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Mobility as Stress Regulation: A Challenge to Dialogue in Planning?

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Abstract

Most people consider both conflict and negotiation to be unpleasant experiences. It is particularly stressful to try to reason with others who do not share one's values and who therefore might appear unreasonable. Those who are habitually involved in this type of long-lasting dialogue which includes building consensus and trying to understand and respect other ways of thinking, are likely to experience mental strain. People in conflict-ridden communities would thus have a motive to look for stress-reducing strategies, such as 'voting with their feet' or other forms of physical distance regulation. The more mobility that a society offers, the more likely such strategies for keeping stress at a tolerable level would tend to be used. However, the tenets of discourse ethics require co-presence when dealing with tensions in troubled communities. Furthermore, communicative planning benefits from place attachment and social inclusion, some similitude of preferences, and strong commitment to one's home community. These are characteristics that might wither as a result of frequent travels away from home. As such, hyper-mobility may potentially be seen as a challenge to communicative planning and deliberation in a pluralistic society.

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Introduction

Tension exists between the proximity required by communicative planning and decision making and the physical distance regulation that is facilitated by enhanced personal mobility. The tension arises from the stress experienced in the interaction, discussion and negotiation with people who are egotistical or who act on the basis of different interests or value sets on the one hand, and the use of mobility and distance adjustment as means of stress regulation on the other.

A number of ongoing trends render this tension increasingly important. Firstly, mobility is steadily rising. The average Briton travelled about five miles a day in 1950, but now travels about 30 miles (Adams 2005:124). Schafer and Victor (2000) project that by 2050 the average world citizen will travel about the same distance as the average West European travelled in 1990. Secondly, deliberative democracy has been widely discussed recently (Bohman and Rehg 1997, Elster 1998), with the ideologically related communicative planning in the mainstream of current planning theory (Taylor 1998:122-25). Deliberative democracy is a procedural model of politics that favours universal and unconstrained deliberation about issues of public concern, rather than the mere collection of independent opinions through voting (Weinshall 2003:24). Thirdly, the migration of millions of people across national borders is a core element of the globalisation process. Planners and decision makers are now more than ever directing their attention towards the concomitant development of pluralistic and multicultural cities (Friedmann 2002, Sandercock 1998, 2003). This development augments the need for participatory planning processes, which have been mandatory in many liberal countries for some time. However, the deep differences between the values of population segments in modern multicultural cities may make involvement in communicative planning processes more trying (Bollens 2004, Watson 2006).

The following sections address three questions:
- Might stressful living conditions in local communities stimulate travel?
- Might higher mobility and more travel affect the feasibility of dialogue and discourse ethics?
- What are the implications of the answers to the previous two questions for local participatory planning?

In discussing these questions, this essay contributes both to planning theory and transport research. It connects two types of phenomena; the first is communicative processes in public planning and decision making, and the second the increase in mobility, which augments the flows of people, goods and information. Furthermore, the essay brings together the academic fields that study these phenomena, namely, communicative planning theory and the 'new mobilities' approach to sociology. These approaches are considered important enough by prominent scholars to be launched as new paradigms in public planning and sociology, respectively (Innes 1995, Sheller and Urry 2006, Willson 2001). The normative core of the essay, the belief that communication in planning processes should be developed and deepened, rests on Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics and his concept of dialogue (Habermas 1999). The three central concepts –

dialogue, social stress, and (hyper)mobility – are defined and explained in the sections where they arise in the essay.

Unfortunately, little empirical evidence is available in relation to several of the issues raised here. Very few studies discuss the effects of enhanced personal mobility on the feasibility of planning in general and communicative planning in particular (but see Sager 2005). Likewise, transport studies do not acknowledge the stress regulating function of making short trips and longer journeys – a notable lacuna in transport research to be discussed in the next section. Empirical investigations of transport responses to stress-producing disorders or conflicts in urban neighbourhoods are equally scarce. Consequently, this article cannot conclusively answer the question whether high mobility poses a challenge to face-to-face dialogue in planning. The aim here is rather to ask some thought provoking questions about the relationship between very frequent trip-making and participation in communicative planning and to forward a number of hypotheses in this regard. The essay is an attempt to think ahead towards the accentuated planning problems that might arise in a society where personal mobility is considerably higher than in Western countries early in the twenty-first century. The hypotheses concern (1) stress regulating travel, (2) the relation between high mobility, place attachment, and involvement in local planning, and (3) the contradiction between frequent temporary escapes from distressed local communities and the possibility of a social face-to-face dialogue of high quality.

Spatial planning encompasses urban renewal, zoning, and a number of other controversial activities. Among these are the siting of public facilities that are generally unwanted by the local population, the planning of new roads bringing noise, pollution, traffic accidents and barriers, and preparation for large private development causing congestion and environmental degradation, thereby changing the character of the place for the worse. Such projects need to be discussed locally in collective decision processes where residents have the opportunity to defend their interests. The literature of environmental psychology shows that neighbourhood stability will deepen attachment and local involvement. 'Living in a neighborhood with highly mobile residents generally makes it more difficult for neighbors to get acquainted with one another...and get involved in common local groups or initiatives' (Taylor 1996:43). Mobility in this citation refers to willingness to change residence rather than the frequency of trips. Both aspects of mobility – frequent permanent change of housing address and frequent return trips out of the troubled area – might affect the quality of dialogue in local communicative planning. It is generally assumed 'that residents, in part because we live in a highly mobile society, are willing to change neighborhoods if one community does develop problems' (ibid.47). It is hypothesised that high mobility, with regard to both residential shifts and the number of trips, is contrary to place attachment and sense of community. These subjective feelings are assumed to be important in motivating residents to enter dialogue in planning for community development.

