The role of planning cultures in urban infrastructure development

The art of planning a tram for Nijmegen

Master Thesis
Radboud University Nijmegen
Human Geography: Urban and Cultural Geography
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Preface

“So if you emphasize that the tram is your HOV project, I think you are minimizing other highly valuable projects within the city boundaries. It puts other projects in the shadow of one main project.”

This quote from the interview with the municipal executive councillor responsible for public transport in Arnhem, shows that high-quality public transport (abbr.: HOV, for “hoogwaardig openbaar vervoer”) in the region Arnhem Nijmegen is a holistic project, crossing municipalities and concerning different lines of transport. But as I followed my research internship in Nijmegen, I became familiar with the view dominating the discourse in the city. Here, some leading actors have the vision to bring the tram (engl.: streetcar, but I will use the term tram as it is common in the project under investigation) back to the city. Shortly before the start of my internship at the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen the report on the feasibility of a tram was published and had high attention in the city. The project was presented to me as the tram project. From that period dates the main focus of my interviews, which is the question whether to realise HOV in Nijmegen with a tram or with buses, which correspond to HOV requests.

Even though I am now aware that the HOV planning in the regional scope is more than the tram, I used the question of the modality as a controversial feature in the project to get an access to the deeper motivations of the actors under investigation. In this respect, this is not a thesis about HOV from a planners’ point of view, but a paper, which wants to show the soft factors of planning within the culture of the project. Soft factors are considered to be such elements in the planning process which are not written in a law or a manual, but depending on the personal behaviour and interactions of the actors, who are the people involved in the project.

I would like to thank my internship organisation, the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen for having me in the office and providing me with a project in the sector traffic and transport. Thanks to the former director Carol van Eert for accepting me as an intern and thanks to Reindert Augustijn for supervising the project and connecting me to his employees and other important actors within the project.

Thanks goes to my professor and supervisor from the Radboud University Nijmegen, Huib Ernste. I appreciated the year of studying in his courses, which I am now completing by this thesis. This took me an additional year due to personal circumstances, and I am happy that I could return to the work on my topic without organisational difficulties.
Even though my studies took me longer than expected, my parents were supporting me in my wish to return to Nijmegen and to complete my thesis. Therefore I am thankful for my family and friends who always kept me motivated to complete these studies of Urban and Cultural Geography which pleased me from the beginning on.

Above all, I am grateful to have Malte by my side. He was always there for me and followed the work on my thesis with interest and made some helpful remarks.
Summary

This is a case study on the planning culture of an urban infrastructural public transport project in the region of Nijmegen. The interviews with involved actors at the core of the thesis, are conducted under the theoretical framework of actor-centred institutionalism. This theory asks for the role of the actors within their institutional setting and tries to unravel the spaces of interpretation. These spaces, with respect to my work, consist of the soft factors of planning like the personal beliefs and styles of working that individuals have.

The project under investigation is the HOV planning for the region, but my main focus was on the question of whether being able to bring back the tram to the city of Nijmegen. In this aspect of the HOV planning, mainly the municipality of Nijmegen and the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen are involved. Therefore these two institutions are presented by introducing their main actors in the project. The chapter on these leading institutions is based on the interviews conducted with the actors in spring 2012 and therefore should already open up the discussion relevant to my research questions. On the chapter on the actors follows a part where I have chosen fields of agency within the project of HOV. Here again, it is not mainly about technical aspects of the planning, but about how the actors deal with the hard sides of the project. Different opinions and convictions become clear and offer us insight into the soft aspects of the planning process. The core of the analysis consists of the chapters 2.3 until 2.5.3 but two more abstracts summarize the findings in reference to the research question. These concern the spaces of interpretation of the actors within their institutional setting and the underlying motives of their doings and sayings.

The thesis is introduced by a chapter on the research background and by one about the internship organisation. In the part on theory, practice theory is added to actor-centred institutionalism. As a key concept, planning culture and governance are introduced before moving on to the methodology. Here, it is first about the way the interviews were developed and conducted, then follows up a notion on how I worked with the programme Atlas TI. The presentation of the research question leads to the empirical section, where the actors of the case study are presented and their way of working is analysed. The main outcome, as shown in the conclusions, is the finding that soft factors are highly influencing the planning process by the widely varying characters of the actors. Institutional settings can be described but it became clear that the planners’ personality is much more than the doctrine of the organization.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Previous Research

The starting point in the description of the core of my thesis is the crisis of spatial planning in the Netherlands dating from the 1980’s. At this time, in the name of New Public Management, liberalization, de-centralisation and privatization became widespread. Other reforms of planning practice originated from the evolvement of forms of governance, resulting in informal experiments with horizontal policymaking together with citizens and stakeholders. These two contrasting points of view limited the role of the state in planning in the 1990’s (Grijzen 2010: 70).

According to Dutch spatial planning theorists, the regulatory system of planning had become too slow and overregulated. Beside that, the national government had withdrawn itself, but there was nothing to replace its steering role due to a weak regional governmental level (Grijzen 2010: 73). By the end of the 1990’s, planners started to search for a new way of planning. In an influential report by the Scientific Council for Government (WRR), the term developmental planning was introduced. As Grijzen (2010: 78) summarizes, the report based its proposal for a new kind of planning on an analysis of the network society. “In a network society, nearness is replaced by accessibility and a spatial hierarchy is replaced with a pattern of important places” (Grijzen 2010: 78). Here, I introduce Jean Hilliers (2005: 272) notion, that place is always a site of “negotiated meaning” and therefore until today – against a background of socio-economic change – “planning practitioners are struggling to embrace the various processes of transformation of structures and practices in meaningful ways” (Hillier 2005: 271). Recent developments in planning theory emphasize a relational view of practices, which includes a tension between a non-linear notion of change and the ideal type planning style. Hillier refers to Patsy Healey, recognizing network complexity in the planning process, fragmented and folded conceptions of space and the need for creativity in developing spatial strategies (Hillier 2005: 274). This is in line with Deleuze and Guattari, saying that ideas do not come to order from abstract notions, but develop as part of practical, creative experimentation played out within and between economic and socio-political institutions (Hillier 2005: 273).

The network of the public, private and civil sector is transforming in the context of processes like globalization, de-regulation and other reforms mentioned above. This goes hand in hand with social, economic and spatial polarization and fragmentation (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 291). Therefore, “all over the world cities are searching for appropriate ways of governance” (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 291). Deleuze and Guattari claim the term molecular soup in reference to tensions between governability and ungovernability, where “unexpected elements often come
into play and things do not quite work out as intended” (Hillier 2005: 272). Nevertheless, Uta Hohn confirms an academic examination of designing urban spaces within the context of New Urban Governance, where “it is about elaborating on the interests and strategies of the players as well as their involvement in networks with specific power structures. It is essential to analyse the consensus-finding processes, as well as causes of tension and conflict, and also discuss questions of legitimatization and allocation of decision-making power and responsibility within the framework of governance processes” (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 293). Such an investigation of planning culture in the framework of governance is supposed to bring new insights regarding our knowledge of the informal aspects of planning. An examination of the processes shaping informal planning is needed to better anticipate, in which direction planning practice is developing. The concept of planning culture brings forward the informality of planning and embraces the importance of these soft factors for successful planning which will be investigated in this paper. Planning is about negotiating different meanings and possibilities to find suitable compromises for the development of places.

The problem in the HOV discussion lead by the municipality of Nijmegen and the City Region is the involvement of different institutions and actors, standing for different points of view. It is common ground to develop the public transport in the city of Nijmegen to respond to the anticipated growth of the city due to the spatial developments planned in the North across the river. How to develop the accessibility of Nijmegen is another discussion. The open questions of the project crystallized in two points. First, will there be a bus or a streetcar connecting the relevant nodes of Nijmegen? Here, questions of finances, capacity, accessibility and the image of the city play a crucial role. Secondly, there are different options on which route the HOV should run. Regarding the complexity of the actors involved, the HOV discussion for Nijmegen is a suitable project to investigate under the conceptualization of planning culture. For me personally, it is favourable to work on a project based in Nijmegen to get to know more about the place of my studies within my professional field. Developing public transportation is part of my conviction when it comes to create and maintain sustainable cities. Therefore it is favourable to work within the organization of the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen to be able to observe how such a vision is conceptualized and negotiated.
1.2 The Internship Organization

In March 2012, I started my research internship at the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen. Until June, I was located in office next to the station in Nijmegen on Mondays and Wednesdays to work on my thesis. When I had the first meeting with the organization in autumn 2011, the former director presented himself as my supervisor. In January 2012 he introduced me to the counsellor of finances and coordinator of the City Region council. When the director left the City Region in March 2012 to become the mayor of the village Beuningen, the counsellor was now in charge of my supervision. The first step to undertake at the City Region, was to get to know the employees. I got in touch with the persons working on transport projects. This mainly with the help of the team manager traffic and transport, who practically became my internship supervisor. In the field of traffic and transport, I found the case study of the HOV discussion in the region of Nijmegen to investigate under the theorisation of planning cultures. During my hours in office I was busy with getting to know the HOV project, before conducting the interviews with the main actors involved. In a later stage I used to write the transcriptions of the interviews during the time I spent at the City Region office.

The City Region is structured in three governing bodies: The general board or the City Region council, the executive board and the chairman. Beside the administrative organization, there is the official organization, which is headed by a secretary-director. The director is supported by a staff service and the staff management. The director leads two sectors, the traffic and transport sector and the sector regional development. The regional development sector is divided into several sub-themes namely space, housing, employment and governance and communication (De Stadsregio, 2012).

![Organisation of the City Region](https://www.destadsregio.nl)

*Figure 1: Organisation of the City Region (Source: www.destadsregio.nl, accessed March 1, 2012)*
The City Region claims for close collaboration, expressed in the following section: “The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region is headed by a board consisting of five members representing the various municipalities and a chairman. It is governed by the regional council, which comprises 37 members representing the local municipalities. In order to achieve its aims, the city region collaborates with local authorities and organisations like the Chamber of Commerce, expertise centres, organisations of employers and employees, transport organisations and public housing associations” (De Stadsregio, 2012). Jantine Grijzen (2010: 178) describes the City Region in her promotion as a regional government, situated between the two large rivers in the east of the Netherlands and lying within the borders of the province Gelderland. It is a semi-urbanized region with the two larger cities Arnhem and Nijmegen, giving the organization its name. Beside these urbanised centres, twenty smaller villages make up the region. Economically, it is less important than the Dutch Randstad, but the City Region is situated near the German border and is an important economic region for the positioning of the Netherlands in Europe. A lot of traffic to Middle and Eastern Europe goes through the region, either by car, boat or train. This makes mobility one of the important policy issues for the region (Grijzen 2010: 179). This self-understanding of the City Region is illustrated by the following image to be found on the homepage of the organization.

![Figure 2: The City Region and Europe](Source: www.destadsregio.nl, accessed March 1, 2012)

The organizations’ mission statement is formulated as follows: “The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region presents itself as an attractive, easily accessible region with a strong competitive position worldwide. Not surprisingly, the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region has expressed the ambition of becoming the second biggest economic area in the Netherlands after the Randstad by 2020” (De Stadsregio, 2012). Due to transformations presented in the introduction of this paper, the City Region went through a period of transition in the 2000’s. These transformations were investigated by Jantine Grijzen (2010) and presented in her dissertation. “The reorganization was designed to find a new way of governing: performing policies together with
other public and private actors. (...) Consultants were mainly hired to lead the projects, and hence became the vehicles through which the new way of governing needed to be implemented. However, the high involvement of consultants also limited the learning of the organization itself and eroded the coherence between projects” (Grijzen 2010: 177). The new way of working was investigated by qualitative interviews. The planning style is characterized by statements as governance, interaction with society, getting things done. The type of planners was described by the employees of the City Region as brokers, sensitive for outside world, project-process management and mobilizing implementation force (Grijzen 2010: 184). The new planning culture ended up in the planners of the City Region performing a wide variety of overlapping projects. Shortly after the reorganization in the end of the 2000’s, any coordination between the various projects took place to create coherence among them. Most of the projects had consultants as project leaders (Grijzen 2010: 188). According to the former director of the City Region, in 2007 the City Region had entered a period of generating output: making sure projects were implemented. This on the background of governance-light, which depicts governance without the institutional weight of rules, administrative thickness and inflexibility of other governments (Grijzen 2010: 188). By investigating a case study on transportation, supervised by the City Region, I will try to unravel the current planning style born out of the period of transition of the last decade.

On my first day of internship, I got to read the government’s mission statement about the definite reorganisation of the seven City Regions in the Netherlands from 2012 March, 2\textsuperscript{nd}. The collaboration among the municipalities within the regions will not be mandatory anymore. Therefore, the City Region seems to loose power and money and finds itself again in the search of a reformed positioning.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this master thesis investigation is based on actor-centred institutionalism as developed by Fritz W. Scharpf (Scharpf 1997). The underlying idea of the concept is to methodologically combine individualism with institutionalism. These two poles have to do with the foregoing debate on structure and agency, leading to what we are talking about today in the field of practice theory. Combining individualism and institutionalism, aims at researching the problem of governance and self-organization on the level of entire social fields. Hereby, I consider the place of the streetcar project, as understood following Patsy Healey (2007) and her concept of place governance, as a social field where governance practices are carried out. The integrated approach of actor-centred institutionalism argues that the analysis of structures needs reference to actors, just as the analysis of actors needs reference to structures. In my understanding of Scharpf, the institution can be seen as the structuring part and the actor as the
acting feature. To what extent social actors create the world or are instead produced of it, how we conceptualise or dissect actions, has clear normative implications concerning individual responsibility (Loyal 2003: 51). In social theory, the rules and structures, which are of most significance, are those which concern institutions, as these practices are most deeply sedimented in time-space (Loyal 2003: 79).

1.3.1 Giddens and the Return of the Individual

When it comes to social structures, we can see that in sociology, structures were usually conceived as objective features of social organisation. They exist independently of social actors' cognitive beliefs and to some extent they shape and determine their consciousness and action (Loyal 2003: 71). Structure was seen as external to, independent of and determinant upon a freely acting agent. This refers to related debates such as object over subject, society over individual or, institution over actor. Giddens' sociological as well as political, central preoccupation has been the recovery of the subject as a knowledgeable, autonomous, reasoning and capable actor. It appears to Loyal (2003: 67), that Giddens wants people to have choice because he wants them to be capable of effecting change in the existing of things. Therefore the idea developed that "social structure provides the conditions of possibility for social action" understood as the two-fold way in which "structural constraints both limit the possibility for action and appear to the agent as pre-structured enablements associated with opportunities for action" (Loyal 2003: 58). Structure is no longer simply constraining but also enabling: "structure thus is not to be conceptualised as a barrier to action, but as essentially involved in its production" (Loyal 2003: 73). Here it shows Giddens being a post-structuralist, counterposing Wittgenstein for whom meaning and subjectivity are still rooted in collective social practices. Giddens has an “unwillingness to abandon the subject completely” (Loyal 2003: 60). Therefore, actors actively create or produce structures, expressed in the notion of a duality of structure. Duality of structure means that, "every act of social production is simultaneously an act of reproduction" (Loyal 2003: 73). This means that ends of action are to be understood by reference both to individual factors, and to a social, normative element involved in their constitution (Loyal 2003: 63). Talcott Parsons as well recognised that “individual actors are moved to conform to norms by both external and internal pressures. The sanctions of others will also press upon the individual to conform to norms. But these sanctions are secondary and derivative supports of the normative order and have no independent significance” (Loyal 2003: 65).

