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Stina Ellevseth Oseland and Håvard Haarstad

Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation, CET, Department of Geography, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

ABSTRACT

Sustainable transformation is hampered by conflicting goals. Here we examine how goal conflicts are handled in planning practice, focusing on processes around municipal climate and sustainability governance. We investigate local manifestations of goal conflicts between transport and land use planning and emissions reductions in three Norwegian cities, using document analysis, interviews and observation. We find that governance actors handle goal conflicts through what we term *strategies of displacement*. We identify three such strategies: temporal, sectorial and scalar. The research contributes to explaining how and why goal conflicts persist in planning practice.

Introduction

The problem of conflicting goals is widely recognized in studies of sustainability governance and planning. Conflicting goals are at the core of politics, where diverse interests play out, and of sustainable development, with conflicts between growth and environmental protection. There is a broad debate on the trade-offs, co-benefits and contradictions in sustainability, for example in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Fuso Nerini et al., 2018; Hickel, 2019; Nilsson et al., 2016). In planning and local governance studies, Campbell's (1996) classic study presented planning as characterized by a basic conflict between environmental protection, economic growth and social justice.

There is less agreement as to whether these conflicts can be overcome, managed or resolved, or whether they are intractable structural features inherent to governance. Opinions seem to depend on the theoretical positions adopted. Campbell suggested that reaching a negotiated solution to these conflicts is possible but would require us to "reorganize society" (1996, p. 301). Revisiting his planners' triangle, Campbell argued that we may "need to let go of the idea of balance (between social, environmental, and economic priorities) as the core principle for sustainability, and instead speak of a kind of truce, a working contradiction, a stalemate, a temporary armistice" (2016, p. 396). Castán Broto (2015) suggested that such contradictions can be highly productive in driving low-carbon transitions.

CONTACT Stina Ellevseth Oseland stina.oseland@uib.no Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation, CET, Department of Geography, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Our concern in this article is how local and urban authorities handle goal conflicts in practice. We understand *goal conflicts* as competing and incompatible objectives within currently existing policies. We shift the focus from the more abstract contradictions and trade-offs between overarching goals, to examine how conflicting goals are managed, discussed, or even evaded in concrete decisions in cities. Arguably, the local level of governance is where contradictions are actualized and need to be worked out because concrete implementation takes place locally. How are conflicting goals dealt with in the local climate and energy action plans (CAPs)? How do local actors reflect and discuss conflicting goals? What techniques and strategies of governance are used to evade, overcome, negotiate or ignore goal conflicts?

Our empirical focus is on goal conflicts between transport and land use planning priorities and goals of emissions reductions in the major Norwegian cities of Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger. These are the three largest cities in the country outside Oslo and are part of a national major city network (*Storbynettverket*) promoting sustainable urbanization. The three cities face similar challenges; some of the most challenging can be characterized as fundamental conflicts between competing goals, particularly in transport and land use planning and climate emission reductions. Using document analysis, interviews and observation, we analyze the goal conflicts that arise between transport and land use planning on the one hand, and climate emission reductions on the other, and how authorities relate to and manage goal conflicts in concrete decision-making processes.

We show that goal conflicts are not overcome, but rather evaded, overlooked, or denied in different ways. Local planners lack the tools to handle conflicting goals properly, and local politicians have incentives to avoid handling goal conflicts within electoral cycles. Avoiding conflicting goals does not mean that they go away. Rather, they are *displaced*. We argue that several strategies of displacement are in operation, and identify three: temporal displacement, assuming that the conflict will be solved by future technology or more restrictive measures later; sectorial displacement, assuming climate and sustainability are issues pertaining to a different sector, and hence, have to be managed there; and scalar displacement, avoiding the goal conflicts through unclear and contested scalar division of responsibility. The three processes are interlinked and entangled but can be understood and analyzed separately.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we describe how conflicting goals are understood and discussed in the literature, including examples of studies from Nordic countries. Next, our operationalization of how to analyze conflicting goals is outlined, followed by a description of methods. We present and discuss the case, namely urban conflicting goals in Norway, before offering concluding remarks.