References to different geographical levels and various types of travel are scattered throughout the essay. The emphasis is, however, on the level of local territorial community and the trips that regulate the distance to such places.1 Planning and

communicative processes often relate to the local level, and the entire argument in the coming sections could have been put forward without reference to entities other than local communities, municipalities, and cities. The occasional references to globalisation, migration, and nomads in the following are used as exemplifications and at the same time link with topical themes.

The line of reasoning is structured in five ensuing sections. The first draws attention to the fact that travelling can be motivated by tensions at the place of origin; for instance, conflicts of values or interests stalling the development of a local community. Tension creates stress, and the second section introduces the literature suggesting that altering physical distance can be used as a strategy in stress regulation. To the degree that this contributes to very high mobility, dialogue in planning might be unfavourably affected, as explained in the third section. This leads to the dilemma explained in the fourth section, as a consensus building type dialogue is particularly desirable in troubled communities likely to convert mobility into significant tension-related travelling. The dilemma is that face-to-face dialogue and very high mobility may be difficult to realise simultaneously. The final section sums up the argument and offers some concluding remarks.

Trips motivated by escape rather than attraction

This section presents the notion of origin-motivated trips, which constitutes part of the rationale for the strategy of using physical distance regulation as stress abatement. Even transport researchers objecting to the traditional view of transport as a derived demand ignore the psychological effects of travel which create physical and thus emotional distance (Anable and Gatersleben 2005, Mokhtarian and Salomon 2001, Steg 2005). However, Ory and Mokhtarian (2005) mention 'escape' as an attractive feature of travelling. Its appeal comes from temporarily escaping obligations, routines, distress, or tensions at home or at work (ibid. 99). They found some empirical evidence for this motive for travel in their model of 'travel liking' (ibid.121). Escape from stress contributes to the sense of freedom, which is often associated with auto-mobility (Sager 2006).

In principle, motives for travelling can spring from characteristics and phenomena related to the origin, the journey itself, the destination, or any mixture of the three. The sources of origin-motives (O-motives), underway-motives (U-motives), and destination-motives (D-motives) have not however received equal treatment in transport research. Demand models depict travel as involving a disutility to be endured for the sake of arriving at a desired destination, and with the rational 'economic man' behaviour assumed in the models this disutility should be minimised (Ortúzar and Willumsen 2001). The social benefits of mobility can be undervalued by disregarding the relief it provides from conditions at the origin, as well as ignoring the reasons why travelling can be a pleasing activity in itself. Although the local level is the focus here, it warrants mentioning that even at the international level several massive flows of people are O-motivated, such as those made up of refugees and migrant workers.

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Relative prices are the pivotal independent variables in economic demand models. Analogous to this, the relative attractiveness of origin and destination often determines whether or not a trip will be taken. Imagine that prospective income is the decisive variable, and that the destination offers higher income than the origin. It is quite conventional to maintain that the high income at the destination causes the journey, or that the trip is due to the low income at the origin. However, a biased accentuation of either O-push or D-pull factors seems equally fruitless in seeking to better understand travel behaviour. Morokvasic (2004) analyses Eastern European women's trans-border and short-term movements to the West, as such movements now form a recognisable pattern as regards post-1989 European migration. Many try to continue this back and forth movement for several years, 'settling within mobility', staying mobile as long as they can in order to improve or maintain their quality of life at home (ibid.7). 'In post-communist societies' race toward the market economy, many people react to the transition economy by hitting the road, trying to avoid being left on the fringes of their societies engaged in rapid, but unpredictable, transformation' (ibid.10). This type of cross-border shuttling is partly O-motivated and contains elements of stress regulation.

The present exposition centres on trips triggered by O-motives. It might, however, be problematic to determine the relative influence of each type of motive on specific trips. The standard approach of ignoring U- and O-motives probably reflects the transport planning profession's forecasting ambitions. The prediction purpose gives priority to quantifiable activities and to travel resistance measured in physical or economic terms. Trip generation models do of course take origin characteristics into account, but they concentrate on easily countable variables, such as the number of inhabitants in each age cohort, their income and car ownership, and residential density or the number of housing units of different types (Ortúzar and Willumsen 2001:Ch.4). Such O-variables do not however directly motivate travel; they only indicate the living conditions that may motivate trips. 'If a place does not help [persons] achieve desired affective states, they can be expected to seek emotional congruence through behavior such as travel' (Fuhrer et al. 1993: 310). Standard variables might, for example, hint at the occurrence of cramped apartments with small children and thus suggest the need for parents to put some distance between themselves and domestic tensions now and then. Travel studies are not however designed with such trip-generating stress regulation in mind. For each group in an origin zone, the emphasis is on modelling the travel consequences of its implicit preferences for activities in the various destination zones.

In the economic approach, benefits at the destination have to exceed the costs of the journey for any trip actually taken. A similar net calculation in terms of stress is pertinent in the psychological approach. Provided that costs and benefits balance each other, the advantage of stress abatement related to origin must outweigh any additional stress due to the travelling itself.2 This ambiguous association - between stress and travelling - does not undermine the main argument that high mobility paves the way for stress regulating trips motivated by origin-based tensions.