Agency is understood as the correlate of the concept of action (Loyal 2003: 51) and “it is analytical to the concept that a person could have acted otherwise” which ties agency to power (Loyal 2003: 57). Power is tied to agency and refers to the capacity of agents to make a
difference in the social world. In reference to institutions I consider Giddens’ writing on rules as an important contribution. He notes that, rules in social life are techniques or generalizable procedures understood for the most part on a tacit, unformulated basis, which can be applied in the enactment and in the reproduction of social practices (Loyal 2003: 79). Further describing the tacit character of a rule, it’s said that, “tacit rules, which refer to the majority of rules implicated within social practices, are only known practically and may be contrasted with discursive rules. Such rules imply a prior interpretation of a rule, which therefore may alter the application of them” (Loyal 2003: 80). “To know a rule does not presuppose the ability to enunciate it discursively, but rather to know it tacitly, as practical consciousness. This allows an emphasis on the practical nature of rule-following, in contrast to a conception which envisages rules as straightforwardly conscious and discursive” (Loyal 2003: 86). Rules are considered to be generalizable procedures, which can be applied “on a case to case and context to context basis” (Loyal 2003: 87), which means that “to know a rule is not to know how to apply it in novel circumstances or to know how to go on in social life” (Loyal 2003: 86).

In the words of Talcott Parsons we can say that, to the extent that individuals are said to have agency, they are capable of acting independently of, and in opposition to structural constraints and may (re)constitute social structures through their freely chosen actions. The converse implication is that a human being without agency would be an automata whose action was determined by external social structures (Loyal 2003: 62). Giddens speaks of actions, which “could be otherwise, in order to stress how actions are never wholly determined by structural constraints” (Loyal 2003: 68). As Loyal (2003: 68) concludes, few sociologists have in any case ever believed in complete determination of this kind, and this position is opposed by the view that, if structural constraints exist, they feature among the many necessary causes of action rather than counting as sufficient causes of it.

1.3.2 Practice Theory

We have seen above, when discussing the tension between structure and agency, that social structure is never fully determining human action but counts as one aspect of the whole, making up agency. Through individuals, performing doing and sayings, practices are composed and are described as spatiotemporal manifolds (Schatzki 1996: 133). Practice theory brings together the dichotomy of structure and agency whereby it is about the vulnerable opposition between individual and society (Schatzki 1996: 133). For me, this again includes the opposition between the actor and the institution. Schatzki considers Bourdieu and Giddens as the most influential authors on the analysis of practice. First, I want to return to Giddens and see what he has to say on practices before looking at practices and institutions as developed by Bourdieu. Giddens theory of structuration as developed from agency to practice includes that “practices are
composed of individual's activities. Social reality is a tangle of streams of activity that compose practices with structures that are both the condition and outcome of those practices. Structures, consequently, must also somehow be the condition and outcome of individual activity” (Schatzki 1996: 144). Further on the same page, Schatzki continues how “individuals draw upon the structures of practices, thereby renewing the structures and participating in and perpetuating the practices” and that “actions, practices, systems and structures form tightly bound complexes”. In a meaningful way Schatzki describes once again the co-constitution of action, practices and structure, when he says that, "structures are sets of rules and resources, which are at once the medium in which practices are carried out and the renewed result of their execution. Since practices compose systems, the structural properties of social systems are likewise sets of rules and resources that are both medium and result of system practices. What’s more, since practices and systems are composed of actions, the ultimate reason why rules and resources structure practices and systems is that actors draw on rules and resources in their interactions. In doing so, they perpetuate the practices of whose structure the rules and resources are elements, and thereby also help reproduce the social system composed by these practices” (Schatzki 1996: 146). But rules and resources are not the only determinants of action. What people do, also depends on their “reasons” and “wants”. Whereby “reasons” are the grounds on which people unspeakingly and continuously understand their activity to rest; and wants are motivations rooted in the unconscious (Schatzki 1996: 147). Moreover, since most of daily life is routine, “general wants are usually satisfied and actions not directly motivated by them. Only in critical situations, when routine is disrupted, do general wants directly give rise to behaviour, which seeks to restore the ontological security maintained in routine” (Schatzki 1996: 147).

For Bourdieu, the emphasis is on the concept of disposition. Actions are produced by dispositions “that characterize existence in the context of certain practices, generate actions that reproduce and perpetuate the practices and conditions” (Schatzki 1996: 137). Moreover, habitus is supposed to replace the dominance of mind, while the dispositions constitute habitus. These dispositions are bodily schemes (Schatzki 1996: 138). This labelling emphasizes that the operations of habitus are carried out by “bodily gymnastics and also transpire both nonconsciously and automatically. Mental dispositions and the like, as a result are inscribed in the body” (p. 138). Another important concept of Bourdieu’s practice theory is the idea of groups: "(...) the particular prices, chances, laws and frequencies individuals face reflect both the groups to which they belong, that is, their position in group space and the relations among these groups" (Schatzki 1996: 137). Also which behavioural dispositions a person acquires, depends on his position in group space. It is important that the action makes sense to the actor, that is, “to someone whose schemes of action, perception, and thought have been formed within certain practices and conditions. The actions that habitus selects thus make sense given the situation
and also given the objective conditions and practices familiar to and inhabited by the actor” (Schatzki 1996: 139). In this project, I consider an institution as a group and therefore the members of one organization or institution belonging to the same group. “This means that the actions the bodily schemes select will also be sensible and reasonable to other actors who have matured within and become accustomed to the same practices and conditions” (p. 139). And what is left to wish for is that, in the words of Schatzki (p.139), "the homology of the habitus of actors who grew up and live amidst the same practice-established objective conditions also ensure that the actions they individually perform add up to regular, unified, and systematic social practices”.

1.3.3 Scharpf and the Theory of Actor-Centred Institutionalism (ACI)

The theory of actor-centred institutionalism serves with a descriptive language and an ordering system for the case study. Therefore, the notion of institutions, as well as the notion of actors, in the concept have to be explained. The institutional background constitutes actors and actor constellations, and influences their orientation. “Individuals will often act in the name of and in the interest of another person, a larger group, or an organization” (Scharpf 1997: 52). The concept analyses the “influence of institutions on the perceptions, preferences, capabilities of actors and on their modes of interaction” (Scharpf 1997: 38). In reference to actors, this can be said in other words: “Actors in the framework of actor-centred institutionalism (ACI), are characterized by their orientations and by their capabilities” (Scharpf 1997: 51). For my research it is about the perceptions, planning paradigms and the preferences whether for a bus or a streetcar. Here, the institutional background, including action resources and instruments of political influence, play the central role. Institutions also shape the situations actors are confronting. Nevertheless, the theory stresses that the institutional context is not completely determining action. Institutions can be seen as systems of rules, structuring the courses of action, whereby rules might be legal as well as normative. Institutions are restricted to specific regulatory aspects and therefore enable and restrict, but cannot fully determine behaviour. This has to do with the notion that institutions can be changed by action, leading to a reframing of actor’s perceptions.

As a methodology to get to know the institutional setting of interaction, Scharpf notes to first examine the set of interactions surrounding the social field under investigation. Consequently, the actors involved in these interactions can be identified. The choices of these actors will determine the outcome of the project. In order to reduce complexity, Scharpf stresses the concept of “diminishing abstraction” which includes to first find institutional explanations for the courses of action before focusing on actor-centred factors. Moving then to the actor level, Scharpf introduces the argument that actors are partly rational (maximizing their self-interest).
but have specific capabilities (all action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects) and action orientations (perceptions and preferences of a particular actor). This can be expressed in the way that the rational actor paradigm may capture the basic driving force of social interaction, but at the same time we have to be aware of the idea that human action is based on culturally shaped beliefs about the real world. The concept of actor-centred institutionalism rejects pure rational choice theories and the assumptions of neoclassical economics but combines them with an understanding of perceived realities and subjectively defined interests and normative convictions. This combination consequently also rejects the extreme of the purely social construction of reality. This point of view leads to the idea, that people have views and preferences of their own, which sometimes brings them to evade the rules they are supposed to adhere.

Looking at actors in institutions brings us to the concept of strategies. These are the courses available to take by the actors. "The ideal individual actor of rational-choice models is assumed to have the capacity for strategic action – which is to say that on the basis of accurate perceptions and adequate information-processing capacity, he or she is able to respond to the risks and opportunities inherent in a given actor constellation by selecting the strategies that will maximize his or her expected total unity" (Scharpf 1997: 58). But, "if this model is to be applied to composite actors, its cognitive as well as evaluative mechanisms must be re-specified before they can be meaningfully employed" (Scharpf 1997: 58). The conclusion Scharpf (1997: 58) draws on the capacity for strategic action is the dependence of it on convergence in preference in the group and the capacity of conflict resolution. Strategies are interdependent among different actors in the same field, leading to focus on actor constellations. Analysing actor constellations, Scharpf (1997: 10) thinks game-theoretically: "Strategic action implies that actors are aware of their interdependence, and that in arriving at their own choices, each will try to anticipate the choices of the others, knowing that they in turn will do the same". The capacity for strategic action depends first on the convergence or divergence of relevant perceptions and preferences among the members of the composite actor.

1.3.4 Composite Actors according to Scharpf

In sum, strategic choices are aiming at achieving the best outcome under the consideration of the preferences of all involved actors. The site of the emergence of strategic action is first of all the level of the so-called composite actors. This definition refers to units that include several human beings, whereby the individuals intend to create a joint product and "the term composite actor will be reserved to constellations in which the intent of intentional action refers to the joint effect of coordinated action expected by the participating individuals" (Scharpf 1997: 54). "It is empirically meaningful to treat aggregates of individuals as composite actors and to explain
policy outcomes in terms of their preferences and strategy choices”, whereby the notion of a composite actor implies a capacity for intentional action at a level above the individuals involved” (Scharpf 1997: 52). “The architecture of complexity (Simon 1962) of real-world interactions will allow us to treat larger units of actors whose choices may be explained in terms of factors defined at the level of the larger unit” (Scharpf 1997: 52). Scharpf (1997: 54, Coleman 1975, Mayntz 1986) distinguishes collective from corporate actors, both belonging to the concept of composite actors. Collective actors are “dependent on an guided by the preferences of their members.” Corporate actors are described as having a “high degree of autonomy from the ultimate beneficiaries of their own action” and that the preferences of staff members are neutralized by employment contracts” (Scharpf 1997: 54).

“The strategic capacity of composite actors depends on institutional conditions facilitating internal conflict resolution” (Scharpf 1997: 59). Further, the capacity for conflict resolution within the composite unit plays a role. In areas in which composite actors are routinely engaged, we are likely to find them to be capable of strategic action. Only when composite actors are confronted with novel problem situations, differences in strategic capacity will show up. To come to an end, I include the notion “that in principle the same empirical phenomenon must be analysed from two perspectives: from the outside, as a composite actor with certain resources and a greater or lesser capacity for employing these resources in strategic action; and from the inside, as an institutional structure within which internal actors interact to produce the actions ascribed to the composite actors” (Scharpf 1997: 52).

1.4 Planning Culture as a Key Concept

The key concepts underlying my research are governance and the concept of planning culture. I will first introduce ideas of governance mainly based on contributions by Patsy Healey and Uta Hohn. Definitions of planning cultures are considered to be embedded in the concept of governance.

“A major issue in the debate about governance processes is the relation between formal government, wider governance processes and political communities” (Healey 2010: 51). Hohn and Neuer (2006: 297) underline this statement by claiming that “governance cannot replace government but it changes and complements it. There is no governance without government”. Healey (2010: 49) uses the term governance “with a broad meaning, to cover all kinds of collective activity (...) and includes government as a part of the overall deliberate collective activity involved in place management and development”. “People manage and develop places in all kinds of ways as they try to improve the environments in which they live (...). Such activity is motivated by a recognition that one person’s concerns are shared with others, and helps to create a public that has a collective stake in what happens in a place (...) Such activities
undertaken to promote collective concerns of some kind constitute governance arrangements of a particular urban complex” (Healey 2010: 49).

"In the context of a remarkable re-scaling of governance-arenas set off by manifold exogenous and endogenous processes like globalization, de-regulation, de-centralization and privatization as well as social, economic and spatial polarization and fragmentation, metropolitan regions and urban districts are gaining even more importance in terms of levels of governance” (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 291). "The term New Urban Governance thereby means the collective and institutionally anchored regulation of urban development processes, from the micro-level of a project area to the whole urban and city-regional levels, by different players such as decision-makers who are involved in informal and formal, flexible and enduring networks with horizontal as well as hierarchical structures and specific power balances” (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 293). I am attracted by Pats Healey’s concept of place-governance because here it is obvious that "attention to place qualities cuts across sectors. People are concerned with how to access health, welfare, education and leisure services and facilities, and realise that where they live and what transport options are available make a difference to their lives. To address their concerns, formal government organisation needs not only to work out how to link together the various sectors as they relate to a specific place. It may often be necessary to co-ordinate action between different government jurisdictions. So those promoting a planning approach to place management and development have often encouraged governments to break out of their traditional boundaries and make links with others. This raises issues about how formal government relates to the wider social organisation of a society” (Healey 2010: 53f).

As I followed my research internship in an organization dealing with regional development, the following statement of Hohn and Neuer (2006: 296) concerning the rescaling of governance arenas shall be included in this paper: “The competition of cities for investment, their effort for the highest possible ranking in the international city hierarchy within the context of globalization, and the realization that, due to the impact of residential, retail and industrial suburbanization as well as the increased mobility of the population, many problems can only be solved by regional consensus and no longer within the administrative borders of a community, have led to a heightened importance of regional governance”. The authors continue that functional networks can lead to new forms of territorialisation as the development of regional identities via common place-making campaigns (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 297). In reference to the planning style on the background of New Urban Governance, Hohn and Neuer (2006: 296) state, that “as a consequence of differentiating processes on the urban scale, a concentration of urban governance is taking place at the district level within the framework of more project and programme orientated planning”. In their paper, they summarize how “governance proves to be a dynamic process in which flexibility, informality, problem and project orientation as well as
variability of relationships and networks in terms of time and space play an important role”. Healey’s final statement about the final mode of how governance should be today says that “the final mode has grown in importance as citizens have come to demand a greater voice in the delivery of government initiatives, as well as in articulating what these initiatives should be. It reflects steady shift from an understanding of democratic practice in elite terms to more participatory conceptions of democracy. The central ideas of this governance mode are that purposes, strategies and specific action programmes of governance activity should not be just the work of political elites and technocrats, but that all those with a stake in a place should have some kind of voice in shaping policy making, and that this should be done through discussion and deliberation, not only through technical analysis” (Healey 2010: 67).