Understanding Conflicting Goals

The phenomenon of goal conflicts is well recognized in both the scholarly literature on planning and in the literature on sustainable transformation and transition. The fact that economic growth and environmental protection – to take one classic example of a goal conflict – are at odds with one another is widely accepted. In vernacular political debate, the left typically holds that economic growth is incommensurable with environmental protection while the right often argues that they can be reconciled. There is extensive academic debate on conflicts between various goals inherent to the sustainability agenda. For example, many point to the trade-offs, synergies, co-benefits, and contradictions between the various UN SDGs. Systematic studies find evidence of both synergies and conflicts between the SDGs (Nilsson et al., 2016; Pradhan et al.,

2017), while others argue that conflicts and contradictions between the goals are likely to undermine the SDG agenda as a whole (Spaiser et al., 2017). Hickel (2019), for instance, argues that the SDG agenda's goal for economic growth (SDG 8) "renders it empirically infeasible" (p. 873) to achieve a reduction in resource use (SDG 12) and reduction in CO2 emissions (SDG 13).

Urban policymakers and planners confront an array of goal conflicts in their daily work (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Campbell's (1996) classic planners' triangle presents this as a trilemma between economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection, suggesting that there can only be negotiated, temporary resolutions between them. However, as is the case with the SDGs, the trade-offs and conflicts are not made sufficiently clear. A key role for urban planners has traditionally been to mediate between conflicting views and find consensus (Fainstein, 2000). However, as Owens and Cowell (2011) note, "trying to turn the broad consensual principles into policies, procedures, and decisions tends not to resolve conflicts, but to expose tensions inherent in the idea of sustainable development itself" (p. 43). Although the "communicative turn" in planning theory and practice attempted to resolve conflicts through participation and dialogue, it did not overcome fundamental conflicting interests in the planning process (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Holgersen & Haarstad, 2009; Rydin, 2011). The literature on urban post-politics has argued that the conflicting interests are obscured and managed within the contemporary bureaucratic and depoliticized understanding of planning (Swyngedouw, 2010).

In other words, conflicting goals in planning are often handled by being obscured and hidden in political and planning processes. In their study of the project to make Leuven climate neutral by 2030, Kenis and Lievens (2017) noted that the inherent tensions and obstacles of the project were concealed behind a technical, managerial, and scientific discourse, which partly explained the project's lack of progress. Similarly, studying urban stormwater planning, Bohman et al. (2020) found that goal conflicts remained unresolved in decision-making processes. Rather than being identified explicitly in decisions, inherent conflicts between misaligned strategic goals are passed on to other actors and later stages of planning (Bohman et al., 2020). By seeking an inclusive consensus, planning processes encourage compromise and overlook inherent contradictions, in turn postponing difficult decisions and priorities to the future.

So why are conflicting goals in climate governance not handled more directly in planning processes? The answer is not clear, but the literature offers multiple potential explanations. For instance, local planning authorities have diffused and limited authority and mandates to tackle such broad and intricate issues. Municipalities are siloed (Oseland, 2019), with responsibilities and the production of services divided among several units, with different institutional logics, based on the kind of laws and regulations that they uphold. Thus governance systems employ a web of divergent institutional logics within (Beunen et al., 2017; Uittenbroek, 2016). Conflicts of material interests are a prominent reason for a lack of general handling of conflicts, and at the municipal level there is often a clear center–periphery dimension to such conflicts (Antonson et al., 2016). Divergent understandings of the goals can lead to a lack of handling of the conflicts; the goal of sustainable development in a city's land use can entail different understandings and hence solutions (Campbell, 1996, 2016; Godschalk, 2004; Owens & Cowell, 2011).

In planning practice, these conflicts manifest in concrete decision–making processes, where actors with varying degrees of power stand on different sides. Conflicting goals in municipal planning are many and multifaceted: goals in conflict with climate targets are no exception. They span from the overarching, for example, tensions between generating jobs or reducing emissions, to the concrete - for example whether to allocate road space for cycling paths or car

parking. Some climate-friendly policies can conflict with other climate-friendly policies: for example, compact city development may conflict with blue-green infrastructure, the preservation of existing qualities, livability (including noise, green spaces, etc.), and biological diversity (Wang et al., 2018).