The idea of journeys being engendered by O-motives marks the transference, to transport research, of certain aspects of Charles Lindblom's 'disjointed incrementalism' model of

planning and policy-making (Lindblom 1959). In that model, 'analysis and policy-making are remedial; they move away from ills rather than toward known objectives' (Hirschman and Lindblom 1962:216). The transport analogy sees the origin as housing the ills, while travelling is the means, and destinations the ends. Remedial travel is O-motivated and aims to adjust distance to origin.3 Incrementalism rejects the idea of given ends. Instead, objectives are indefinitely explored and reconsidered (ibid.215). For O-motivated travel, this means that the destination is indeterminate and thus less important than the physical distance from the origin. Hirschman and Lindblom hold that, 'instead of comparing alternative means or policies in the light of postulated ends or objectives, alternative ends or objectives are also compared in the light of postulated means or policies and their consequences' (ibid.). This means that, in the present approach, journeys are not always the consequence of desired destinations; rather, it is the other way around. Possible destinations are compared in light of the trips called for, considering the distance they would remove the traveler from the origin. This is reinforced when ends and means are chosen simultaneously (ibid.) – meaning, here, that trip lengths do not follow from given destinations. In the incremental model, for any actor, 'analysis and policy-making are serial or successive; that is, problems are not "solved" but are repeatedly attacked' (ibid.). Analogically, O-motivated travel does not resolve the tension at the origin. But at least it gives the traveller some respite and creates an opportunity for contemplating what can be done about the conditions at the origin causing strain.4

The above application of disjointed incrementalism is static in the sense that there is no time dimension affecting the reasoning. However, an important difference between mainstream transport research and the 'new mobilities' paradigm is that the latter treats the traveller's means-ends scheme as dynamic (Sheller and Urry 2006). That is, in the sociology of mobility, it is of interest how destinations are transformed into new origins, and how space is turned into place (Taylor 1999), creating tensions in the process of establishing home, identity, or a sense of belonging. Moreover, how does mobility change preferences endogenously to create new destinations, and how do former origins cease to influence new movement? That is, how does path dependence influence trip generation? Can 'nomadism' be seen as the borderline case of travelling between places that each have the character of 'origins', here calling forth associations with the – however transient – home base from which most trips start? Might the marginalisation of some nomadic cultures follow from the rapid transformation of every new destination to an origin with concomitant tensions maintaining O-motives and kindling the urge to move on (Brearley 2001)?

The approach adopted by mainstream transport research is to start out from one basic concept, that is, 'transport'. The type of trip is then specified according to transport mode, trip purpose, what is transported, and so forth. 'Transport' covers all activity in public networks for the moving of people or goods, for which an origin and destination can be meaningfully identified. When O-motivated travel aiming for stress regulation is acknowledged, it might, however, serve analytical purposes to distinguish two basic concepts. The first, 'transport', designates movement that is instrumental in reaching a certain destination and thus a specific activity, hence, D-motivated movement.

'Wayfaring', on the other hand, designates trips and travels with a more arbitrary destination, or one to which the traveller is indifferent, and also movement caused by an intrinsic desire for travel (Ingold 2007:75-84). Wayfaring is undirected travel presupposing O- or U-motives. Movement and distance regulation are the immediate aims, often pursuing the objective of alleviating stress, and a destination, if there is one (or more), is largely incidental (compare Mokhtarian and Salomon 2001:696).5 It would nevertheless be wrong to suppose that the wayfarer wanders aimlessly over the surface of the earth, with no places of abode. Routes might be chosen because of their potential for enhancing the enjoyment of the journey. Or, when O-motives trigger a departure, a particular route might be chosen because there are places along the way that allow for stopovers at supposedly convenient distances from the origin. Bhat and Lockwood (2004) use a similar distinction to transport/wayfaring in a study of weekend recreational participation.

A few researchers ask whether the neighbourhood social environment – in addition to the built environment – influences travel behaviour. For example, McDonald (2007) found that a high level of neighbourhood cohesion sees more children walk to school. Schwanen and Mokhtarian (2005) exploit the idea of origin-motivated travel when studying the extent to which a lack of congruence between physical neighbourhood structure and preferences in respect of land use near the location of one's home affects the mode chosen and overall distances travelled. It thus remains a task for future research to extend 'residential neighbourhood type dissonance' from a mismatch of preference and reality related to land use characteristics to a mismatch related to social characteristics.

Studies of the relationship between place attachment and residents' leisure trips are potentially very relevant to the questions raised in this essay. Fuhrer et al. (1993) find that higher attachment scores are associated with lower travel activity over weekends and per year. Place attachment would tend to be high in neighbourhoods which do not cause their residents much stress, and low in distressed neighbourhoods with disorders and conflicts. Næss (2006:200) mentions 'the so-called escape hypothesis in studies of leisure travel – according to which, people who are dissatisfied with their dwelling and its surroundings will spend a large proportion of their leisure time elsewhere'. His own empirical study in the Copenhagen metropolitan area shows that '(f)or travel within "weekend trip distance" from the residence, inner-city living appears to have a certain compensatory effect in the form of a higher frequency of medium-distance leisure trips' (ibid.197). It is uncertain if any of this higher frequency reflects attempts to escape from deficiencies in some inner-city dwellers' residential environment. However, such an effect of escape from urban stress seems likely in the Swiss material analysed by Schlich and Axhausen (2002). Næss (2006:200-201) reports that:

Accounting for socioeconomic and demographic variables, they found more frequent trips to leisure activities away from home both among downtown dwellers and among the inhabitants of the traffic-exposed suburb, compared with those in the suburb not exposed to traffic nuisances.
Even though little empirical evidence is available, the hypothesis here is that the amount of O-motivated travel is significant and that such travel is used as a means of stress

regulation. Because transport research concentrates one-sidedly on the D-motivation of travellers, the rich psychological literature on personal space, relational distance and stress regulation is ignored. The next section is an attempt to link psychological contributions on 'distance' to the idea of O-motivated travel. This prepares the way for a discussion of the wayfarer setting out from troubled local, territorial communities later in the essay.