In 2009, Boelens sees difficulties in the realization of new forms of governance in the Dutch planning practice. "New forms of discursive, or even radical participatory or associative plural democracy pass the review, each of which gives rise to customized public, private or private-public governance and additional forms of regulation, more embedded in everyday experiences of various citizens and business. But although the Dutch government embraces this new relational and decentralized management philosophy in the White Paper on National Spatial Planning (2006) (…), a closer look shows that the recent restructuring (…) points in the other direction. One can discover a strong recovery of a vertical state control with all the bureaucracy and increasing distance to the daily life of citizens and enterprises, rather than relational, decentralized embedded governance” (2009: 184f).

Coming from comparing different planning cultures across Europe in the frame of INTERREG projects, CULTPLAN (2006) states that, “spatial planning is largely a cultural activity because it impinges directly on political, social and economic issues. Planning concepts, development processes and planning decisions are always influenced by the cultural backgrounds of social groups and individuals, and cultural differences are one of the obstacles to successful planning. Cooperation between actors is complicated by their different perceptions of the meaning of space and understanding of planning systems and processes”. Dühr et al. (2010: 375), also coming from a European comparative angle, explain the emergence of the cultural aspects in planning theory: “From the early 2000’s there has been a renewed interest in academic debate on the idea of planning culture and how it varies internationally, including across Europe. This cultural turn recognises that the wider societal and cultural context has considerable influence on the organisation and functioning of a planning system and development process”. Young (2008: 30) sees a new cultural positionality as the constitutive of the most important opportunity for planning today: “It is a potential that spans the full spectrum of planning forms, scales and purposes” and he believes it represents the gravitational centre for planning reform. His conclusion here is, that "any planning positionality focussed on solutions, is most likely to be
grounded in culture” (Young 2008: 29) and he sees “culture as the social, environmental and historical grounding of urban and regional planning (Young 2008: 35), using Lefebvres’ trialectics of being what combines space, time and society.

Hohn et al. (2007) acknowledge that “planning culture is a fuzzy concept without a specific theoretical background” but therefore provides a certain scientific potential. Dühr et al. (2010: 375f) confirm that “the concept of planning culture is often rather loosely defined” but they continue explaining that the concept is “used broadly to represent the norms, values and principles that underlie planning practice. This includes aspects of the broader institutional context and the wider cultural context of spatial development”. Faludi (2005) defines planning culture as “the collective ethos and dominant attitudes of planners regarding the appropriate role of the state, market forces, and civil society in influencing social outcomes”.

I will dedicate my work on planning culture to the claim of Hohn et al. (2007), saying that there is a “need to look beyond anecdotic approaches on a national level”. My thesis will not compare national planning cultures but build on Healey’s idea of place-governance. Therefore I will investigate the planning culture surrounding a certain project, including the cultural embeddedness of the involved actors on the different levels of governance. Here, Dühr et al. (2010: 375) explain how planning culture can be described “as the ways, both formal and informal, spatial planning in a given multi-national area, in a region, country or city is conceived, institutionalised and enacted”. Put in other words, Knieling and Othengrafen (2009) summarize that “a planning culture is characterized by particularities of history, by attitudes, beliefs and values, political and legal traditions, different socio-economic patterns and concepts of justice, interpretation of planning tasks and responsibilities, and different structures of governance”.

Looking at the planning culture considering a specific place or project brings the focus on the actors involved. “Planning, like any practice, is both an activity and a skill, underwritten by professional education, institutional traditions and regular performance. Competent practitioners draw creatively on learnt principles, tools, rituals and other reifications of practice, adapting them to the context often without the need to refer to them explicitly: practical skills become embodied. Furthermore, practical skills tend to become central to the practitioners’ identity as a member of a community of practice” (MacCullum 2009: 165). “As part of planning practice, we can see committee meetings as nodes in a planning network which might include agendas, discussion papers, reports, correspondence, press releases and so on. Each of these has a range of expected characteristics – a typical structure, typical modes of expression, systematic relations with the other genres. These characteristics partially realise a context of culture which, together with the immediate context of situation, frames participants’ construction and interpretation of what is going on” (MacCallum 2009: 15). “The question of changing planning cultures indicates that there is more than just methods and instruments in planning. We have to
consider values, subjective interpretations and roles which are of importance in order to understand the use of instruments and methods” (Hohn et. al 2008). To sum up, I share the following definition of planning culture: Planning Culture “as the typical way of working (organizing, deciding, managing) during the process of planning, as a result of the accumulated attitudes, values, rules, standards and beliefs shared by the group of people involved” (CULTPLAN 2006), by the means of “culture expressing the connective in life” (Young 2008: 42). And Hohn and Neuer are adding that, “governance as well as planning culture are, in the context of a comprehensive understanding of the cultural embebeddness of social life, embedded in the interdependencies of social, economic and political values, norms, rules and laws, which is by no means to be understood as static, monolithic bloc” (Hohn and Neuer 2006: 293). The authors continue, that a network of interdependencies is regulating the behaviour of actors, gives orientation and is simultaneously either confirmed or transformed by the actors’ actions. As a point of departure in analysing planning culture, Hohn uses the following framework. In a wider sense, the here described governance culture is in line with how I perceive planning culture, as the presented factors are influencing the consequences for urban and regional development. The layers of culture included in the scheme concern the institutions under investigation in the core and an outer layer of governance culture describing the way of working in the project with respect to tools and methods. The core and the outer layer are embedded in a social culture, regulating action and defined by social, economic and political traditions. These three stages are influenced by other exogenous and endogenous factors as described in the figure. All together, they create the consequences for spatial development.

Figure 3: Framework for analysing urban and regional governance cultures (adapted from Hohn, 2007).
2. The Case Study: Planning a Tram for Nijmegen

2.1 Research Objective and Questions

The sections on theory and methodology show how much planning is driven by central actors, within or against their institutional background. We saw that planning decisions are culturally embedded in the values and preferences of the practitioners. It can be assumed that planning is often conducted unconsciously based on the incorporated knowledge and experience of the actors. The objective of my research is to raise the awareness of the cultural embeddedness of planning and unravel the underlying motives of the actors involved in the discussion on developing HOV in Nijmegen. As this thesis is based on the findings in line with the theory of actor-centred institutionalism the focus is on the actors within their institutions. Therefore the following research question has been developed:

How do the actors act within their institution and what are their spaces of interpretation?

As spaces of interpretation I understand the way the actors incorporate their personal beliefs and values. It is about to investigate how they interpret the rules and regulations given by the institution and which are their spaces of manoeuvring. Therefore we will discover the way of working of the actors investigated. When analysing the way of working in the different institutions and observing which decisions are taken it is necessary to add the following research question:

What are the underlying motives?

Here, the objectives in planning are analysed by comparing the different motives of the actors as well as shared motives within an institution.

During time of analysing, the first question was on the institutions involved in the project. In a second step the institutional settings had to be analysed. Moving to the actor level, the question was “who are the central actors and how do they act within their institutional context?” and “what are their frames of interpretation?” Further guiding questions during the work on the data were about frame conflicts, finding compromise and the strength of informal planning.

2.2 Methodology

This section includes some findings on frame analysis, based on the work of Fischer (2003). This concept was essential to my work in the beginning of the process but is only included implicitly throughout interviewing. Nevertheless, the idea of framed meaning became more important when analysing the data. Fischer introduces frames in the context of the cultural turn, explains what to understand under the concept of frame, leading to the process of reframing. In a second
part on the methodology, I will describe how the qualitative research was conducted. After conducting the interviews, data was analysed by the help of the qualitative data computer programme Atlas TI.

In 2003, Fischer states that the foregoing years have renewed the challenge of conducting social sciences through developments in critical, postempiristic and postmodern theories. “These perspectives have brought with them a more sophisticated emphasis on social meaning and values, through a deeper understanding of language and discourse” (Fischer 2003: vii). Fischer continues that discourse, in this view, does more than reflect a social reality, but actually constitutes much of the reality that has to be explained and “that discursive power can determine the very fields of action” (Fischer 2003: viii). Therefore, a discursive approach seeks to show that we need a much more refined understanding of the interactions that construct reality, in particular the way the empirical is embedded in the normative” (Fischer 2003: viii). As stated above, social meaning is basic to the study of public policy, but there are problems concerning the methods of empirical analysis because social meaning poses special problems of access. “Each person has only direct access to his own realm of meaning. As meanings are not directly observable, the realm of meaning has to be approached through interpretative analysis” (Fischer 2003: 139), including analysing the unobservable as well. Further problems with the methodology come up by the circumstances that no universally applicable generalizations can be found, as outcomes depend on contextual factors. The nature of contextual explanations further implies that discourses shape practices in a very subtle manner that is difficult to reconstruct (Fischer 2003: viii).

“Common to mainstream social science is case-study research, which can include an emphasis on the meanings held by the actors under investigation” (Fischer 2003: 139), whereby research based on interviews and participatory observation is adequate. By analysing a case, we have to raise the question “how is the issue selected, organized, and interpreted to make sense of a complex reality?” (Fischer 2003: 143). To get to know more about the social meanings involved, Fischer stresses the role of language and states that “access to the realm of meaning often can be gained through the study of communication, both spoken and written”. For my research, this means engaging in conversations with actors involved as well as the study of policy documents and informative publications about the project to the citizens. As these meanings are generally only indirectly made available through such communications, it is necessary for the analyst to go beyond methods as content analysis. An interpretative reconstruction of the situational logic is needed. “By examining the process through which the policy meanings are transmitted, which audiences for the meanings are intended, and how the readers interpret, interpretive policy analysts seek to determine not only what a particular policy means, but how it means” (Fischer 2003: 142). Fischer explains, that this can be done by “identifying patterns that emerge through
an examination of the verbal and non-verbal messages the actors give about their beliefs and experiences” (Fischer 2003: 140). As seen in the methodology presented by the theory of actor-centred institutionalism, is it first about identifying the relevant participants or actors, and then develop an “understanding of the events and actions in relation to the subjective meanings, motives or purposes that lie behind such actions hold by the participants” (Fischer 2003: 141).

Here, Fischer describes how the analysts have to immerse themselves in the beliefs of the participants. These beliefs, understood as ideas, values, feelings and meanings, can be captured in the conceptualization of frames. "The framing of an issue supplies guideposts for analysing and knowing, arguing and acting. Through the process, ill-defined situations can be understood and dealt with" and Fischer continues introducing the notion of frame conflict: “Frames highlight some issues at the same time as they exclude others. That which is featured and stressed is generally what the framing group values. This process is giving rise to frame conflict, occurring not only because different groups focus on different elements of a policy issue, but because they value different elements differently” (Fischer 2003: 143). This brings us back to the understanding of game-theoretic thinking of the theoretical framework presented above, when different composite actors reach for a common outcome considering different preferences. Conflicting frames can paralyse the decisions-making process and this is when policymakers turn to reframing as a primary way out of such situations. Through the actors “conversation with their situation” (Fischer 2003: 146), frames can shift. This process is explained as follows: "Actors apprehend and respond to the changed situations in which they find themselves. In the process, a frame shift can occur thoughtfully or thoughtlessly” which will say that "a mismatch between people’s beliefs and their actual behaviour (...) may cause people to readjust their beliefs to accommodate changes in their situations” (Fischer 2003: 146). Fischer combines these findings to a possible research question for interpretative analysis: “How does the problem-setting frames of public policy change over time?”, whereby it is about uncovering the multiple and conflicting frames by examining the histories, roles and institutional contexts and interests of those who advance(d) them. It is about the “need to learn what social actors themselves really think about particular events, why they believe they occurred, especially what those who did them had in mind at the time, independently of their publicly expressed intentions or motives” or put in other words: “the real reasons and motives for an action are as important as the action itself. People want to know whether things happened for the reason given”. The following question arises: “Were there underlying motives? Were they well-meaning? Or were the statements part of a strategic rhetoric designed to advance a particular group’s interest?” (Fischer 2003: 141). This can be found out through qualitative interviewing (coding) and participatory observation.
The methodology of qualitative researching presented in this research, was developed by Flick (2002). Most suitable for the investigation of the actors involved in the HOV project might be a combination of semi-structured and narrative interviewing. “The semi-standardized interview is a specific elaboration of semi-structured interviewing and should bring the reconstruction of subjective theories and how they are applied in professional activities” (Flick 2002: 80). “The term subjective theory refers to the fact that the interviewee has a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study. This knowledge includes assumptions that are explicit and immediate and which he or she can express spontaneously in answering an open question” (Flick 2002: 80). As I will interview central actors of the organizations involved in the discussion on the tram launching, the interviews can be understood as expert interviews. In this approach, the expert on the specific field of study is considered to represent a group, hereby his or her institution. The traditional expert interview should keep the focus on the expert knowledge on a topic and the interviewer should therefore eliminate personal points of view of the expert. This is not in line with my purpose to get to know the attitude and personal background of the expert in his professional activities. Therefore, even though interviewing experts, a more narrative approach is needed. Narratives as data serve as an approach to “individual worlds of experience through the openness of the conversation” (Flick 2002: 96). “Narratives allow the researcher to approach the interviewee’s world in a more comprehensive way” (Flick 2002: 96). As the focus of the interviews shall stay restricted to the expert’s professional life and the case-project, the idea of the narrative interview will be conducted in a semi-standardized interview. The challenge will be to guide the interview as much as necessary but to avoid the question-answer scheme. A too narrow scheme of questions may ”tap subjective experiences” (Flick 2002: 96). As different groups will be compared in the final analysis, “the collection of data is correspondingly conducted with a method which seeks to guarantee comparability by defining topics and at the same time remaining open to the views related to them” (Flick 2002: 185). An adequate method to interpret comparative studies is thematic coding. “The research issue is the social distribution of perspectives on a phenomenon” (Flick 2002: 185). Here, the different groups are treated as cases. As a first orientation a short description of each case is produced, shown in Flick (2002: 186). Further, a deepening analysis of each case is carried out. In the analysis, a system of categories is developed for the single case. This structure may be developed from the first case and then applied to all the other cases. This may include a modification of the categories. The system of categories is further elaborated by first open and then selective coding. Codes can be understood as concepts representing the message of a sequence in the interview. Selective coding applied in thematic coding shall not deliver a grounded core category but give sense to the single case. “The result of this process is a case-oriented display of the way the case specifically deals with the issue of the study, including constant topics which can be found in the viewpoints across different episodes of the interview” (Flick 2002: 188). It is then possible to
compare the definitions of technology and the related codings from all cases. The lack of this method is that it might rather stay too descriptive and not bring added knowledge. Therefore, the interpretation should focus on clashes of frames and the way the different groups came to consensus. In this respect, the concept of discourse analysis (Flick 2002: 200) should be part of the interpretation carried out by the method of thematic coding.