A key element of goal conflicts is how they are manifested as opposing priorities between different levels of policy-making. Indeed, the mismatch between scales of policy-making has long been recognized as a key problem in climate governance (Bulkeley & Newell, 2010; Haarstad, 2014). Antonson et al. (2016) find a discrepancy both between the municipal master plan and the views of the regional authorities, as well as between the municipal master plan and statements in interviews by local planners. Similarly, Tennøy and Øksenholt (2018) argue that the divergent prioritization of objectives is often the root cause of conflicts arising in planning processes.

These contributions show that the literature acknowledges that goal conflicts linger in planning and governance systems in different ways, and maybe hidden, downplayed, siloed, or unresolved in interactions between governance levels. Next, we consider how to understand the way conflicting goals are handled and understood in practice, from the perspective of local planners and decision-makers.

How Are Goal Conflicts Managed in Practice?

How can we analyze the way goal conflicts are managed in practice within planning processes? Building on Flyvbjerg's (1998) studies of power in planning, as well as theoretical perspectives on path dependency in sustainability transitions (Hansen & Coenen, 2015; Loorbach, 2020), our perspective is that goal conflicts are created and maintained by divergence along three dimensions: knowledge, institutions and material structures. Firstly, *knowledge* points to differences in how problems are understood, framed, and defined (Rein & Schön, 1993; Rydin, 2007; Vinge, 2018).

Secondly, *institutions* point to how governance systems create separation of problem areas, silos, and specific rationalities attached to various actors and levels in bureaucracy and politics (Lockwood, 2015; Madanipour, 2010; Stead & Meijers, 2009). Thirdly, *material structures* point to how infrastructure, the built environment, and resource distribution create interests and rationalities that shape the positions actors take in decision-making processes (Hansen & Coenen, 2015; Shove et al., 2015; Unruh, 2000).

The point of highlighting the different aspects of goal conflicts is to underscore that these conflicts are not simply irrational misunderstandings but are related to fundamental conflicts in social structures. We focus on how these lines of conflict are handled, managed, and coped with in concrete decision-making, in the practice of planning. Despite the fundamental character of goal conflicts, concrete decisions are continuously being made. We need to understand better the techniques and strategies, or lack of such, employed by authorities in making decisions. In practice, decisions are necessarily made under conditions of bounded rationality, in specific spatial and temporal contexts, and in complex situations with a great deal of uncertainty (Wangel, 2011). Concrete decisions rarely relate directly to the overarching goal conflicts in society. Rather, decision-makers typically attempt to make an optimal choice in the circumstances at hand.

In the empirical analysis below, we first examine CAPs in the selected case cities to assess whether and how conflicting goals are acknowledged and discussed. Then, we review some concrete decisions with clear goal conflicts to understand how planners and other decision-

makers themselves rationalize making decisions in the context of conflicting goals. We aim to identify some general strategies through which goal conflicts are handled in practice. Our analysis deconstructs what particularly messy problems – such as road expansions in light of climate goals – consists of, to better understand how goal conflicts operate in practice.

Methods

We base our study on cases of local manifestations of goal conflicts in the Norwegian cities of Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim. These are the three largest cities in Norway outside Oslo, and face similar challenges of urbanization while attempting to reduce congestion, pollution, and CO_2 emissions. They are all regional centers, creating similar challenges with regard to land use, transportation, and infrastructure. All have ambitious targets and plans for shifting towards sustainable forms of mobility. To study conflicting goals and how the cities deal with them, we focused the scope of data collection on key planning documents, debates in city councils, media coverage and opinion pieces in newspapers, interviews with planners and central politicians.

For each of the cities we analyzed the Climate and Energy Action Plan in light of goal conflicts. This research forms part of a larger research project on CAPs in Norwegian cities. We conducted interviews with actors with direct involvement in the processes of revising and passing CAPs: conflicting goals were addressed in the interviews. We followed city council meetings where the action plans were passed. The planners and politicians interviewed all had central or direct roles in the processes of making and passing climate and energy action plans, and work directly with planning, climate change, and/or city development. They were asked to identify and elaborate on the main bottlenecks for local climate mitigation efforts. In Trondheim, we interviewed nine planners and one politician; in Bergen three politicians and seven planners; and in Stavanger we conducted nine interviews with politicians and one with a planner. We aimed to interview a similar number of planners and politicians in each city, but there were differences in access. This is likely attributable to differences in institutional culture, and where the cities were in planning processes at the time of fieldwork. We decided to not pursue interviews with officials at the national level since obtaining a satisfactory scope of informants would not have been possible within the scope of the current project focused on the local manifestations of goal conflicts.