Mobility as stress regulation

This section situates physical distance as an element of psychological distance. It is maintained that boundary protection of a personal space, that is, the balancing of closeness/connectedness against distance/separateness, is used as stress regulation in personal relationships. Furthermore, the literature confirms that stress diminishes with increasing physical distance from traumatic, threatening or high-tension events. This suggests that high mobility, which makes physical distance regulation effective and feasible, can also be a means for stress abatement in troubled local communities. In proceeding, the concepts of mobility, hypermobility, and social stress are first defined.

Mobility is here seen as an individuals' potential or ability to travel over shorter and longer distances. Hence, mobility encompasses both the revealed and potential transport of people. With increasing opportunities and means for travelling, society will sooner or later achieve a level of mobility that involves so much individual freedom of choice, so many complex combined options of activities and transport, and such intricate and shifting tactics for utility maximisation, that planners are unable to adequately model when and where people will travel. Society will have then reached the state of hypermobility (Sager 2005).

This state of hypermobility corresponds to the utopian situation in which resistance to moving across physical distances is so low that the trip frequency for each purpose of travel would be the same whether the destinations (working place, school, friends, public offices, shops, recreational areas, etc) are situated in the immediate neighbourhood or on the opposite side of the city. A more realistic idea of hypermobility can be imagined, say halfway between this utopian hypermobility and the mobility level of a well-off U.S. family in 2010 paying an affordable petrol price, living in a small city without notable congestion, and owning one car for each grown-up family member. What is said about hypermobility throughout the essay is meant to be valid for such a 'realistic' interpretation.

Several strategies exist for the regulation of stress through changing one's mobility. The following categorisation includes strategies with both more and less travelling compared to the situation in which stress is not a problem:
1. Renouncing mobility and withdrawing to the private sphere (Miethe 1995, Wells and Harris 2007).
2. Changing the characteristics of trips traversing the stress-generating area, for example, shifting to less stressful routes avoiding crime spots, blocks with hostile

residents, or the blight of run-down neighbourhoods. In some stress-producing conditions, it may help to change the time of day during which the trip was undertaken or to avoid making the trip alone (Brown et al.2007, Loukaitou-Sideris 2006).
3. Trips to 'safe havens' (shelters, places of worship) or places with surveillance (malls, community-based clubs) within the troubled area, where the disorders and dangers of the city are kept at bay (Coleman 2004, Raco 2007).
4. Return trips out of distressed or unsatisfactory residential areas (Kaiser 1993, Morokvasic 2004, Schlich and Axhausen 2002).
5. Moving permanently from the distressed area, as studied in the fields of residential mobility (Clark 2005) and migration (Bell and Ward 2000).

Stress is pressure, tension, worry and distress resulting from problems in one's life. Still, it is not seen here as a mental or physiological reaction that should be eliminated, as some stress is hardly distinguishable from the form of arousal coming with an interesting and stimulating life. However, the level of stress can be so high, as subjectively felt by an individual, that it becomes unpleasant and debilitating. Attention is particularly focused here on social stress, not caused by personal mental conflicts or family relations, but rather caused by decay, disorder, congestion or conflict in the area where the individual lives. When excessive social stress is felt, the individual is likely to search for strategies of avoidance, disengagement, and cognitive dissociation, in order to achieve optimal psychological distance from the source of tension (Hess 2000, 2002).

Empirical studies in psychology have found that 'distance' is related to a wide range of relational processes and outcomes, such as conflict, attachment, arousal, cognitive appraisal, relational satisfaction, and affect (Hess 2002:663). Psychological distance is broadly defined as 'the absence of closeness, or, more specifically, as a feeling of separation from another, resulting from infrequent, weak, and/or unvaried causal interconnections' (ibid.664). Psychological distance may be too high or too low, so closeness is a variable to be optimised rather than maximised. In planning contexts, a person might see the regulation of distance from a disagreeable relational partner as a significant mechanism by which the unpleasant but necessary relationship can be kept intact. Distancing can therefore be a maintenance process, and it can be accomplished through both cognitive and behavioural means. That is, to regulate relational distance, people may change their behaviour, or they may change the meaning assigned to the same behaviour. The adjustment of physical distance implies behavioural change; in the face of unwanted closeness it functions as an avoidance strategy for regulating psychological distance. It serves, for example, to prevent a tension-building interaction episode from happening. Based on a series of experiments, Hess concluded that 'avoidance is people's first choice for creating relational distance' (ibid.676).

Kantor and Lehr (1975) documented that the tension between the desire for closeness and the desire for distance is an essential feature of family relationships. They recorded hundreds of events in which family members attempted to put both psychological and physical distance between themselves and their relatives (ibid.7). Physical distance expresses the extent of spatial proximity and was subsumed into psychological distance.