Following the methodology of Flick, the programme Atlas TI helped me to organise the process of coding. As described above I started with open coding, developing categories as they were evolving. By the time, patterns of opinions and frames became clear throughout the different interviews and I could use the codes developed in earlier stages. The same codes from different interviews were grouped into code families. These code documents were the basis of the analysis part, starting with chapter 2.3. Within these documents, I applied a more refined type of coding. At this stage it happened that in the more detailed coding, earlier codes reappeared. In an early process of coding, I created network views, showing the network of codes surrounding one actor. These diagrams are now not included in empirical part of the thesis, but helped me to better understand the storyline of the case.

Figure 4: Network View of the codes included in a single interview, taken from AtlasTI. (M. Fromm, summer 2012)
2.3 High-quality Public Transport (HOV) in Nijmegen

The idea of high-quality public transport as itself, is anchored in most of today's city planning in the Netherlands as well as around the world. For the purpose of this thesis, high-quality public transport refers to the label of HOV, the Dutch abbreviation for “hoogwaardig openbaar vervoer”. In Nijmegen, this definition was first mentioned in 2004, by the company running the buses. In the Netherlands there are several examples of realized HOV, mostly in form of buses. The terminology of HOV can be used for public transport, which is fast and reliable and has a lot of comfort. HOV works as a sound concept with a radiance to attract more passengers. The aim of HOV is to offer a real alternative especially to the car but also to the bike.

In February 2012, a project organisation of HOV Nijmegen published the findings of the research done until this date. At this time, the project is described as an initiative of the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen and the Municipality of Nijmegen, under the lead of the municipality. The title of the paper may be translated as “Decisions on choices” (Voorkeursbeslissing Hoogwaardig Openbaar Vervoer Nijmegen) as the research was about to find a route for the first axes of the new high-quality public transport (HOV) in Nijmegen. The second question of the report concerns the debate whether to realize HOV with buses or by investing in a tram system. Therefore the research questions have been combined and all possible routes have been analysed testing both modalities. The paper commences with the statement, that the development of HOV in Nijmegen was a political wish to reach better accessibility for the northern part of the city, especially for the connection over the river. The reasons why HOV might be needed and is helpful to the region, can be found by taking different perspectives into account. Concerning traffic and transport, HOV should improve the accessibility of the city so that the city can keep its position as an economic engine in the region. From an economic point of view, HOV is strengthening the nodes by linking them. In this perspective, HOV helps developing the public space and is therefore acting as a catalyst by developing the space along the route. Further, the paper sees HOV in Nijmegen as a statement of sustainability for the city. (Voorkeursbeslissing 2012: 10)

Already in 1999, research was done about the idea to bring back the tram to Nijmegen. At that time, it was the idea to realise a connection from the northern part to the main station by passing through the city centre. For many different reasons, this project was not possible to realise and therefore, in 2001 it has been decided to put the plans aside. Other alternatives were not at hand at that point. The first visions under the label of HOV, have been presented by a bus company in 2004. They achieved to build better bus lanes in the city centre, which helped to develop the idea to have good public transport axes through the city centre. But it was not the time yet to speak about introducing HOV. In 2006, the improvements of regular public transport
were visible, but the wish of the municipality to introduce HOV became stronger. A dedicated routed through the centre was chosen were HOV should run. These plans should be worked out together with the City Region. In 2008, the axes and the plans were worked out as far as that HOV was integrated in the regional plans and it has been planned to bring the HOV project into a funding programme by the government. In 2009 the municipality decided to take the lead in planning the first HOV line, whether as a bus or a tram. In 2010 the project organisation HOV Nijmegen was created to do research on the feasibility of HOV with a focus on the possibilities of the introduction of a tram. In the time between 2010 and 2012 extensive research was undertaken with the aim to get funding by the government.

The following paragraph will show what interviewees from different organisations and institutions had to say about HOV in spring 2012. For the interviewed municipal executive councillor from the municipality of Nijmegen, HOV is about offering an alternative to peoples’ transport use: “If you want to have a real alternative for people using the car normally, there are two ways to get them into public transportation. First of all not to do anything about the road system so that it gets impossible for people to reach their destination in time because they are in traffic jam all the time. Or, giving people an alternative.” HOV can be an alternative when it is “frequent, which means six times an hour, so that people can go to the bus station without checking the schedule and there will always be a bus” summarizes a civil servant from the municipality. He continues that, “HOV has to be reliable which means punctual. The stops of HOV are informative and comfortable so that you have a proper shelter for example. HOV is supposed to be attractive for every age and every group of people.” In this point, the municipality agrees with the major NGO involved in the tram discussion. For them, the passenger and the comfort of the system and the modality are most important: “(...) buses with a lot of comfort and a certain aura. The modality has to show the traveller that there are extra possibilities just like comfortable seats, low floor with an easy entrance. Also the bus stops should fulfill certain criteria. They should offer comfort to the traveller. There should be benches and no risks for cyclists passing by.” Form the municipality of Arnhem this aspect is regarded different: “Less important is the comfort of the bus that has more to do with the marketing aspect of HOV than with the passenger.” But the municipal executive councillor from Arnhem agrees upon the other properties of HOV “like speed, not that many stops, it is there to facilitate the huge traffic streams of passengers and not the individual. So it is allowed to skip bus stops, make high speed, high frequency, because there should be no need to really know when the bus leaves, it should be just going.”

In Arnhem, the HOV discussion as it is going on in Nijmegen, is perceived more critically, especially when it comes to the idea of introducing a tram. “We should go back to basic in policy making and think what is best for the travellers here in the region. Obviously it is nice to give the
label HOV but in the end, if it does not contribute to the wishes of the people here in the region, then we should not do it. Otherwise, if it has no label, but is contributing, then we should do it.” What we should not do in the opinion of this interviewed municipal executive councillor is to “clash the word HOV with the tram. Even if you would do that in the Nijmegen area, then you miss other potential HOV projects. I think there are several important bus lines in Nijmegen, which you could consider as being HOV: Lot of transport, a lot of passengers.” The counter position towards the tram shares the chairman of the board of the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen. I asked him what is a higher priority for him, HOV or tram, and he answered that for him it is the tram: “HOV is second choice. I do not reject HOV but if I had the chance to make the decision on my own, I would decide to realize a tram through the city centre. And for the rest, on a regional level, I would support HOV.” This shows how much the chairman of the board of the City Region differs from his civil servants working on traffic and transport as we will see below. For the chairman, the local aspects of the projects are high on the agenda. He is collaborating with the municipal executive councillor in charge at the municipality and the market in the city centre is a matter of concern for them. The market is nowadays located in a street where the tram should be running. The buses that normally take this route, can make place on Saturdays and Mondays but a tram infrastructure is not that flexible. There is not enough space in the centre to have the market and the tram next to each other. A fact that was never mentioned by the civil servants of the City Region. Beside that, the chairman of the board seemed to be the only one from the City Region being in favour of a tram. He argues that, “the infrastructure is ready. There is a free pass for buses, which is capable to adopt a tram. So the infrastructural problems are brought to a minimum. Second, but maybe I should turn them around, is the amount of passengers seen on this track. Bringing the tram over the river is an absolute necessity. (...) it should be there fast because it is a new part of the city. So I would start with this track and realise it further on to a network and in the meantime, on a regional level, realise a HOV system.”

The regional level is the focus of the civil servants working on traffic and transport in the City Region. The team manager says that when he thinks of HOV, he is talking about parts of a whole transport system: “I am looking at the region, trying to solve accessibility problems. Then, to one part this is public transport and a main project in that is HOV. So HOV Nijmegen is part of a bigger picture, so it has to be well connected to the already existing connections.” Further on, the City Region has a differing institutional practice than the municipality. In the municipality, the municipal executive councillor is leading and he is doing politics. The team manager from the City Region is actually a civil engineer and explains that he wants things to be done: “I am only very interested in to get things done: within the time frame, within the conditions maybe set by the Local Council. I will also try to influence the Council but I am a little more into realizing projects than into framing policy for instance. Okay, that is also part of our deal, but we are more
the realizers of projects.” To realize projects includes the financial part. Therefore, the civil engineers are strongly concerned about the budget. An expert of the group explains: “I am not against the tram. I also attended a lot of meetings about the tram, so I cannot be against it. But if I look at all the facts; it has to be paid somehow! The tram is more expensive than the bus. You have to be aware of the fact that there will not be more money provided in times of crisis.” Facts, in this respect are mostly understood as information about costs. Here the expert of the transport and traffic group gives an insight on the process from having the first ideas of a project until the inclusion of these facts: “In the first phase of the project it is feelings: tram or bus. It starts with somebody saying “I want a tram in Nijmegen”. At this point you do not really know anything. You cannot really have discussions at that point. But at a certain moment people start having heavy discussions in this phase, where you get the qualitative stories: this is not based on facts, here it is about visions. You have to discuss the visions and here everybody kind of shares similar views. But at a certain moment, the facts get involved. Then it is about discussing integer. Do you really want to have the facts on the table and know about the costs?” In the opinion of the interviewed expert, there should always be agreement on the facts. He claims that people should not get in conflict in this phase because the facts speak a clear language and that they can now be presented to the politicians, who then can decide based on these facts.

The politician interviewed in Nijmegen states that actually it is all about the financing. If he does not get the money, the project is not possible to realise and he told me that he then considers himself as failed in the position of the municipal executive councillor responsible for the tram to return to Nijmegen. Based on the facts developed by the researchers between 2010 and 2012, his advisor in spring 2012 developed a strategy on how to bring the project further in the Council. The strategy contains the idea to let the Council decide on the route but not yet on the modality. The municipal executive councillor explains the situation in spring 2012: “If we want the council to decide whether we need a tram or not, we probably get a “no” because we do not have the financing. What we are doing now is that we have the route set and we have calculated whether it is the optimal route. So in the discussion with the government we can say that all the alternatives have been discussed, so this is the best decision for Nijmegen. First the route, and then it is possible to have a tram running there. It seems that the municipal executive councillor combines the different opinions present in the City Region. On the one hand he is enthusiastic about the tram and thinks locally, just like the chairman of the City Region but at the same time he is concerned about the budget regulations.

To conclude this section of a general introduction to HOV in Nijmegen, the urban planner from the municipality is quoted: “Building HOV only in a transport related approach is not sustainable.” He thinks of a city accessible and liveable also for various types of urban dwellers and claims to keep green spaces for example.
2.4 Institutions Involved in the Planning Process

2.4.1 The City Region Arnhem Nijmegen

The City Region Arnhem Nijmegen, situated in Nijmegen, was described earlier in this paper as my internship organization. The region Arnhem-Nijmegen is perceived and presented by the organization as highly attractive and accessible. And therefore has ambitions of becoming the second biggest economic area in the Netherlands after the Randstad. The City Region wants to contribute to this growth by translating national objectives to the local level. At the same time, it responds to requests related to local developments from the regional municipalities. These regional municipalities are the 20 municipalities which the City Region consists of. These villages and the two focal points, Arnhem and Nijmegen, are represented in the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region board, consisting of five members and the chairman of the board. The board is heading the City Region while there is the Regional council governing the organisation. This council comprises 37 members again representing the 20 municipalities (De Stadsregio, 2013).

Beside other sections within the institution, such as “working” or “housing”, this thesis focuses on the actors in the field of traffic and transport. For this field, the following tasks are formulated: “The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region is legally responsible for preparing and implementing the regional transport policy. It commissions the regional public transport companies and grants permits for train, bus and city region taxi services. The City Region manages the funds intended for financing public transport and implementing infrastructural projects to improve traffic flows.” (De Stadsregio, 2013). This was reflected in a statement by one of the civil servants interviewed: “The transport section takes care of the buses and of some trains in the region. We work on infrastructure projects and we work on operational matters, contract management and other things.” The manager explains that the City Region is mostly not in direct contact with the inhabitants of the area: “That is something that the municipalities do. So what we try to do is to work together with the industry; with the organized companies. As well with the Chamber of Commerce and with the important schools of higher education.” The programme manager continues, that “HOV is one of the projects within the section of public transport. So the City Region is a collaboration of 20 municipalities and they have decided to introduce HOV. The government has decided that we should do this and we are now working on it. We are actually subsidising, the infrastructure will be built by the municipalities themselves. Only when it is constructed, our concession will run over the roads.” In this respect it has to be added that “the City Region, in principle, gives the concession to the company, but in daily practice it is the bus company which is discussing with the municipalities and is trying to come up with good solutions in bus traffic” knows the municipal executive councillor from Arnhem.
This was confirmed by the interviewee from the company, running the buses in Nijmegen: “We are quite separated from the City Region. The municipality of Nijmegen had a clear position on this matter, they were leading the investigation because they want to do something with their HOV just like us. I think the City Region is more involved in later phases when the HOV plans affect the region. So there was not much cooperation between the City Region and us, but there was quite some interaction with the municipality.” On the other hand, there is a strong collaboration between the City Region and the municipality of Nijmegen when it comes to HOV and the idea of introducing a tram. The mobility policy maker from the municipality claims the fact that it is important to know that the municipality is not the only responsible for transport infrastructure, but the City Region as well on one political layer above. About the way of working the programme manager of the City Region says that it is all about project plans: “We are not elaborating like real civil engineers how exactly each line should look like.”

Essentially to the work and tasks of the City Region is the regional character of the institution. The civil servant expressing himself most critical towards the tram says that “ok, one local authority wants a tram, 90 others do not want it. We have one budget for the complete region. So Arnhem does not like the tram because if we invest millions here, there is not the same amount of money for the complete region. So we are not working for one local authority, we work for 20 local authorities. But of course, in the beginning Nijmegen was a little bit upset that we were so critical. They said that we oppose the tram. (...) We should just realise the HOV network and not just focus for a tram for one city, but build the complete network. This means to invest in dedicated infrastructure and high quality buses. I think that is the future for that region. Nijmegen should think about how to connect to neighbouring authorities to build up the network. (...) Nijmegen should think more beyond the local boundaries.”