Participant observation was conducted during the revision of the CAPs of the three cities; the information and discussions on conflicting goals from these meetings and in field conversations with a broad range of municipal planners and local politicians form part of the understanding of central aspects of conflicting goals as an issue in local climate governance. Additionally, news articles and op-eds in regional newspapers and debates in public media form part of the contextual background review.

Urban Sustainability Conflicts in Norway

To examine conflicting goals in planning, we concentrated on examples where issues of transport and mobility conflict with climate goals. We show how these issues are dealt with, or evaded, in planning documents, and extract the opinions and reflections of planners and politicians on the matter. In Norway, all three levels of governance – national, regional, and municipal – have roles in planning. The national government produces overarching regulations and

guidelines, the regional level is the arbitrator of planning conflicts and has several responsibilities within transport, while the municipal level is where most practical planning decisions are made (Saglie et al., 2015). Within each of these levels, and across them, interests, discourses, knowledges, and ways of performing the process of planning and implementation will differ; as in other governance systems, these levels and actors can operate as distinct silos where particular rationalities and cultures are maintained. For example, the logics that the national road authorities use when negotiating and planning for new tunnels and bridges will be quite different from the rationalities of the two municipalities between which the infrastructure will be built.

The city (municipal) level has responsibility for developing a Climate and Energy Action Plan (CAP). Each of the three cities has ambitious targets and plans for a shift to sustainable transport. Bergen's CAP, the "Green Strategy" (passed in 2016) announces the main climate target of becoming a fossil-free city by 2030, which is defined as "no use of fossil energy sources" within city limits (Bergen Municipality, 2016, p. 13). Trondheim's CAP (2017) states the main goal of an 80 percent reduction in direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared with 1991 levels by 2030. Stavanger passed its CAP in 2018, and likewise states the main goal of an 80 percent reduction of GHG emissions compared with the 1991 levels by 2030. Trondheim and Bergen's CAPs are primarily focused on topics related to mitigation, including energy consumption and production, and adaptation, whilst Stavanger's CAP has a distinct environmental focus, in addition to mitigation and adaptation. All three cities have experienced an increase in emissions compared with 1991, although there has been a slight decrease since 2016.

How Do Overarching Plans Deal With Goal Conflicts?

At a discursive level, the plans of all three cities recognize the existence of goal conflicts – and even use that specific term (*målkonflikt*) in discussing them. Bergen and Stavanger's CAPs have separate sections, however brief, pointing to goal conflicts. In the case of Stavanger, the plan points to the goal of increasing tourism as conflicting with sustainability goals:

> In several areas, the climate and environmental objectives may conflict with other objectives the municipality and society have. One example is growth within tourism, where increased air and marine traffic also entail increased emissions. General growth in consumption, travel and other things can also result in increased GHG emissions, the consumption of finite resources and losses of natural areas and biodiversity, in Norway or in other countries. (Stavanger Municipality, 2018, p. 8)

The plan for Stavanger points to urban densification as potentially in conflict with the goal of reducing the number of people troubled by noise. More broadly, it states that the biggest challenge for the Stavanger region is to transition to a low-emission society and, at the same time, maintain a "functional operation and a good quality of life" for its citizens. In other words, conflicting goals are recognized, both in concrete measures and in a broader sense, yet there is little discussion of how they can be resolved.

In Bergen's CAP, conflicting goals are explicitly recognized, with a separate section on conflicts between goals that highlights two particular instances: increased road capacities and the consequent effects of projects, and a potential expansion of the airport with a second runway "emissions of between 40 and 70 thousand tons of CO_2 per year by 2065 if a second runway is built" (Bergen Municipality, 2016, p. 29). Referring to climate goals both locally and nationally, the plan states that current technology and the municipal goal of shifting freight to rail transport, "building a new runway at Flesland airport is a clear conflicting goal, given today's climate

technology." Even though most emissions from air traffic are excluded from municipal climate emissions (only emissions from take-off and landing are included), they are widely discussed as a major part of the overall emissions from the population, and a theme for future climate planning. Again, although conflicting goals are explicitly recognized, the plans fall short of suggesting how conflicts can be overcome.