Stress-regulating movement takes place at many geographical levels, running the full gamut from adjusting the distance to neighbors (Crow et al. 2002) and adjusting seating distance from a disliked person in a room (micro) to emigration to a foreign country (macro). In micro settings, people generally seem to prefer greater physical distance between themselves and others in higher-tension situations (Long et al. 1980, Long 1984). A child's preferred physical closeness to other persons is correlated with empathy, and proximity may be facilitated when empathy is present (Strayer and Roberts 1997). Some examples concerning the relation between stress level and physical distance from tension-building events are given below.

In some cases, there is an objective risk continuously present at a location or in a district, and this risk diminishes with increasing physical distance from that area. It seems reasonable, then, that people's stress and worries follow a similar pattern reflecting geographic proximity. In a case of serial murders at a university campus, Biernat and Herkov (1994) found that physical distance from the murder sites was associated with reduced stress symptoms. Similarly, people living close to a Russian nuclear power plant (Eraenen 1997) or near the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant (Davidson et al. 1982, Gatchel et al. 1985) showed stronger stress reactions than people living farther away. Milgram (1993) found lower stress levels with less proximity to damaged sites in a study of adult Israelis' reaction to nocturnal missile attacks during the Persian Gulf War. Riolli et al. (2002) obtained similar results when studying Albanians' reactions to the Kosovo crisis of 1999. There have been several studies of the variation in stress level according to the distance from sites of terrorist attacks. Sprang (1999) examined mental reactions to the Oklahoma City bombing, while Blanchard et al. (2005) and Ford et al. (2003) systematized reactions to the September 11 attacks. They all found that post-traumatic stress symptoms increased with proximity to the incident.

It is uncertain, though, what the above-mentioned reports on reduced stress levels for people living at distances removed from shocking events tell about the stress-regulating effect of taking trips out of troubled neighborhoods. In the literature reviewed, each person reporting his or her stress symptoms stays a constant distance from the tension-producing event. In the problem situation discussed in this essay, however, each person lives in the high-tension area, leaves temporarily and often only for a few hours, and then returns to face unaltered conditions. Increasing distance from the trouble spot might ameliorate stress in both cases, but not necessarily in the same way or to the same extent.

Another indication of stress regulating behavior is found in the literature relating residential mobility to place attachment or sense of community. 'Place attachment refers primarily to affective, but also cognitive and behavioral, bonds between individuals or groups and one or several places' (Gustafson 2001:668). Place attachment is distinct from sense of community because the former is a spatially oriented emotional construct, while the latter is more of a socially oriented cognitive construct (Long and Perkins 2007). Those who have negative feelings towards the place in which they reside are expected to experience a greater level of intra-urban residential mobility (Randall et al. 2008:24).

Also, low place attachment and a low sense of community are associated with high stress level:

According to Clark (2005:15308) research suggests that people in poor neighborhoods have a lower health status than those in non-poor areas. One explanation for this outcome is that poor neighborhoods cause stress. The daily stresses of residing in communities with crime, noise and poor housing produce internal stresses that lead to anxiety, depression and diminished quality of life. (Randall et al. 2008:26-7)

When mobility is discussed in relation to place attachment, the focus is often on change of permanent residence. However, Gustafson (2001) suggests that temporary forms of mobility – travel for leisure or work, for example – should also be considered.

It is argued in this section that stress experienced as a consequence of an array of tension-generating situations is regulated by physical distance and the amount of time spent away from the stressful environment. Thus, when the stress level becomes troublesome, people have a motive to diminish stress by adjusting their travelling pattern with regard to frequency, trip duration, and distance from stressful locations. It is not possible to infer from travel surveys to what extent this is actually done, as these surveys do not identify O-motives as reasons for making trips. The majority of daily trips are mainly D-motivated, such as journeys to work, school, and public service. Trips for shopping, visiting friends, recreation and entertainment might be prompted by a combination of D-based and O-based motives. The need for 'escape' can affect the duration of the stay away from the origin, the wayfaring character of the trip (time spent at the destination versus time spent en route), and the choice of destination. In any case, it seems reasonable on the basis of the present section to hypothesise that, stressful living conditions, processes or events in the neighbourhood will entice people to take advantage of their mobility and thus alleviate stress by regulating the physical distance from stress-inducing circumstances.

The trips generated by high-tension living conditions can be of very different types. Stress might sometimes be relieved by walking around a few blocks before returning home. Or, a couple of days away visiting relatives might create the desired distance. On other occasions, a three week holiday would reduce stress to a tolerable level. If tension tends to build up again on return, then a permanent move might be considered, although residential mobility can be trying in itself, as exchanges of social support are negatively affected (Magdol and Bessel 2003). The dissimilar trip categories bear upon the conditions for communicative planning processes in different ways and to different degrees. As will be explained in the next section, however, the hypothesised general tendency is that higher mobility and longer and more frequent journeys will have an adverse effect on dialogue in planning of the local, territorial community to which the traveller belongs.

The influence of high mobility on the feasibility of discourse ethics

Dialogue is a central feature of discourse ethics, and one that might come under pressure as societies grow ever more mobile. This section argues that extensive O-motivated travel can contribute to this potential problem for communicative planning by explaining why widespread and frequent travelling makes discourse ethics less workable.

Surely, trips triggered by the attractiveness of the destination can also adversely affect social dialogue in one's own district. This article nevertheless centres on O-motivated travel because it takes place as a direct reaction to the difficulties that the social dialogue should be dealing with, namely how to improve the dysfunctional and stress-creating aspects of the local community. Hence, O-motivated trips can be seen as an explicit alternative to social dialogue and thus as a challenge to communicative planning. This is set forth as an hypothesis, although arguments also exist which point in the opposite direction. For example, after journeys providing temporary disengagement, one might return home with renewed energy to reengage in social dialogue.