To complete the view on the City Region, the leading NGO in the HOV process was consulted and the chairman explains that he is making sure that the output prepared by the members of the organisation, gets included in the programme of the City Region or the province. “Sometimes we also get questions from the City Region but we also do our advice without tasks.” The chairman of the NGO also knows difficulties in such processes: “In case we really want more than discussing and in case it is a real pity that they do not follow our advice, we turn towards the media to claim our point of view. We want to show the travellers that we care about their needs and desires. If then the advice is still not fulfilled, the problem are the operators or the City Region.”

The City Region is a construct made up of a number of municipalities and working between the province and the communities. There are linkages to higher political levels such as the government or the European level. But the City Region is also working together with the industry. When it comes to HOV in Nijmegen the organization is more in favour of realizing the
project with buses, even though the chairman of the board wishes to see a tram in Nijmegen one day.

**Team Manager Traffic and Transport**

The team manager explains himself as working for the City Region, which has 40 employees. There are three people employed in the management section, where he is one of, acting as the team manager of traffic and transport: “Some people call it mobility, but in English I prefer traffic and transport. In that project within traffic and transport, the responsibility of the City Region is mainly on cycling and on public transport, the concession, public transport infrastructure and mobility or traffic management.” As a team manager, his responsibilities are linked directly to the City Region Council. The Council is giving tasks, which are then worked on within the traffic and transport group, consisting of 10 persons out of which two are involved in HOV. Both these persons have been interviewed. The civil servant working mainly on infrastructure and the person labelled expert, being the project leader HOV within the City Region. In the following, the team manager gives insight into his way of working in cooperation with different actors: “I am only attending meetings in the beginning. Normally I only discuss with the project leader how the project is developing. Well yes, in the end when there is the big reception I will be there again. But not so much during the time they actually work in the teams. But what we have in all the meetings is a civil servants meeting. These ones I attend throughout the whole time of the process. But you also have meetings in which the progress is discussed with the governmental side or the councils and the municipal executive councillor. And then I often join those meetings, just to see. And then also in big projects like HOV, they all make reports every few month to the council. So we have a project plan, progress plans and all the financial details of course. And me, I follow of course the project plan and then we see how the progress is going and I will join the meetings with the council. That is the way. And then we have a lot of interaction informally. Our council consists of 20 municipalities, so we always have to work together with all of them.” Personally, the team manager believes that he is known for thinking in cost-benefit analyses. He admits that he might not be known for having broad perspective but that he is good at arranging bigger amounts of money for the City Region: “I get money for good ideas, but then I have to believe in this ideas.” If people are able to convince him for their ideas he uses his talent to convince other people to spent money on these issues. Further on, he thinks that people consider him as being realistic and integer. “I am not a dreamer. I am trying to be realistic as a civil servant and do not follow the council but act as an advisor. Sometimes the municipal executive councillor or the chairman of the board consider me a little bit stubborn because I do not follow. They have big dreams but I am telling them what is realistic.” This sort of conflict is described by the chairman of the board, saying that on a political level, the City Region is in favour of a tram but that the team manager is against it. But the
chairman admits, that “it is not fruitful to confront him with my ideas, because I realize myself that we do not have a chance to realize a tram. It is not worth a war between us. There is no need to elaborate on this issue because I know his view and he knows my view. Even with his view corresponding a 100% with my view, I am not able to realize a tram. So the problem is elsewhere.” When it comes to the personal view of the team manager towards the question of a tram, he explains that he worked in developing countries where it was especially important to “spend the money in the right way”. The team manager sees the tram as an idea of an elite. In most parts of the city people will still use buses and he even thinks that bus lines will be cut in order to save money for the tram. He argues that in Nijmegen and in the whole Netherlands, due to the flat topology, people use bicycles a lot so that adding the size of the city, Nijmegen does not need a tram in his opinion. He suggests to better build a new museum to contribute to the attractiveness of the city. To sum up on this point he assumes: “I am a little bit afraid that you will only have one line and other areas will not be equally well provided with buses.” The position of the team manager traffic and transport can be caught in a frame bringing together cost-benefit thinking and social justice. These ways of thought origin from his work of organizing money for the City Region, combined with his experiences in developing countries where every amount of money has to be spent wisely. This framing leads to his conviction that Nijmegen does not need a tram and therefore fosters a frame conflict with his superior, the chairman of the board of the City Region. Interestingly, even though they both know that their frames are clashing, this conflict is not essential to the discussion. This because the chairman knows that even with the team manager agreeing upon his view, it is still not possible to realize a tram. Therefore I do not expect a reframing of one of their points of view.

*Project Leader HOV City Region*

The project leader HOV is described by his manager as being more interested in the bigger picture, especially when it comes to combine public transport with spatial planning. The project leader has worked in public transport for a long time and knows both the sides of infrastructure and concession. The team manager is sure about having put the right person in the right position. The task of the project leader is to be responsible for the whole HOV plan, and therefore he has a broad approach. “I take care of people, money, the project and the political backing. So I take care of administrative steering of a steering group, which consists of the administrative board members of the concerned municipalities. I take care of the project team and I take care of finances. And these considerations are worked out in my teams. This is my task.”

The key words in describing his way of working are money and trust. He says he is first steering by personality, but then by money: “If I would not have the money I could not bring the project
The civil servant acts in the strong frame of the cost paradigm and follows this through.” But after the financial aspects, for him the interpersonal relationships between the members of the project group and him are important. He sees himself as one of the group: “With a lot of experience you may run people over in projects. And this is not the right way of working. You have to be equal to the others. You have to be a servant of your project team. You do not have to be the boss, but you have to facilitate.” The interpersonal relationships are important to him because he wants the others to trust him. The project group has to trust him but also the collaborating municipalities in the council or the politicians. Only if they can be sure that their money in well invested and that the project leader will bring the project through – due to his ability to estimate what is politically feasible – they are willing to contribute their money to the project.

The trust of people is a major factor of the successful working of the project leader but he has more strategies: “My point is always to lay out why I do something the way I do it. And then, I try to link this to the needs of the counterparty. You work against them, but you do it within their interest. That is how you reduce the risk for conflicts. This works well.” Due to his position as leader of the HOV project he reflects on the style of working in the group. He points out factors such as teamwork, experience and the identification with the project. These soft factors of planning will be investigated later on in the chapter on spaces of interpretation.

*Civil Servant Infrastructure*

The interviewed civil servant is responsible for the feasibility study of the connection to Kleve. Beside that, his main project is the realization of railway stations for the region. He clearly states that his way of working is mostly influenced by costs. He explains that everyone in the City Region kind of likes the idea of a tram: “We understand that the tram has an image and that strong brand. It can enhance spatial economic development, but well, you have to look at your wallet and then you see we cannot pay it. So you have to be realistic!” From the beginning, he was critical about the tram and his opinion did not change: “We are fully dependent on the central government for the money. And well, in this time of crisis you do not have a chance to get funding. We already get money from the government: About 75 million a year. And about 40 million is for the operating companies and this money is not enough to include a tram in the city because the costs of a tram are much higher than of a bus – even an HOV bus.” He continues that even the building of the infrastructure is too expensive: “When you make a project, the City Region and their municipalities are responsible to finance the first 112 million. And only if you might have a good score when it comes to the business case or a social cost-benefit analysis, for the rest you might get funding from the government. But this money is not available. Not with us, not in Nijmegen, nowhere. So that is why, in the current context it is not realistic to think about a tram.” The civil servant acts in the strong frame of the cost paradigm and follows this
frame thinking from the beginning on. Now that it looks that a tram in Nijmegen is not possible to realize he will stick to his framed opinion. I could imagine that this way of thinking will stay part of this person and lead his working style also in coming projects.

Chairman of the Board

The project leader HOV names the chairman of the board as the one supervising his responsibility as the portfolio holder of the HOV. The chairman approves the work of the project group and only then the plans are presented to the whole executive board. After the executive board agrees upon the plans, the work of the project leader continues: “I meet the responsible persons of the municipality and we think of how to realise the plans. Then, all together with the people of the municipality we make a plan. Once we found consensus, we inform the concerned municipal executive councillor and the people in charge at the bus company. We present our plans including the financing and ask for their opinion. Can we go further in working out the plans? That is the first step. If they approve the plan, the municipal executive councillor informs the council and I bring the project to the executive board. That is how my initial plan gets approved. But before all that I checked with the members of the board, but these people are also not responsible themselves because they are always part of a whole board. So in my case, the chairman of the board is supervising my responsibility.” The chairman of the board sees himself as the one who brought the tram on the agenda and is still in favour of this modality even though he now accepts that HOV will now be realised with buses: “I brought this whole tram issue on the agenda and I see now that Nijmegen adopted that thing after a few years and after another few years they realise that we are not able to do it.” He continues by giving explanations to this unwillingness: “What we miss in this case is a sense of urgency, it s nowhere to find. Nobody has a sense of urgency. First, the government does not feel the urgency. And also there is no strong drive in society to get this on a political agenda as an urgent issue.” He is therefore forcing himself to be realistic and tries to accept that he cannot see that sense of urgency. He is even missing a culture, which is fostering better public transport. He makes a distinction between his first choice – a tram, and the second choice, which he just labels HOV. As a tram seems not to be possible to realize in the next decade, he concludes: “We should take the second choice and wait for better times. If I did not put the tram on the agenda a few years ago, there are chances that we now would not even have the bus on the agenda, the HOV. So I think, well, my responsibility was putting it on the agenda to see now that we are realising a second choice.”

Also the civil servant interviewed from the same organisation mentions how much the chairman of the board is in favour of a tram. He says that the chairman is very enthusiastic about the idea and that he thinks that every decent city should have a tram. A member of the municipality knows that “the executive board of the City Region is still in favour of a tram. The chairman is a
Tram lover.” The civil servant sees some difficulties in this position: “You have to be careful, that is not seen as a political hobby of one or two persons. The chairman for example says that he wants a study on a tram from Nijmegen to Kleve, and then people ask for the reasons because we are not able to realise it. Why should we do this? And therefore he has to be careful that people do not say that it is like a hobby for our chairman.” The chairman knows about this accuses and answers: “The reason why I was enthusiastic about the programme when I was asked to do it, was not because my hobbies are trains or trams.” It is more like that he is sometimes wondering what makes people so opposed against a tram. He enjoys looking at examples in France where the government is supporting the building of tram systems in middle-size cities. The chairman refers to a major of Bordeaux and brings forward the cultural elements of the tram: “A tram is civilizing your city because a tram is for everybody, for white and for blue colour. A tram brings together the different parts of the city. So for me, a tram is a necessary part of an urban system. It is a pity that we abolished the tram in all our middle-size cities a 50 years ago. And I am not able to bring it back. And that is a bit of a drama. I don’t see how we can realize tramways in the Netherlands, because there is no condition to realize. The only thing you can do is expensive research and studies for years and years. And then you only see that the central government says not to have the money. This frustration he explains with his view on Dutch urban culture: “It has something to do with the way the Dutch people look at their cities. They have a certain fear of the big city, of the metropolis, of everything that is big. They often go to London, to Paris, to New York and they are very enthusiastic. But they do not want that at home. They prefer to cycle, in a city which is not too big. That is Dutch culture. And I think it is a pity. In my view, on the global map, the Netherlands should behave like Singapore or Dubai, because they have the chance to make profit out of their scale. But we are a province of Germany and that’s it. We do not have high aspirations with our nation.” This statement suits his view on himself, when he says that in his work he is influenced by a higher sense of urgency but also ambition. Beside that he refers to his professional experiences in foreign countries. After all, the fact that he differs from what he described as Dutch culture, had to do with character as he says.

To conclude, I give the word to the chairman himself when describing his role within the institution of the City Region Arnhem Nijmegen: “I think they often see me as a front runner, as a bit autistic. That is the picture that they have of me. Too much in his own right. Too much convinced of his own mission. So I am walking on a distance with the rest of the crowd. Well, in my profile there is a strong emphasis of being independent. They want an independent chairman, so I behave independent. I claim to be a person who can say more than a colleague, for example a major in one of the municipalities. As an independent chairman, I have the right to speak more freely.” The frame of the chairman is marked by this freedom of speech and thinking
and therefore there is no reframing expected towards a lesser engagement with the wish for tram a tram.

2.4.2 The Municipality of Nijmegen

Even though the interviewed municipal executive councillor in Arnhem warned me to only focus on the tram project, he admits that, “In Nijmegen, the tram project is a project which has high political attention. It is something people talk about – in the council or on the streets.” When the municipal executive councillor in Nijmegen came into office in 2010 he picked up the discussion on HOV and made it a real project in order to get a result in order to come to a conclusion whether it is possible or not to build a tram system. What was done in 2011 was to develop a strategy to discuss all the issues that are part of the project. The municipal executive councillor explains: “And then everything comes together in a proposal that we present to the city council to get their support.” This was in a critical stage at the time of interviewing, as in the following week the discussion was taking place in the council. “I need to get the support of a majority in the council for our proposal. And if I get that, this is the basis for the following up discussion with the government in Den Haag about the financing.” The municipal executive councillor is aware of the fact that it is difficult to convince the central government. At the moment there is not enough money available in Den Haag. Also the councillor, as other actors in this study, forces himself to be realistic. That is the reason why he has chosen to let the council decide on the route and not on the modality: “Let’s decide to have a route for HOV that has the ability to transfer to a tram system in the future.” About the future tram related options the municipal executive councillor expresses himself as the following: “I know that there are some parties that say it is too expensive. You could conclude that we do not want a tram, but my opinion is to leave the question open. We do not know what we need in ten years from now.”

In an interview at the bus company, I was told that it is the municipal executive councillor in Nijmegen who keeps the tram project alive: “(...) that makes the employees of the municipality not rejecting the tram as well. They follow him, although they have their strong doubts about the strength of this specific alternative”. The policy maker explains that when he realized that the attitude of the superiors may that change – will say that they stick to the idea of a tram, then he “did not want to slow the process, and started doing his job.” About the municipality, the person responsible for the civil servants thinks that, “in this organization a few are thinking in trams. The others think that this is just a project and that in three or four years it will stop and we will see that it is not reachable.” But he is convinced of the project HOV itself: “For me, it is inevitable that there will be HOV. This city needs it. And my only opinion on this subject is, that we cannot rely furthermore on cars and trains and bicycles. There has to be something in between.”
Further reaching than the question whether to realise the wished for and needed HOV with bus or tram, is the opinion of the urban planner of the municipality. He and his team thought in the beginning that the municipal executive councillor and his civil servants are working on a new traffic and transport system because of the introduction of HOV. “But they did not want to and we did not understand in the beginning. We tried to convince them of our vision, but we did not understand what their vision was. Then, we found out that they did not want to have a new system. They have their existing system and they only want to make small changes on it. So we changed our way of working and communicating with them and gave them some opportunities to make the existing system better instead of changing the complete system. And now, in the new vision, some of the lines, going in circles around the city, are included. But our goal is a new system over the coming few years and their goal is changing some aspects of the existing system. We claim to have a system for the city but they want to have a system for the people using the buses. So that is just a complete different way to look at the city. So we can see that also within the groups of people busy with HOV at the municipality, smaller and bigger differences occur when it comes to have an opinion upon the project. There is again the difference between the superior and the civil servants as well as varying views from different department within the same organisation.