In Trondheim, the CAP explicitly recognizes conflicting goals, although they are discussed less prominently than in the other two cities. Trondheim's plan states that the need for new housing, roads, and other infrastructure, and the "measures to meet these needs can be in direct conflict with the climate goals. An increase in road capacity will for example lead to increased traffic work and an increase in emissions during the building phase" (Trondheim kommune, 2017, p. 8).

Not surprisingly, we find that the planners and authorities developing the CAPs are clearly aware of the existence of goal conflicts, particularly in relation to traffic growth and new transport infrastructure on the one hand, and climate and sustainability goals on the other. Indeed, we find that the National Road Authority rhetorically recognizes conflicting goals as well, although their argument for "balance" is in effect an argument against strong climate action. One key policy document reads:

> The goals can be in conflict with one another. It is important to find a balance between the goal of good mobility for the population and business sector in areas with strong population growth, whilst at the same time ensuring zero growth in personal car use and reduced emissions of local pollution and climate gases in the city area. (Statens vegvesen, 2017, p. 35, our translation)

Similarly, the cities are managing urban growth and ambitious climate goals at the same time. The awareness of goal conflicts was clear from our interviews with planners in the three cities. Speaking of the importance of the conflict between densification of urban land use, on the one hand, one planner said, "The densification politics we need to have in place, are in conflict with both green structures and public health. […] Using green spaces for densification does lead to a worsening of public health. There are conflicting goals there" (interview, land use planner). Another expressed how they struggled with prioritizing sustainability in practice: "There is no use in prioritizing the environment every other time. You have to make the environment a priority every time" (interview, land use planner). The planners described how, when local politicians and planners are juggling several interests and goals of development simultaneously, a lack of consistency and a continuous presence of contingencies create space for conflicting decisions.

Our analysis of existing plans indicates that the cities have no specific strategy for handling conflicting goals, beyond pointing to the existence of the goals. This may be because the problems seem intractable and beyond the scope of the plans, as some of our interviews with planners suggest. Yet planners also attribute these goal conflicts to the contradictory policies of the national state.

In 2017, mayors from seven of the largest cities in Norway, including our three cases, together submitted a letter to the Minister of Local Government and Modernization (Storbynettverket, 2017). The letter analyzed policy areas where the national government had failed to co-ordinate its policies, stay loyal to its own goals, or prioritize the sustainable land use planning that it expects of municipalities. The cities emphasized their own intentions of meeting climate targets but stressed that their ability to do so depended on how the Government proceeded with its own investments and coordination across Ministries. They suggested that the national government does not always follow its own guidelines and established objectives. In particular, the letter points to the national government's role as manager of estates and asks

that the establishment of new national structures and institutions in their cities, such as hospitals, be located near public transportation infrastructure, in line with the state's own guidelines by which cities have to abide. In other words, city leaders ask the national level to act in the same way that the national level asks of the cities.

While the letter is quite concrete in pointing to specific areas where national policy underpins conflicting goals, it can also be read as a way for the cities to deflect responsibility. Several of the areas that they point to – for example, restricting private car parking – the cities can also do themselves. Hence it appears that the cities and the national government are attempting to shift responsibility for the difficult prioritizations onto each other.

At times, goal conflicts emerge in the divergences between local and national levels. Yet conflicting goals also present dilemmas which are highly local and within the realm of local planners and authorities to work out. We now examine two specific instances of how conflicting goals are dealt with across our case studies. Both – expanding road capacity and siting large public institutions – are related to expanding transport infrastructure on the one hand and climate emissions on the other.

The Goal Conflicts of Road Expansion

In each case city, ongoing projects are expanding roads into the city centre. These roads are likely to increase flows of private car traffic, which in turn undermines the cities' goals of avoiding such increases. Those goals are mandated by the state, within Urban Growth Agreements. Ironically, the road projects undermining the goals are also national – and local authorities complain about this both in private interviews and in public. At a conference we attended, the administrative director of the Department of Urban Development in Bergen discussed a major bridge expansion project in the region and said "we know that [the project] is needed, but at the same time we are thinking 'help!', and pull our hair." In an interview, a planner reflects on the matter, expressing frustration and a lack of possibilities to act. "We don't get to have a say. And I am unsure if the politicians get into it. […] What would it look like if they said 'we don't want [that bridge]'?" Planners and decision-makers are acutely aware of this paradox of receiving large infrastructure projects in the region on the one hand, and the associated problems of achieving climate and sustainability goals on the other. A land-use planner in one of the case cities lamented:

> The state, the national level, (…) it happens all the time that four-lane highways are built before two-tracked railway is built, and by then, people have already started driving on the four-lane highway. (…) In this year's evaluation of the environmental package we had to write that with all that's happening with road constructions from the outskirts into the city, will make it harder to achieve the goals. It will lead to an increase in traffic.
>
> Interviewer: Do you have the tools in place to compensate for the increase in traffic?
>
> Planner: No. It is really challenging. We don't really have other tools than parking restrictions and road taxes. (Interview with authors)

There are complicated reasons why this situation repeatedly occurs. Decision-makers pass legislation, plans, and funding for contradictory initiatives at the same time, without really considering how they are in conflict. National and local parliaments often simultaneously support road projects, the land-use changes they involve *and* the ambitious climate targets that contradict them. Road infrastructure is discussed in various settings and debates other than climate, often by different politicians, using competing rationalities. In the national road debates, most

parties agree that more and better roads are needed. Parliamentarians lobby to get more road funding to their own districts. In the national climate debates, by contrast, the need for more action, such as reducing traffic, is widely agreed upon. All the while, local politicians and planners complain about inherently conflicting goals, both in public settings and in interviews, pointing to the difficulty of achieving the city's climate goals when road projects are pushed so strongly. One planner, when asked what the main bottleneck is to achieve the city's climate goals simply responded, "that the car is holy" (interview, land use planner).

In Trondheim, the expansion of National Road E6 passed against the will of some leading local politicians, who favored a rail project instead, precisely due to the goal of zero growth in car traffic. In a debate on public radio, the Deputy Mayor, Hilde Opoku from the Green Party, stated:

> The entire project is built on a transport prognosis stating what the expected traffic will be like in 2040. A unified county and the municipality have said that we want to prioritize two-tracked railway on this stretch. Therefore, it does not make sense to us that you start building the road before you have seen the effect of the train solution. Our point of departure is that there is no need for the expansion of this road, and at the same time you have the giant paradox in the fact that the Parliament has decided on a zero-growth goal in traffic. (Public radio debate, NRK, 2016)

The reply from the Vice Minister of Transport, Tom Christer Nilsen from the Conservative Party, was simply that "it is obvious to everyone that we need more and better roads in Norway. (…) this stretch is important both in regard to personal transport, but also the transport of goods" (public radio debate, NRK, 2016). The county governor, in turn, held that a solution to the goal conflict would be found in the future, during negotiation of the Urban Growth Agreement.

Our analysis finds this exchange indicative of how conflicting goals in transport are left unmanaged. The goals are treated as separate matters, each are individually important, and are simultaneously advanced on the basis of different rationalities. Avoiding growth in traffic is argued for on the basis of the climate challenge; road expansion is promoted on the basis of safety, regional development, and job creation. When overarching societal goals conflict in concrete policy measures, such as the E6 project in Trondheim, decision-makers argue for one or the other on the basis of their political ideology. This familiar gridlock of political debates means that the fundamental goal conflict is left unmanaged or is transferred onto some possible future solution.

Localization of Public Infrastructure

The question of where to place large public infrastructure facilities provides another example of how silos and the differences in institutional reasoning play out and become conflicting goals. The siting of the new public hospital in Stavanger was a long process involving state, regional, and local actors, invoking conflicting concerns. Should it be located in the city centre, in conjunction with existing transport infrastructure, and thereby minimizing traffic growth, in line with the zero-growth objective? Or should it be placed outside the city center, close to the university, where construction is easier, cheaper, and near the health education milieu? The Minister of Health, Bent Høie, finally decided to locate the hospital close to the university, which was not the option preferred by the municipality. The municipality and the county governor both voted for what had been labelled the urban alternative, whilst the county council and the state's Regional Health Council argued for co-localization with the university.