Since the 1980s planning theory has given a prominent role to dialogue and communicative processes. Most of the contributions have been inspired by Jürgen Habermas's (1999) theory of communicative action and have been launched under the labels of communicative planning, critical pragmatism or collaborative planning (Forester 1989, Healey 1997, Innes and Booher 1999, Sager 1994). Habermas's concept of 'dialogue' occupies a central position in these planning approaches as a benchmark for evaluating processes found in practice. Dialogue ideally requires that all concerned should take part, freely and equally, in a cooperative search for truth, where nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument. This is 'a speech situation that satisfies improbable conditions: openness to the public, inclusiveness, equal rights to participation, immunization against external or inherent compulsion, as well as the participants' orientation toward reaching understanding (that is, the sincere expression of utterances)' (Habermas 1999:367).

The character and function of dialogue are an integrated part of Habermas's (1990, 1993) discourse theory of democracy. Discourse ethics is a theory about the ethical implications of the presuppositions that people must make when they participate in debate. It mandates a critical interpretation and revision of private needs for the sake of reaching consensus on norms, for example, in a communicative planning process:

The general goal of Habermas's project of discourse ethics is to develop a just method of resolving moral conflicts in a pluralistic society, in which the authority of one set of sacred texts or other authorities does not enjoy universal and politically legitimating support (Weinshall 2003:25).

According to Ingram (1993:306), Habermas claims that the coordination, integration, and socialisation of persons inhabiting modern societies all depend on rational communication. This is seen as the only way to restore confidence between contending parties in the event of communication failure or disagreement. The emphasis on 'rational

consensus' is retained as a regulative ideal that guides deliberation and legitimizes the outcome of democratic procedures.6 Rational communication means dialogue, so if hypermobility affects dialogue negatively, this might have profound social repercussions.

Communicative planning and decision making in the Habermasian vein is based on discourse ethics, which implies attempts at reaching consensus on norms that are in the real interests of everyone. This is an attractive but sometimes hardly realizable goal in planning processes, where deep differences are often observed between the groups involved. World-views and the very meaning of development or progress might differ, and people occasionally regard each other from within divergent rationalities (Watson 2006). The moral principle of discourse ethics – the Universalisation principle – states that:

Every valid norm must satisfy the condition that the consequences and side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of the interests of each could be freely accepted by all affected (and be preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation) (Habermas 1993:32).

The Universalisation principle tells us under what conditions consensus on a norm qualifies as rational, that is, expresses an insight into the better argument (Rehg 2002:407). Habermas argues that one must also presuppose that the following conditions are fulfilled, to give the participants reason to believe that the results of the discourse are valid:

1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
2a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever;
b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse;
c. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.
3. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2) (Habermas 1990:89).

Interpreting dialogue as implying physical co-presence and face-to-face conversation is too strict. In planning processes where significant numbers of people are affected by the proposed projects, the simultaneous presence of all involved is unrealistic, and especially in a citizenry with high mobility. It is obvious that everyone cannot speak to everyone in a dispute of any scope. The ideal claims of discourse ethics cannot be satisfied to the letter, as no individual would be able to argue the matter out with all other affected individuals. Nevertheless, face-to-face dialogue is the core of citizen participation at the local level. Strong doubt would be cast upon the urgency of protest and the intensity of preferences without members of different parties actually turning up to argue their case. Therefore, the line of reasoning throughout is directed at this archetypal form of dialogue.

Discourse ethics is a vehicle for systematic reflection on the problems attending consensus in pluralistic societies. It is argued below that consensus in processes with the above characteristics will be harder to reach in conditions of very high mobility. The

reasons for this are given in subsections arranged around four terms: (1) diverse preferences, (2) different life contexts foster social exclusion, (3) unpredictable consequences, and (4) loose ties with the home community. Consensus might also seem less important to the individual under hypermobility. The closing remarks of this section suggest that this is because high mobility facilitates 'voting with one's feet'.

Diverse preferences

High mobility gives the opportunity for all sorts of trips, many of them involving journeys outside the communities in which the traveller performs his or her daily activities. Visits to other communities, societies, and cultures expose the traveller to new practices, ideas, values, and lifestyles. The visited population is affected in similar ways. Whether one likes or dislikes the new influences, increased mobility might change preferences and make them more unstable. This is a threat to established cultural traditions, and when traditions dissolve, it becomes less likely that all participants in a planning dialogue will endorse the same norms and physical solutions. MacIntyre (1988:326-369) holds that until the parties in practical reasoning and dialogue have made the existential commitment to a common tradition, any conflict resolution is either accidental or manipulated, and thus irrational or impossible. Discourse ethics cannot get around the objection that rational consensus requires prior agreement on a tradition-mediated notion of the common good. Thus, by eroding tradition, hypermobility makes it harder to realise the Universalisation principle because the effects on individuals of extensive travelling weaken the foundation for solving social conflict.