**Municipal executive councillor Nijmegen**

The interviewed municipal executive councillor is responsible for the HOV project in Nijmegen and one of the ones remaining being in favour of a tram: “I still have the option for the tram, or the wish of the council of a high quality system, which is in my opinion a tram. I will not step down from that yet.” The recent contribution of the municipal executive councillor was to let decide the council on the route but not on the modality. For him, the main task was to develop a proposal that gets the support of the majority in the council. “Only on that basis I can negotiate for money from elsewhere to get it financed.” If the council is not approving the proposal there is nothing the municipal executive councillor can do. He is fully dependent on this result. To get this support he is working behind the scenes with the coalition partners “to convince them of the necessity to make the decision as we do it now.” Beside that he is closely collaborating with his employees: “It is all their work. The results are on my desk and I decide whether I find this result I want to propose, but I do not write anything at all. All the discussion we had in the city, I was involved, but they are writing the proposal of course. But we decide together which choices we make. So my role is at the end of the line, but I take the decision what the proposal will be alike. If I do not want the proposal this way, it will be different. That is my responsibility.”

We saw that the municipal executive councillor wants to have the tram realized and in the interview the politician shares his vision: “My idea would be that in ten years time, there will be
a tram. Starting on the other side of the river, going through town. In the centre you could get on the tram to go to the centre of Kleve. I think the whole region would benefit from it. Especially all the towns on the eastside would benefit from it and also tourism would profit. It would be really easy: From the station in Nijmegen you could just go to Germany; from the museum you can go to towns in between. Everybody would benefit and would have a fast, high quality connection from the north to the university.” The way he sticks to the idea of a tram may be linked to his political programme. As quoted before, he would see himself failed as a municipal executive councillor if the project fails. Beside that he is sure that people look at him as being passionate for the tram. He hopes to be seen as a driving force behind the whole project because that is how he thinks his role should be. “People also see this as an election issue, getting the tram back to Nijmegen. Public transport is a necessity and I think investing here is a necessity, so therefore I have to show that I am passionate about it. I think that is important.”

Framing the way of thinking of the municipal executive councillor responsible for public transport in Nijmegen, brings us to the deep wish for the tram as a political programme. The tram for him is closely related to his position and private person. Fighting for the tram to get realized is part of his frame and therefore even though in frame conflict even with his employees will not bring a reframing until the end of his time in the town hall.

**Task Giver Civil Servants and Advisor Municipal Executive Councillor**

The person who sees himself as the counterpart of the municipal executive councillor is not a politician but has the responsibility for the organization of the civil servants in the municipality. He is responsible for getting the results done and achieves that by giving orders to other people working the department. “And all the time I am monitoring: Are we doing the right things, are people enough involved. It is a managerial role. Me myself I do almost nothing, I write a few things. I prepare the decision making in the council. I am mostly managing the project.” The task giver is supervising 6 to 7 projects at the moment and is therefore mainly busy with the overall managing part. On every project there is a project manager. These persons have to report to the task giver. About his collaboration with the municipal executive councillor, the person interviewed answers that he always tries to be “as frank and open and transparent as I can be and to be always very responsive on risks. To think abut the effects of the next steps. What would that step do on the result? But also, what would it do for the position of the municipal executive councillor? Because he is politically responsible: For a politician damage is much sooner the case than for a civil servant.” The advisor of the municipal executive councillor proposed to let the council decide on the route first than on the modality: “The discussion on tram or bus is only a discussion on the material. It is not a decision about visions, strategies or goals. So for me it is almost a discussion of aesthetics than of functionality.” But still, the tram is
present in the discussion on HOV in Nijmegen and the political advisor explain how this came to be: “In the beginning, we needed something to get the project started with: To get it on the agenda, to get in the heads of all the people the fact that we started something promising and important. So therefore we used the tram for a part to give people a promising future. And later on, when we investigated what a tram is, we realised that a tram would be wonderful: Wonderful because it is appealing but also because of its functionality. But then, on the other hand, we examined that there are also disadvantages like high costs, very difficult procedures and the dependence in the financing.” Important for this interviewee is the effect the results of the project have on society. That is one of his personal goals and a second one is to “make choices in a way the citizens of Nijmegen can respect it and hopefully enjoy it. So when we are making choices about the HOV, that people can understand. So it is important that your communication is in order and that people can participate.” Further more, he was always telling the civil servants that they are doing the project that for themselves but for the people living in Nijmegen: “So we have to take responsibility and tell the people what we are doing with their money.”

Policy Maker Traffic and Transport

The policy maker for traffic and transport works at the municipality for more than 10 years and followed the whole process of developing HOV for Nijmegen. As a civil servant he has to oblige the tendencies of the responsible municipal executive councillor and therefore he is involved in the plans for a tram. For the policy maker, the modality is not of importance. Rather, he puts emphasis on a holistic traffic and transport concept, including the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and car drivers.

Urban Planner

The urban planner interviewed is working in the city development department and therefore, public transport is only one branch of city planning he is busy with. The urban planner is concerned with a high quality of life for all the inhabitants. His main contribution to HOV was the idea to develop a whole new system for public transport in the city. The pattern of lines of the buses and maybe of a tram would have been reorganised. These plans of the city development department have been mainly rejected but few features will be introduced with the launching of HOV.

2.4.3 Cooperation City Region and Municipality

The City Region is responsible for the regional planning and therefore has the lead on HOV for the region. The city of Nijmegen is one municipality out of 20 making up the City Region: “We consist of 20 municipalities”, says the team manager traffic and transport: “So they are always
involved in our plans. So we have to take them step by step through the plans. And actually, often these are their plans. But they cannot do it on their own because there are often HOV lines crossing communal borders. If it was within one municipality they could solve their own problems.” This is what Nijmegen decided after some time, to take the lead on the planning for their own territory. But the team manager completes: “We are always involved in their local projects as the ones providing public transport. What we try to do is to be their advisors. The province we involve, but the municipalities we are advising them. The province and the central government are more on a higher level, but we are advising the municipalities on the same level.” About the way of working together the team manager stresses that “for us, planning HOV is more a sketch and working out the details will be done by the municipalities. We do not write in the beginning through which street the line should go. I don’t even know all the streets. The people in my group know already better, but the people in the municipality, they know exactly!”

The project leader HOV of the City Region gives an example of advising the municipality of Nijmegen on HOV: “If you want to do HOV, you need space. The municipality did drawings for the traffic on the bridge. These drawings were discussed with me and I discarded them because there was not enough free space for HOV. You have to plan for the future! You can only once built up such a huge crossing… And so, that is what they are going to do then. And there you see again that this co-working is about trust. It is about them to think that he knows well. You have to be reliable.” For the project leader it is the City Region promoting the valid ideas and only if the persons in charge at the municipality share the same opinion, a project can be realized. In general he believes that “it is about reliability. You have to have a good professional network. What is really important in HOV planning, is that people talk a lot to each other. Everybody has to know what the other one is doing. It is about exchanging knowledge.”

Both parties claim to be the one who have started the project in the region or for the city. The municipal executive councillor lays out the situation as the following: “The process started when I came into office, two years ago. And we picked it up, but of course there had been discussions before that about HOV, but I made it a real project in order to get a result at some point and come to a conclusion whether it is possible or not.” Also the task giver at the municipality remembers that “we started the project in 2006”, but at that time “the lead of the project was in the hands of the City Region. The chairman started the project “TempoTeamTram” and for 3 years the City Region was responsible.” In the coming quote, the task giver explains how Nijmegen decided to take over the lead on the tram project: “In 2009 we saw that the whole idea of making one HOV between Arnhem and Nijmegen is getting difficult because Arnhem did not have problems with their public transport at that time. So creating HOV for the region was not feasible or necessary. But in Nijmegen, there were urgent problems so we wanted to speed up the process. Therefore, we asked permission at the City Region in order to start the project
purely on our ground.” Since then the municipality of Nijmegen is dealing with a part of HOV what is not understood in Arnhem: “Well, I think that is strange, because I think the lead should be at the City Region. It is a property of HOV that it is not within one city, because it has an outreaching effect, thus the City Region should have the lead.” How the collaboration on HOV between the City Region and the municipality of Nijmegen looks like, describes the task giver from the municipality: “I talked a lot about the progress of the project and the policy to the City Region. So that what we were thinking at the municipality, corresponded with the policy of the City Region. Now they are also paying small amounts of the costs we are making. By their donation in the project, they are showing their commitment with the project.”

The interviewees were asked to think about controversies in the project. In relation to the team work of City Region and municipality, one of the employees of the City Region states, that "first it is about planning and priorities. When I am working on this project, this project has priority to me. The municipality of Nijmegen for example, they are also working on other projects. When we say January, February everything should be done, and then they explain what else they have to do beside. Within the municipality there are other concerns and things are moving slow. That is how a project gets a lower priority for the municipality. This is a point of conflict. But for me, this is not a real conflict, because these things you have to respect.”

Another point of differences is the question whether to be able to build a tram system or to reject the idea. The civil servants of the City Region quite early were convinced by their own calculations that a tram is too expensive: “Nijmegen was a little upset that we were so critical. They said that we oppose the tram. Then you have to deal with that, it is a strategic matter. A colleague once said to let them conclude themselves.” This strategy was perceived in the same way by a civil servant of the municipality: “When the project team of the municipality in the beginning was pushing too hard the idea of only realizing HOV with a tram, I involved the civil servants of the City Region. They were holding back towards the high ambitions of the municipal executive councillor two years ago. The City Region had the idea of letting us work on the plans by then realising ourselves that a tram is not feasible. Only after all this evaluations and research done a few month ago, we got more realistic and since then it is easier to rework with then City Region.” The following figure illustrates the cooperation of the City Region and the municipality by listing the interviewed actors and their motives.
The figure shows how close the two leading heads of the project are, but how distant the convictions of the people working on the lowest scale. For the actors in between on the one hand, mainly the successful realization of the project is of importance, no matter with which modality. On the other hand, it is about good public transport. Here again, the modality is of low priority, after criteria concerning the passengers’ benefit and low costs.

In the public it may seem that the municipality is still in favour of a tram but the City Region is rejecting it. Looking closer at the topic the situation is more subtle. The project leader HOV of the City Region still thinks that there are people in the city who favour a tram. But for him, the research and evaluations decided not to have a tram in region: “But first, Nijmegen really wanted the tram. Now they say to check again in 2020. So through the facts the opinion changed.” The chairman of the same organisation portrays the situation from another angle: “The local council of Nijmegen just decided on their part of this HOV network and the thought is to have a tram – almost everybody wants a tram." So here, there are two completely opposing statements from people from the same organisation. We can see it as a fact that in 2020, the discussion on the tram will be picked up again. So at this moment of time the debate can be looked at from two perspectives: either focusing on the next ten years, where there will be no tram be built in Nijmegen or to emphasize the fact that in 2020, new money is available at the central government and that everything will be prepared to let a tram run through the city. Depending from which angle the debate is looked at, it can be either stated that it is not possible to have a tram in these times of crisis, as well as that the council is mostly in favour of the idea to have a tram in Nijmegen, so that the situation will be analysed again for 2020. Despite all
differences between the two organizations, the chairman of the City Region lays out what he thinks about this: “There is not too much difference between what they are doing in Nijmegen and what they want and what we are doing. On a political level, the municipal executive councillor and I, we do agree at a very high fashion on different subjects concerning HOV, for example the tram or the connection to Kleve. I cannot think of things in which we differ. But on a level below, the people working for him and the people working here, there is always tension. And this has to do with power, with the question of who is in charge. It has to do with a bureaucratic culture of competition. If you look at differences in a rational way, you will not find it. It has all to do with power and who has the right to say things about a certain place. These controversies are not on a political level, they are on an institutional level and they are related to power and the legitimacy of what you are doing.” The chairman of the board rejects the question whether these controversies are on a personal level: “Well, no. It is translated to personal behaviour, but it comes from your position in the institutional world.”

2.5 Fields of Agency

For this chapter I have chosen three topics, which show with what issues the interviewed actors have to deal in the planning process. With these topics at hand, the different positions and opinions should be revealed in order to better understand the cultures present in this urban infrastructural project.

2.5.1 Planning a Route for the Tram

A civil servant describes his relation to the routes of HOV: “HOV is a plan of indications of the corridors. In practice, we search for lines where to let the public transport ride.”

In the report published by the project group HOV Nijmegen (Voorkeursbeslissingen 2012: 19), all the possible routes of HOV through the city centre of Nijmegen are analysed and presented in an easy accessible manner. The route between the university and the north of the city is cut into four parts. For each part again, different lines are investigated. For the part between the university and the central station, both for HOV bus and a tram the solution to take the direct route following the railways seems to be the best. This solution offers the fastest connection of these two nodes but is not serving the neighbourhoods in between. Therefore other routes have been investigated but have been rejected in the process of evaluation due to travel time demands.

The most interesting as well as most difficult route to find is through the city centre, thus connecting the central station with the main bridge. Here, there were three main possibilities investigated, again with variations. The route leading around the centre in the east and along the river in the north has been rejected due to topographic matters and because the line would not
bring the travellers directly into the core of the inner city circle. A second possibility is to lead HOV along the car route from the main roundabout directly to the bridge. Here people could walk into the shopping streets from the HOV stops, but still for some actors this seems not close enough for the traveller who’s destination is the centre. Beside that, the traffic on the roundabout would be disturbed by a tram that has to cross the place.