County council documents show that the planners in the county preferred the present-day site, particularly for urban development reasons: they considered it the only alternative where the zero-growth objective would be attainable. Analysis of planning documents reveals that municipal and regional planners objected not only to the actual decision but to the knowledge and rationality used by the state's representatives in their decision. The county council held that "societal goals and non-health-related societal criteria are barely mentioned" in the national state's reasoning, and that "socio-economic analysis is not part of the decision basis" (Rogaland County Council, 2015, p. 5, our translation). It is clear that local and regional decision-makers lament that the aspect of sustainable urban development was not considered.

The documents, interviews, and media coverage of the process make visible the differences in judgement between governance levels, between sectors, and between bureaucrats and politicians. Each of the conflicting goals – sustainable urban development on the one hand and effective delivery of health services on the other – is handled by different authorities, at different levels. Prioritization between them then becomes a question of who has the authority and legal competence over the final decisions. Thus, the conflicting goals are not actually *handled*, in the sense that they are not properly contrasted, weighted, and prioritized. The letter to the Minister of Local Government from the mayors of the largest cities refers specifically to this situation in Stavanger. It points to the problem of how conflicting goals are compartmentalized in the governance system, to the detriment of climate goals:

> there is a need for a greater consciousness about the national climate targets amongst state level departments and authorities […] national enquiry processes highlighting economic and sectorial interests are done before the planning processes and hence they give the premises for the localization. (…) It is unfortunate if national-level government lays the grounds for a growth in traffic.

This example from Stavanger highlights how the conflicting goals are understood and evaluated differently among authorities within sectors and scales. Although there are arenas where different authorities can put forward their priorities and arguments, the process becomes a battle of rationalities. Sectorial authorities are bound to consider only the concerns within their own area of competence; for example, the State's Regional Health Council can only emphasize concerns within their own area of responsibility, which does not include climate goals.

In the end, decisions tend to come down to legal authority and institutional logics. There is no overarching position from which to properly balance and weigh the conflicting goals against each other. Ideally, this balancing act would be the task of the overarching authority in a jurisdiction (in this case the Prime Minister at the national level). But the decision is instead, as seems typical, delegated to the health sector, and subsequently framed through the rationality and objectives guiding that sector. What seems required for effectively resolving such clearly conflicting goals is an overarching authority, or mediating institution, to handle decisions.

Strategies of Displacement

Based on our analysis of goal conflicts in the case cities of Trondheim, Bergen, and Stavanger, across the two policy areas of road expansion and the geographical localization of public infrastructure, we can now reflect on how goal conflicts are handled in practice in local climate governance. We have seen that goal conflicts are widely recognized, but at the same time, there is often no clear way to overcome them. What techniques and maneuvers of governance are used to evade, overcome, negotiate or ignore goal conflicts? We call these maneuvers *strategies of displacement*. By "displacement" we mean the act of evading a situation with conflicting goals

by moving the decision or one element of the conflict elsewhere. We identify three such strategies:

Temporal Displacement

Conflicting goals are managed by putting off the contradiction to some future time. The obvious example here is climate goals, which are typically displaced into a time horizon beyond the term limit of decision-makers currently in office. In our case cities, 2030 is the timeline for major climate and sustainability achievements, but it is unclear how the decisions taken at present put the cities on the path to achieving the 2030 targets. Temporal displacement enables current decision-makers to be ambitious in terms of climate and sustainability, yet at the same time support road expansion, new airport runways, and other measures that likely contradict the climate goals. The response to how to solve these issues is often that traffic-reducing measures and technological innovation and development will solve the long-term effects of new infrastructural materialities.

Sectorial Displacement

We can identify a strategy of displacement in how contradictions between goals are hidden by the sectorial division of labor in governance systems. Concrete decisions – for example, about where to locate a new hospital – are taken by an authority that does not have climate and sustainability as part of its mandate, and where that location does not figure prominently within its decision-making process. The road expansion projects in our case cities are largely driven by the National Roads Authority, whose mandate is precisely to build roads and much less to meet climate and sustainability targets. Although we identified attempts to reconcile these conflicting goals, for example in the Urban Growth Agreements (Amundsen et al., 2019; Westskog et al., 2020), in concrete decisions such as the localization of a new hospital in Stavanger, it appears that the sectorial authority still prevails. In turn, authorities in each sector focus on the goals within their mandate and pay insufficient consideration as to how goals conflict across sectors. As one politician in Bergen said, "what we need to do is to 'hack' the operating manuals of the National Roads Authority" to change the institution's priorities.