In line with the above argument, increasing mobility is likely to promote cultural diversity and thus pluralistic and multicultural societies. High mobility challenges the liberal construction of the undifferentiated 'we'. This supports the assumption that high mobility makes agreement and, therefore, collective decision making more difficult. The trend towards multiculturalism has provoked serious criticism of Habermas's discourse ethics. Baumeister suggests that:

If discursive approaches to justice are to recognise the depth and complexity of diversity, they must abandon the Habermasian search for consensus in favour of a vision of liberalism that acknowledges the plurality and incommensurability of fundamental values and which consequently accepts the pervasiveness of value conflict. (Baumeister 2003:741)

Rational conflict resolution is possible only if the participants can take the argument to an already agreed upon notion of the good human life (Rehg 1994:80). Habermas (1993:91) concedes that 'the sphere of questions that can be answered rationally from the moral point of view shrinks in the course of the development toward multiculturalism', but argues that finding solutions to these few more sharply focused questions becomes all the more critical to coexistence. Moral discourse must include an empathetic sensitivity to the values and needs of other people, as well as an attention to the particularities of the concrete situation.

Diverse preferences often cause dialogical consensus building processes to be difficult and drawn out. The closer the conversations come to embodying the ideal, the more inefficient they are with respect to time (Chambers 1996:171). Negotiation, instrumental trade-offs, and strategic bargaining are the most common alternative routes to reaching agreement and resolving disputes (ibid.196), and they are more time efficient. The wish to save time is a strong driving force behind ever increasing mobility. It is not evident, then, that constituencies providing political backing for the funding of development towards hypermobility will vote to institutionalize discursive forums for collective will formation.

Different life contexts foster social exclusion

Under the constant influx of new ideas and preferences boosted by high mobility, life contexts formed by the pursuit of a particular set of values and a distinctive tradition of embedding them in cultural practices become vulnerable. The protection of a life context depends on the protection of the rights and norms that defend personal freedom (Baumeister 2003:743). Habermas (2001:767) contends that 'citizens can make an appropriate use of their public autonomy [...] only if they are sufficiently independent in virtue of an equally protected private autonomy'. Defense of freedom and the protection of life context are thus closely intertwined, but while high mobility threatens the peculiarity of life contexts, it is often considered an important aspect of freedom (Sager 2006). The problem here is that particular life contexts come under extra pressure with increased mobility which leads to frequent contact between different cultures and lifestyles.

Deviating life contexts may be hard to sustain and uphold as integrated parts of a majority culture. 'And the greater this diversity is the more abstract are the rules and principles that protect the integrity and egalitarian coexistence of subjects who are becoming increasingly unfamiliar with one another in their difference and otherness' (Habermas 1993:90-91). To strengthen the protection of the minority's distinctive character, some distance from the predominant culture is therefore often sought, and the majority's response to this might eventually be exclusion. In fact, because of the element of bonding in communities, they all have built into them by their very nature the defect of exclusion (Etzioni 2000:189).

However, social exclusion runs directly contrary to the principles of discourse ethics. Given that the needs of groups that are socially disadvantaged due to, e.g., ethnicity or religion are liable to differ notably from those of the principal group, and taking account of the fact that even the most benevolent majority tends to misunderstand the needs of minorities, it is vital that members of minority groups participate in public debate so as to ensure that their needs and interests are clearly articulated (Baumeister 2003:747). With ongoing globalisation, minority groups that are vulnerable to social exclusion are often the result of inter-societal mobility.7 The relation between daily mobility and social exclusion of immigrants with a culture that deviates from that of the host country has

been studied by Rajé (2004) and Uteng (2006). Kenyon (2006) examined the relation between mobility and social exclusion in general.

Unpredictable consequences

The Universalisation principle of discourse theory explicitly demands that those in favour of a norm should be able to convince others that its consequences and side effects are acceptable for all (as discussed at length by Rehg 1994). However, the higher the mobility, the more difficult it is to make predictions about travel patterns, activity structure, individual preferences, and thus collective decisions (Sager 2005). This is partly because hypermobility enables individuals to exploit their knowledge of small alterations in the supply of goods, services, and activities, as well as varying whims and tastes, and constantly change their activity patterns and trajectories of movement to maximise satisfaction of their wants. Another reason is that the widely diverging preferences likely to follow from hypermobility tend to make 'the will of the people' unstable and cyclical and thus make collective decisions arbitrary (Riker 1982, Sager 2002).

Even if all norms might not be equally affected by these implications of hypermobility, one cannot take it for granted that the intended and unintended impacts of a norm can be anticipated. Hypermobility does therefore have an adverse effect on communicative planning by dissolving knowledge about the future. Actually, Habermas insists that a broad range of personal information should corroborate practical reason when discourse ethics is to be applied: individual life histories, identities, needs, wants, and traditions (Rehg 1994:101). Such personal profiles might be easier to elicit in a sedentary society than in a mobile society characterised by fluidity and changeability. Without such knowledge, it would be impossible to determine whether a norm puts someone else at a relative disadvantage.