Figure 6: Possible Tram Routes City Centre (Source: Voorkeursbeslissingen, p. 22)

The interviewed municipal executive councillor of Nijmegen explains: “The problem there is space again. You have to cut down trees, the whole look of the Oranjesingel would have to change. It would be difficult at Keizer Karelplein, because the tram has to go across, it would stick the flow through. And it does not bring the people where they want to go. They want to go here, into the centre. They do not want to go there. And of course you can say from the post office to here you can walk into town, yes that is true, but it will prevent people from going. You can see that on Mondays, when the buses do not go through the centre, but go through Oranjesingel because of the market here, we have lesser passengers on Mondays. If you want passengers, you need an optimal route and I also think that people who take the public transport, they want to go to the centre of town. If you bike, you go around it and if you have the car you stay out of the centre. Very simple.” Therefore, there is the last possibility to let the tram enter the core of the city centre. This would bring the travellers to their destination and make the tram a symbol of the city as being present in the most representative places of Nijmegen. But here, the tram would be disturbing the people doing their shopping or enjoying the sun on the main square. The restaurants on that place oppose the tram because there would be cut off space of the terraces to make room for the rails.
The main problem with the tram rolling through the inner city circle, would be the situations on Mondays and Saturdays when there is the market nowadays. The actual situation is that the bus, normally running on these streets, just takes another route along the main roads for the car. In case there will be a tram one day and the route will be set through the city centre it is not clear yet what will happen to the market. So the people running the market are in opposition. The chairman of the board of the City Region is confident about the institutional power and claims: “Who should govern the city? The people from the market or the local council?” Therefore he was at ease with the decision of the municipal executive councillor in June 2012 to let the council decide on the route already. The municipal executive councillor might know best about the situation in the council: “The proposal has a big report and has all the alternatives and the
calculations and everything else. And the proposal says, based on this report, we think that this is the best route to take. And I do not think not there will be a lot of discussion; the only discussion will be: should the route be through the Burchtstraat. And if there will be a tram, where will the market go? So you see in the political discussion, it is not really about whether to do that route or not, or if we want HOV or high speed public transport – no: the question is what will happen to the market! And the market people are opposed to move the market from where it is now."

The connection to the north of the city and therefore to the other side of the river is only feasible when taking the main bridge. There will be built a third bridge also for cars but for the tram route this connection is too far away from the city centre and therefore again for dues to travel time, this possibility has been rejected during the process of evaluating the research. "Bringing the tram over the river is an absolute necessity", says the chairman of the City Region. "It is good that they are making room on the bridge so that in about 20 years time you can realise a tramway over the bridge. It should be there fast, because it is a new part of the city." Until then, there has to be riding a bus and the project leader HOV from the City Region shares his view on the bridge: "Only if the roads are congested every morning, HOV has the chance to be seen as real alternative. Here in Nijmegen, we have such a bottleneck on the Waal bridge. On this bridge especially, the crucial point is to let the bus pass beside the cars in congestion. We said we are only going to invest in this project if there will be built a separate bus line to let the bus be on time."

The strategies in finding the right route for the tram have to do with the financial aspects of the project. "What we are doing now is we have the route set and we have calculated whether that is the optimal route", states the municipal executive councillor. This, in order to be in the right position to confront the national government: "So in the discussion we are having with the government in Den Haag, we can say that all the alternatives have been discussed, so this is the decision of the best for Nijmegen." In an other context the municipal executive councillor again grasps the interconnectedness of route and money: "We have this line, we have one to Beuningen and we have one to Elst and if that is the whole package, then we attend to receive financing instead of only focusing on this one line." In order to get finances in a considerable way, "you have to have a much bigger project, so you have to have more lines."

A further possibility to enlarge the tram project and by that to get it financed, is the connection to Kleve in Germany, due to growing relations in this area. There is a rail connection, which was stopped in 1991 (Voorkeursbeslissingen 2012: 12). Between 2009 and 2010 research was done by the City Region in the framework of an INTERREG project named Sintropher in reference to cross-border transport infrastructure in Europe. One of the investigated possibilities is to let the train from Düsseldorf run until the central station in Nijmegen. The other idea is to let the
planned tram run from the central station in Nijmegen to Kleve, passing the university and with stops in the municipalities in between. The civil servant of the City Region, responsible for Sintropher, has made his opinion on the topic: "In my view, when you want to realize something between Nijmegen and Kleve, you should realize a train – a regional train. Since the Germans are willing to work on a train solution with us. They want to continue working on this line, only when it is a train. No one on the German side of those parties is interested in a tram. Only the local authorities along the route like a tram." It is the case with these municipalities, that they do not have they money to pay for a tram. “So I sometimes wonder whether it is necessary to elaborate this tram concept even more when there is no money. Not for infrastructure and not for operations.” Generally, he summarizes that, “Sintropher is still a study. There have been discussions between the Germans and us. One conclusion for Sintropher is that all the politicians want a tram. But all of them realized that this is not possible within a couple of years. So after 2020 maybe, very longterm.” 2020 is the date when new funds are available at the national government. Until then a tram in Nijmegen is not possible to realize. Nevertheless the project group HOV Nijmegen in 2012 concluded that, the connection of the projects Sintropher and HOV Nijmegen contains chances to realize an optimum solution (Voorkeursbeslissingen 2012: 13).

This opinion is not only shared by the politicians of the municipality of Nijmegen but as well – and again – by the chairman of the board of the City Region, sharing the ambitions of the municipal executive councillor in Nijmegen: “I am absolutely in favour of realizing this tramway, because this is not only a symbolic thing. Revitalizing this track has some symbolic components, because for ages it was one area and only after the Second World War, we made a fence there. Luckily, this is abolished now. We should realize this and use it as an area without borders. I am not in favour of a train, because that is another thing. You cannot bring it to the city centre or the centre of municipalities in between, so I think of a tram.” The political vision of some of the heads in the project gets clear in the following quote by the municipal executive councillor of Nijmegen. In this view, the centre of Nijmegen is located in the heart of the new HOV line which is passing in front of the city hall: “I would personally like to see a tram from the centre of Kleve all the way to Bemmel in the north. Throughout the centre of Nijmegen, in front of our city hall.” These statements remain from the time before the feasibility studies were done. Since then, the civil servant with his paradigm of costs is mainly leading the discussion. Since all the research was published, also the politicians realized that at least until new ways of financing are available, it would not be possible to build a tram. So everybody officially speaks of HOV buses for the coming years. But the so-called tram lovers, did not loose their fascination and when talking to them more intense, their vision of a tram for the city and the region becomes clear.
2.5.2 Bus Against Tram

The idea to realize HOV in the city with the tram solution has his origins in the head of the local politicians both from the side of the municipality as well as from the City Region. We have seen above that they believe in the attractiveness of the modality. They want the tram to have an outreaching effect of comfort and reliability so that more people choose public transport. For the chairman of the board of the City Region, the tram for the city has even higher priority than the HOV project itself. One feature of the tram are the firmly installed rails, which stand for stability and reliability. People can trust in the line and would know that it will be there for a long time. This might help the areas along the line to attract investments and therefore support the development of the city. Difficulties with the fixed lines of the tram would occur twice a week when the market takes place in the city centre. The actors involved did not think about it yet where the tram would go on these days, if the tram route would through the streets of the market. The main concern when thinking of realizing a tram arises when taking the costs of the project into consideration. A civil servant of the City Region admits the advantages of the tram but stays in line with his cost paradigm: “I did not develop a complete image on the added values of a tram to city development. Well, maybe about the situation here in Nijmegen, but does that bring so much that you can risk the investment?”, and he continues: “I am not against the tram. But if I look at all the facts... It has to be paid somehow!” The interviewed municipal executive councillor of Nijmegen knows that at this moment there are not enough passengers to finance successfully a tram. As shown earlier in this thesis, the discussion with the central government is postponed to the coming period of funding in 2020. Related to the high costs are the works that would have to be done to install a tram in the city: “There has to be done a lot to change the bus system into a tram system. The sewerage is in the middle of the street and it is not possible to put a tram above. It cannot be at the same place, so the whole sewerage system has to move”, explains the urban planner of the municipality. A civil servant from the same organisation expresses his concern about the far reaching changes in relation to the tram: “It is about improving the quality of public space and therefore the installation of a tram system requires a complete restyling of the city centre.”

The advantages of a HOV bus system are obvious. Mainly there is the fact that the costs are more manageable for the region and the city. The whole story about the research done until 2012 and the resulting so-called facts has a lot to do with the choice of the modality. In my interpretation of an abstract from an interview with a civil servant of the City Region, the tram is related to feelings, while the bus corresponds with the facts received from the investigations: “Somebody is saying that he wants a tram in Nijmegen. Then I can respond whether I can imagine a tram in Nijmegen or not. This is about feelings. But at a certain moment, the facts get involved and then it is about to have the facts on the table and to get to know about the costs.” The municipal
executive councillor from Nijmegen knows that “the bus company is more interested in a HOV bus. So there are new buses developed at the moment. They look like trams, they have the same quality but are much more flexible.” Therefore, he points out that, “if HOV bus is the final solution, then the market will not change, but on Mondays and Saturdays, the bus will not go through the centre of Nijmegen.” There are concerns about that solution in the city hall: “I think that will be loosing a lot of passengers and also the attraction of the whole system is less.” Furthermore, even though investments for a new bus system are lesser than for the tram, the city could still need external funding. But in this case, it is not sure whether the central government would financially support the HOV bus.

Most involved actors follow the thought that quality is more important than modality. Even the interviewed municipal executive councillor, much in favour of a tram admits that, “it is about a high quality public transport system, that is what we need.” People claim that it is not about the modality, but about how it functions and what it does. The interviewed actor from the bus company summarizes that, “it should be about the product and this is mainly the hard aspects of public transport; it is being reliable and giving a high frequency. Those are the aspects a HOV discussion should be about and not what kind of vehicle it is, because comfort is way less important than the other aspects.” This opinion is shared by the interviewed municipal executive councillor from Arnhem who is saying that, “HOV is not depending on the choice of a specific type of public transport, but it has to do with canalising a large stream of passengers.” For the task giver of the municipality, the discussion on tram or bus is only a discussion on the material. He rather likes to think in terms of visions and strategies and not talk about the material aspects of the project. He has the opinion that, “when you are sitting inside you cannot see if it is a bus or a tram. Only from the outside you can make the difference.” So for this actor, it is more a discussion of aesthetics than of functionality. Even though it is quality over modality and both modalities can have the same qualities, there is somebody in the municipality who is serious about the material differences between a HOV bus and a tram: “The tram or the bus have different conditions in use and in look. For example can you look through the tram because the windows are low. You can have contact with the people sitting inside, while a bus is higher. People sit high and you cannot look through a bus. So the bus is a physical element in the city, while the tram is more integrated and closer to the pedestrian. So the contact will be smoother than with a bus. Beside that, you know where the tram is because of the rails. There will be a stronger barrier to cross, but you know where to cross. With a bus you never know where to cross the street but you know it can come from everywhere. So the feeling of the pedestrian towards a tram or a bus is completely different. One important difference is that for a bus you do not need the whole rail infrastructure. You just have to build the stops.”
It seems that for Nijmegen the question of the modality became less of an issue as there has been now decided to first realise HOV in a bus system. Only the slogan “think tram do bus” reminds the citizens of the ambitious project of re-introducing the tram to the city. This is shown by the state of mind of one of the politicians: “It is very probable to have a bus system for the next maybe ten years. But this bus system has to have the quality of high speed and high quality. And since the road is then known and is comfortable and many people use it, then we can take the next step to a tram”, but “we will always have buses in the city anyway!” So it is not anymore the question of bus or tram, but the recent developments work with a scenario of first bus, then tram or with the motto of bus and tram.

2.5.3 Finding Consensus

The following abstract is based on the interview with the project leader HOV from the City Region. He explains how he personally develops his plans and gets them realized. This is related to a lot of interaction with actors from different organisations. In this respect I may estimate that he is expressing not only his personal culture in finding consensus but that he is part of a culture present in the project or in the wider planning community in Nijmegen.

As mentioned earlier, only if opinions are shared, a project can be realized. Here it is about reliability and “you have to have a good working network. What is really important in HOV planning, as in everything, is that people talk a lot to each other. Everybody has to know what the other one is doing. It is about exchanging knowledge.” Consensus can be built up if there is a shared problem at hand and if there is seen a solution which can be achieved by working together. In the working process, respect for everyone’s opinion is important. The project leader HOV starts a plan always with his own vision or idea: “I start with my own vision and I continue working it out because I think it is good. But the others also have their knowledge. They bring in other ideas. And therefore, the common, shared idea is better than only my idea. It is about accumulating knowledge.” Anyway, the project leader is responsible to get the project through.

Here, his strategy is trust. This trust from people working with and above him was mainly developed through the time when he was showing that he had successful project. Therefore, his working experience helps him to get the support of the people realizing the project. Important for the success of a project is the ability of the project leader – or in general, everybody developing visions and ideas in public transport – to have a feeling for politics. The project has to be so-called politically feasible and to be within a financial framework. The question should always be whether, generally speaking, the project is possible. The way of working together in a project can be summarized in the following saying by the project leader HOV: “It is about having a feeling for the problem of the others. It is a lot about interpersonal relations. That is nowhere written in a book. It is not written in theory, but it is about trusting each other and to have
confidence in each other. First, every single actor puts their own points on the table. Only in the following meetings you start looking for compromises. You work against your counterpart, but you do it within his interest. That is how you reduce the risk for conflicts.”

2.6 Underlying Motives

This chapter should give an insight into the motives that are underlying the actions of the interviewed actors within the project of HOV in Nijmegen. The motives might be as different as the actors, having various backgrounds and personalities and working in different institutions. Nevertheless, throughout this thesis, two major fields of thought became visible. The scope of my research mainly considered the action around the tram. In this respect, on the one hand there is first of all the municipality who made the tram a real issue and is still fighting to get it realized. These people, not exclusively from the municipality, are convinced of the added values of this modality. On the other hand, in relation to the extensive research initiated by the municipality, there are the actors who believe in the cost paradigm. They simply state that a tram is too expensive.

The information concerning the costs, are often linked to the expression of facts. These facts got revealed through the investigations done by external advisors between 2010 and 2012. Since then, everybody knows how expensive the installation and operation of a tram would be. As facts act on the hard side of planning, the costs are a strong paradigm. Especially because at this moment in time the money for the tram is not available: “Not here, not in Nijmegen, nowhere”, says an employee of the City Region and continues that, “this is why, in the current context it is not realistic to think about a tram.” He explains that the City Region gets about 75 million euros a year from the central government. About 40 million out of the 75 million are dedicated to the operating companies, “and this money is not enough to include a tram in the city because the costs of a tram are much higher than of a bus of course. And for example one hour driving a bus costs 80 to 90 euros. The cost-coverage degree is 50% and we finance 50% of the costs for all the buses running.” The civil servant has to say more about the costs: “And then, if we look at what is left from the 75 million, only a couples of million, you have to divide that a little bit in the region. You cannot invest all the money in the coming ten years in the tram in Nijmegen.” The team manager HOV of the City Region is also not a supporter of the idea to get the money for the tram in form of a national project: “Because that is too big and you have to bring in a lot of your own money. Because for the size of this project, you have to bring in at least 112,5 million euros as a region, as the first investor.” But he explains that there are also other budgets within the central government, which sometimes subsidise ideas like the regional HOV in the province of Gelderland. “There was a budget for improving regional public transport and we got 12 million already from there. So I believe more in this kind of projects, where in the end it is complex to
get the money from different projects.” This way of funding the public transport is mainly suiting the actual situation. If there would be a system jump towards the tram, the team manager admits that HOV Nijmegen should become a national project in order to get the money from the government. One opinion about the tram in relation to the motivation of costs reads as follows: “I think it is not spending the public money in the right way. And that is for me the main thing. Everyone pays taxes and everyone has to work hard for that, so then you should get the best thing out of the tax money. So that is for me a very important reason to be a little more sceptical about this idea. I think it is too expensive.”