Scalar Displacement

The final strategy we identify is that goal conflicts are evaded through the often unclear and contested division of responsibility between local, regional, and national authorities. Municipal authorities often lament that nationally formulated targets, such as the zero-growth target for private car traffic in cities, are created at the national level and then turned into the responsibility of cities, while national policies and investments fail to follow suit. As the united group of city mayors emphasized in the letter to the Minister of Local Government, national agencies often *ignore* the national state guidelines which they expect municipalities to follow. At the same time, the formulation of ambitious national goals gives municipalities an opening to demand more resources from the national state. In the space created by the tug of war between authorities at different scales, the conflicting goals remain unresolved.

Conclusion

Although the problem of conflicting goals is widely recognized in studies of sustainability governance and planning, much less attention has been given to how conflicting goals are

managed. The contribution of this article is to examine how local and urban authorities handle goal conflicts in practice. Our article shifts focus from the more abstract contradictions and trade-offs between overarching goals, to examine the techniques and strategies employed by authorities in concrete decision-making processes. This helps us better understand how conflicting goals are handled and understood in practice, from the perspective of local planners and decision-makers. Our main contribution is to explain how and why goal conflicts persist in planning practice.

Our empirical focus has been goal conflicts between transport and land-use planning and emissions reductions in the three Norwegian cities of Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger. Planners and decision-makers are well aware of the conflicting goals between transport and infrastructure development on the one hand, and climate and sustainability goals on the other. At the same time, planners have few tools or processes for resolving conflicting goals in concrete decision-making processes. Goal conflicts remain unresolved because they are displaced through *strategies of displacement*: temporal, sectorial, or scalar.

So why are goal conflicts displaced rather than resolved? The theoretical perspective we introduced suggests that goal conflicts are the result of and maintained by divergent knowledge, institutions, and material structures. In other words, a set of structural conditions in our governance systems allows goal conflicts to remain displaced, evaded, or ignored. However, we may tentatively propose some suggestions for better handling goal conflicts in practice.

Moving forward, goal conflicts should be more explicitly recognized in planning processes. Rather than displacing goal conflicts, planners might work to systematically identify and transparently discuss conflicting goals. Our analysis found that planning documents to some degree identified conflicting goals in the measures and interventions they proposed, but discussions of conflicting goals should to a much more significant degree be mainstreamed into planning documents, processes, and debates. For example, identifying and discussing conflicting goals could be a mandatory chapter or appendix in municipal plans. This process should be started as early as possible in project development processes, to increase the possibilities of finding viable solutions. That way decision-makers would be better informed about the stakes and broader implications of concrete decisions.

Also, as part of a more systematic and transparent approach to managing conflicting goals, planners and other governance actors should develop and use concrete tools to aid the decision-making processes. For climate change, inspiration can be drawn from climate budgeting of the type currently piloted by Oslo and other cities globally under the auspices of C40, a global network of mayors of major cities. Here planners develop a budget for emissions available within the limits of its long-term emissions targets. This enables the cities to integrate climate considerations across different sectors and plans. Similar budgets can be developed for land use, environmental change, and other sustainability issues. The budget tool can help make visible how various decisions in planning are interconnected, so more coherent decisions can be made across sectors, time, and scale.

These are tentative suggestions that may help embed the climate and sustainability goals in a city within general decision-making processes. Ultimately, of course, decisions to prioritize sustainability over other interests are typically left with politicians, and sectorial interests will remain. But making them more transparent, and mainstreaming the management of goal conflicts, they can be better informed. Policies can then be developed using cross-sectorial teams of planners and bureaucrats, so that conflicting concerns are highlighted from the beginning of policy processes.

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Stina Ellevseth Oseland was at the time of writing the article a PhD candidate at the Department of Geography and the Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation, University of Bergen. Her PhD project focuses on the role of climate and energy action plans in local climate transformation, empirically looking at Norwegian cities. She is now the head of Bergen municipality's Climate Agency.

Håvard Haarstad is a Professor in the Department of Geography and Director at the Center for Climate and Energy Transformation, University of Bergen. His research focuses on societal aspects of sustainable transformations, particularly related to climate change and cities.

ORCID

Håvard Haarstad http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2791-9282

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