On the other hand, there are the people who have as an underlying motive the wish to have a tram in the centre of Nijmegen. This community is leaded by the municipal executive councillor responsible for transport and supported by the chairman of the board from the City Region. The municipal executive councillor claims to know that there are some parties “who say that it is too expensive. So you could think that we do not want the tram anymore. But I do not say that now. I support the idea to leave the decision open, because we do not know what we need in ten years time.” Even though until today it became clear that there will be first introduced a HOV bus, there remained some people in Nijmegen who still wish for the tram and see it as the better solution. Connected to the tram is a certain aura of urbanity and centrality. Therefore the responsible municipal executive councillor from Nijmegen points out the benefits the tram would have on the whole region as well as for tourism. Even though the civil servants from the municipality became more critical towards the tram, the policy maker states that, “about think tram do bus, I have to say that our opinion differs from the one of the province: we really think of realizing a tram one fine day.” And the task giver concludes: “A tram would be wonderful. Wonderful because it is appealing but also wonderful because of its functionality.” The underlying motives of these people being in favour of a tram can be mostly added to the group of soft factors. As the planning paradigm of costs counts as hard facts, the actors investigated following this paradigm, are dominating the debate. Whoever might be still in favour of a tram will be labelled tram-lover and has to defend his opinion in the public as well as towards the people working with him.

2.7 Spaces of Interpretation

As spaces of interpretation I consider the areas in the planning process, which are open to personal understandings and definitions. These spaces, obviously can be outlined differently by each actor but there can be also institutional patterns be observed. In the following I have chosen several aspects that reveal the soft factors incorporated in the planning process under investigation.
One of the actors compared Dutch planning culture to other areas of the world and explained that he feels unease with the present culture in his country. The Dutch culture is described as modest and that the Dutch like big cities, but not in their own country. The concerned actor sees himself as having this higher sense of urgency and ambition, which is missing also in the planning of HOV in Nijmegen. Most planners’ culture in this project under investigation is influenced by the cost paradigm. As the costs are associated with facts, most planners consider themselves as being realistic. These realists are again mostly in an advising function and therefore are the informants of people like the actor above, not at ease with this culture. One of the civil servants of the City Region lays out the problem: “I am not a follower of the council, but an advisor. Sometimes the municipal executive councillor or the counsellor think I am a little bit stubborn because I do not follow. They have big dreams, but I am telling them what is realistic.”

The planning work of the actors is a lot about interpersonal relations, which can be considered as a soft factor as there is not one single book where to read how to interact in a planning process. The interpersonal contacts are fully dependent on the personality and experience of the actors involved. A civil servant of the City Region states this by saying that “it is a lot about interpersonal relations and this is nowhere written in a book. It is not written in theory. But it is about trusting each other and to have confidence in each other.” He explains that in communication it is all about experience. Young people have to see in practice what works and what is not working. It is about developing a feeling on how to interact with people. Especially difficult is the interaction between different organisations. In the project of HOV in Nijmegen, we can see that the leading heads mostly agree in a high manner. More problematic is the cooperation and interaction on a level below – in respect to this thesis this considers the civil servants of the organisations investigated. These relationships are influenced by a bureaucratic culture, which is all about power: Who is in charge? Who is allowed to say what in the project? So, in this way, there might arise controversies in the project but the chairman of the board of the City Region reflects that “these controversies have nothing to do with differences in opinion about which direction to choose, but it has everything to do with bureaucratic mechanisms. These controversies are not on a political level, they are on a institutional level and they have to do with power and legitimacy of what you are doing.”

An important feature in the interpersonal constellation of the planners is the one of leadership. The people being in a more responsible position are steering the project and influence it by their way of working as well as their personality. The project leader HOV of the City Region is quite aware of his position and knows that as a team leader you have to have a certain authority in the sense that the employees have to accept the leadership and trust in you: “It is about trust. It is about them to think that he knows well. You have to be reliable.” Beside the mutual trust, it is important for the project leader HOV to see himself as one of his group. He knows that he is the
chairman but it is important for him not to have hierarchy in the group. Therefore he assumes that the only thing he is doing, is leading the conversations in the group meetings. Another interviewed person sharing his thoughts about leadership within an institution or a project is the concession manager of the bus company. He states that if he would have really strange ideas, people would not have put him in a position with responsibility. Therefore I assumed that there was first the vision of the bus company and then the actor developed his own vision along the lines of the institution. By corresponding to the vision of the institution chances are higher to be elected for a leadership position. On the other hand, the concession manager responded that, "by putting me in that position, they give me automatically a certain freedom for my own visions and my own arguments." Actors in a higher position have more freedom of speech and more possibilities to express their personal spaces of interpretation. Not surprisingly, chances are high that these personally developed ideas of the persons in charge are in line with the institution as the actors were often raised within this institutional context.

Another soft factor when it comes to the way of working in the planners’ world in Nijmegen is the teamwork. In all the institutions investigated, people work in project groups and develop ideas in a team. Within a project group, respect and trust towards each other seems important, as well as the awareness of the fact that the common, shared idea is always better than the own idea. This is due to the understanding of accumulated knowledge. Beside the cooperation within one project group, also the cooperation between different groups of interest can be considered as teamwork. If different institutions have to work together on one project, it is about having a shared problem and about seeing a solution that can be achieved by working together. Here, again as in the teamwork within one group, respect for everyone’s opinion is important. As essential as the practice of accumulating knowledge, is the practice of exchanging knowledge. This has to occur not only within the institution but also between all the stakeholders within a project. Therefore, teamwork is all about communication.

Last but not least, the planners are asked to identify personally with the project: "that the actors see HOV as their own project. They should not do their work for the leader of the project, but consider it as a communal problem which can be solved by the people of this community."
3. Conclusions

At first sight, the focus of this thesis is on the HOV debate and the technical aspects of the question whether to realise it with a tram or with buses. But by presenting the actors’ perceptions of the project, the soft factors incorporated in the planning process can be seen.

Hereby, it might be helpful to look back to the research questions as they were posed in the beginning of the paper, and should be answered here. The first part of the first question is asking how the actors act within their institution. This part will be answered with reference to the theory of actor-centred institutionalism. The second part of the first question is about the spaces of interpretation. Here, it is about the ways of working and how the actors incorporate soft planning styles in their everyday working life. The second question considers the underlying motives in the planning process under investigation. The answers of this question refer to the chapter on the underlying motives.

The question how actors do act within their institution is developed from Scharpf’s theory on actor-centred institutionalism and therefore I would like to answer the question in this tradition, by adding elements from other structure-agency findings. Point of departure is the description that the institution is defined by legal responsibilities. Within the HOV project, responsibility is distributed differently across the involved institutions. Therefore the belonging to a certain institution restricts the actors’ freedom of action by influencing the actors’ capabilities. But when it comes to agency within the institutional framework, I observed that actors have their personal point of view. Outstanding was the strong cost paradigm the civil servant of the City Region claimed for or the deeply rooted wish for a tram expressed by the municipal executive councillor responsible for the project in Nijmegen. In the theory of Scharpf this is labelled actors’ orientations, and also influenced by the institution. In my opinion, the personal beliefs of the actors is not first of all influenced by the institution, but shaped by the actors’ life outside the workplace. The team manager of the City Region laid out how his personal convictions became shaped by the tasks he was fulfilling before working for the City Region. We could see that beside the personal conviction, the actors’ position is shaped by the culture present in the working group. So that would be an institutional influence, but still the differences in perceptions and preferences are widely varying within a working group or at least within different levels in an institution. What could have been observed during conducting and analysing the data, is that in both the organisations of the municipality and the City Region, the group of employees is defending an obviously different opinion than the politicians responsible for the project, also being part of the same institution. This has to do with the fact that the politicians either use the tram as an election issue or have just more ambitious plans for the city. The civil servants on the other hand are transport planners, engaging with the facts and the
costs of the project. Therefore, both the persons leading the institutions as well as their employees, are constituting the organisational setting which is then characterized by a mixture of given structure and individual agency. Therefore I am in line with Scharpf, saying that the regulatory aspects of an institution can restrict behaviour, but can never fully determine behaviour. In this special case of the HOV project in the region of Nijmegen, it seems that the employees working in the presented institutions as civil servants, are more familiar with the political and especially with the financial framework of their institution. They think more in structural restrictions than the politicians who have in mind a dream which is not able to realise at the moment with the financial setting at hand within the institutions. Therefore mostly influencing the output of the project are not the ones at top of an institution, but the actors acting in the back of the institution. The opinions of these levels may vary widely and therefore it is delicate to say which is the opinion shared by the institution. It is probable, that after a certain time the frame of one of the parties will be changed so that the whole institution follows one goal or preferences, for example whether to realise HOV in the city with a tram or not. In this case it is also possible that officially an institution shares the same frame, but that unofficially some actors are still convinced of their own truth and do not totally follow the official opinion of the leaders of the institution. This situation can already be observed in both institutions investigated, when employees tell me that they are not convinced of the plans but do not want to further slow down the process and therefore started to work in correspondence to what their superiors have in mind. So even though in line with Sharpf about the fact that institutions cannot fully determine behaviour, I would like to add the notion that the pattern of frame changes in my project was different than expected. It were not the leading politicians of the institutions who where telling the employees which direction to take but the civil servants were convincing their chairman and municipal executive councillor of their realism about facts and costs. This realism can be traced back to institutional regulations but also here, this cannot be the only determination. Even though the realists of this project became dominant in the institutions, in both the institution of the City Region and the Municipality as well the discussion on the HOV buses and the idea of the introduction of a tram are at present.

The second part of the first research question is about the spaces of interpretation of the actors within their institution. These spaces consider for example room for manoeuvring within the rules and regulations of the institution or depict in general the way of working of the planners. By analysing the way of working of the involved actors, the soft factors of planning get revealed. In my thesis, several aspects of soft planning factors came alight. First of all, planning is about communication and this is nowhere to study in a book. Therefore communicating about a planning issue is all about the personality and experience of the involved actors. Further factors influencing a planning project are the way planners work in a team and how they are leaded by
their chairman. For a leader, a certain authority is necessary, but in the end he should act as one of the group. And within a group or a team, mutual trust and shared knowledge are elementary. Above all, planners should and actually do identify at a high fashion with their project. Only if they see the project as feature belonging to their lives, actors engage in the right way to find creative solutions and to communicate intensively in order to fight for their ideas.

When it comes to the underlying motives in this planning process, I discovered two fields of thought. These have been mentioned indirectly when saying above that there are different opinions at hand within a single institution. Because what we have seen that one of the leading motives is the cost paradigm. Especially the civil servants of both institutions in the focus believe in the financial framework they are opposed to. Even though most of them can understand why a tram for the city of Nijmegen might be appealing they trust in their calculations and concluded that this modality is too expensive to install and to operate. Especially after the research undertaken by external advisors, they became more confident about their cost paradigm and are not keen on further investigating the possibilities for a tram. For several people of this group this seems like a waste of time and money. This larger group of people is opposed by a few people in charge of the project which are representing it politically. These persons have another paradigm which assumes that the tram makes the city of Nijmegen a better place. On the one hand the tram therefore is used as an election issue, fostering the image of the tram as being comfortable and modern. Here, the tram is related to the image of a big city. Further, the city of Nijmegen would be the centre of an attractive and reliable HOV line connecting different parts of the region. Therefore and not surprisingly this thesis is mainly focussing on the tram debate as this is the most critical aspect of the HOV discussion in the city of Nijmegen. Both parties, the people believing in the costs and the persons dreaming of a more attractive city do not reject the need that the region needs better accessibility and therefore all the persons interviewed support the development towards high-quality public transport under the label of HOV. But then the discussion arises how to realise HOV and there the main controversy is the question whether to bring back the tram to Nijmegen or to develop HOV buses. As the cost paradigm is stronger or can even be considered as a hard planning factor, the wishes for the tram modality have been mainly overruled due to lack of money. Interestingly, politicians in this field did not give up the appealing idea of a tram in their city. Consequently, the region and the city will start the HOV project with buses but in 2020 another round of funding will take place in Den Haag and the city of Nijmegen plans to be part of that procedure to hopefully get the money for their tram project. Not surprisingly, most of the actors interviewed do not see the tram coming even in 15 years. Now there will be buses and according to the information from the interviews these HOV buses have the same comfort and reliability than a possible tram. Finally, it is about the persons in...
certain positions pushing and fighting for certain ideas and if these actor constellations change, the whole field of the project will face new circumstances.

As the field of planning culture is a fuzzy concept and traditionally refers to comparing planning styles in different countries, I consider this thesis as a contribution to show how planning cultures can be observed in a single place case study. The case includes the main actors and they have been interviewed in long sessions to the HOV debate in Nijmegen. These interviews are at the core of this thesis and therefore maybe too much emphasis is on the tram-bus controversy. The interview questions refer to the theory of actor-centred institutionalism but in the analysis there is too less reference to the theory. When analysing the data my focus was on the soft factors of planning and I hardly developed the analysis in the framework of the theory. Therefore, a deeply funded grounded theory out of my data is missing in this paper. This has to do with the fact that I rather engaged broadly with the concept of Scharpf to have an underlying idea for my research but did not consider the wide range of more detailed pieces of this theory.

For further research in the scope of planning culture I would suggest to engage again with a topic of a local or regional scale. Here, the contact to the planners at stake is helpful to get to know all the involved actors. As well, the manner of interviewing might be suitable to get the deeper meanings of the planning processes at hand. When it comes to analysing it should be more about underlying concepts like the theory of Scharpf or the concept of planning culture. When engaging with a theory, the body of theory should be analysed more detailed to finally embed to own research within it and to hopefully be able to make a contribution. When questioning the planning culture and asking for the soft factors in the project, a detailed conceptualisation of the analysis process should be at hand for the researcher to know what he or she is looking for. Furthermore, I would suggest a more discourse oriented and more detailed reading in the analysis of the data.

When it comes to me to dare an advice for future city planning processes, I want to state the complex institutional setting of the case of the tram in this example. When different institutions on various hierarchical levels are involved, it is important to always keep the project in the focus of the work. This thesis has shown that a project is made of and made by the actors working on the topic and I was told that it is all about communication. The institutions have to employ good traders who fight for the project as it was their own but who respect different opinions shaped by other institutions involved.
4. References