Loose ties with the home community

Very high mobility converted into extensive travelling seems to loosen people's ties with their home communities (Feldman 1990, Nynäs forthcoming). It might then become of less significance to the individual whether the real interests of everyone are actually satisfied when norms are deliberated. This is one way of saying that solidarity might not be appropriately valued as mobility keeps increasing. A modest claim for solidarity that must be fulfilled in processes guided by discourse ethics is that the individual submit his or her moral reflection to all those affected (Rehg 1994:107). Stronger moral solidarity is needed, however, to support relations of mutual recognition that preserve the identity of a form of life (Cooke 1997, Fraser 2000). Furthermore,

in seeking to convince another, a participant must be concerned that the other's conviction rests on arguments whose terms are appropriate to the other's need interpretation, i.e., arguments that do not distort the perception of the other's welfare...(H)owever, participants can neither recognize each other's needs and wants, nor

argue that a norm's observance has acceptable consequences for those needs and wants, unless they recognize values in terms of which each one's welfare becomes the concern of all, i.e., a generalizable interest calling for and structuring social cooperation. (Rehg 1994:111)

The two elements mentioned in the citation are at the core of moral solidarity. Such empathetic concern for the individual's welfare is inseparable from justice, the normative basis of group cooperation (ibid.111). There is a risk here that greater mobility weakens people's sense of belonging and their solidarity with the local home community without compensating by extending sympathy with people in larger territories. In that case, the above line of reasoning supports the claim that hypermobility does not sit easily with discourse ethics.

Voting with one's feet

There may then be a causal link between high mobility, low place attachment and weak motivation for participation in communicative planning. The literature in this field is only indicative however, as it does not directly address participation in planning, but instead deals with political participation (Hays and Kogl 2007), neighborhood organizational involvement (Chavis and Wandersman 1990, Long and Perkins 2007, Perkins et al. 1996), and voluntary civic action in general (Larsen et al. 2004, Payton et al. 2005, Ryan et al. 2005). The thrust of the findings is that the strengthening of informal ties known as 'social capital' promotes community attachment which, in turn, positively affects citizen engagement. Ryan et al. (2005:310) write that:

Turner (2000) provides further refinement by noting the importance of face-to-face relational patterns for linking personal emotions with community context. Accordingly, based on our findings, the face-to-face encounters in the form of formal and informal ties positively contribute to a community's level of social capital (or attachment) which leads, in turn, to collective action in the form of voluntary participation.

The hypothesis here is that higher mobility and the concomitant increase in travelling erodes community attachment and thus negatively affects citizen participation in planning.

There are three main reasons why high mobility is a challenge to dialogue. The first is the various ways in which more mobility makes consensus less likely, as argued above. The second is that people must be able to assemble in a way that is supportive of rational discourse and debate, and it might be problematic to manage proper encounters between parties whose life flows rarely intersect. The third reason is that mobility makes it easier to leave a territorial community temporarily or permanently when value sets diverging substantially from one's own form the basis of social organization (Hirschman 1970, Orbell and Uno 1972). That is, mobility offers a way out of the problems to which it contributes, and the 'solution' is some kind of distance regulation. There are also arguments casting doubt on the negative relationship between high mobility and the ability to reach consensus in neighborhood dialogue. For instance, mobility could

positively correlate with engagement with others, as those with travel experience would know more about 'others' and have more experience about being 'other'. This idea is not pursued further here.

Reaching consensus in a specific local forum might appear less important to an individual the easier it is to 'vote with one's feet'. Voting with one's feet is the archetypal mobile mode of decision making; one moves about until one finds a sufficient number of others who share one's own values and viewpoints and joins a polity of fellow partisans. This is simpler under hyper mobility, and is further facilitated by looser ties with the home community.

This section has argued that consensus on norms may be less likely in more mobile societies. In addition, agreement on fair substantive outcomes, e.g. public plans, can be harder to reach under hypermobility. This is because a fair product relies on a fair procedure that depends on dialogue, which in turn becomes a challenge with ever increasing mobility. The main mechanism is that high mobility leads to diverging preferences and multicultural cities and societies. The same social trends do, however, also facilitate moving away from frustrating environments. This weakens the motive for revising one's preferences and reflecting critically on one's values in communicative planning. Planning theorists' insistence on dialogue and Habermas's continued commitment to the search for consensus (Baumeister 2003:749, Habermas 2001:772) seem to fit better with a sedentary ideology than with the 'new mobilities' approach's idea of the fluid society and the rapidly developing technologies for communication at a distance. Nevertheless, Habermas's fear that political disputes will be reduced to purely strategic struggles for power in the absence of a search for rational agreement is well founded (Habermas 1996). If it erodes social dialogue and undermines solidarity, hypermobility would seem to make people more vulnerable to political settlements that simply favour the views of the majority. But high mobility also makes it easier to escape by wayfaring and applying the strategy of distance regulation to alleviate stress and strain caused by tensions in the home community. This ambiguity points to a dilemma spelt out in the next section.

A planning dilemma in conditions of 'splintering urbanism'

The preceding sections have propounded that part of travelling is motivated by tensions at the origin, and that too much travelling can impede dialogue. It is left to this section to complete the argument and bring to the fore the potential difficulty arising from the supposition that troubled local communities may require both dialogical consensus building processes and opportunities for stress-regulating escape.

This section argues that a dilemma emerges in conflict-ridden and fragmented urban communities – or in conditions of 'splintering urbanism', borrowing a term from Graham and Marvin (2001). While internally non-cooperative communities might be most in need of dialogue and consensus-building planning processes, such communities presumably also tend to motivate much travel for stress-regulating purposes. The problem is that

hypermobility transformed to actual travelling undermines discourse ethics and thus dialogue. It can be hypothesised that a lifestyle on the move negatively affects place attachment and sense of community which 'motivate ordinary residents to act collectively to preserve, protect, or improve their community and participate in local planning processes...(P)rocesses of collective action work better when emotional ties to places and their inhabitants are cultivated' (Manzo and Perkins 2006:347).

Most nation-states are now culturally as well as religiously diverse. Deliberation in such states often involves citizens who do not share the same collective aims, moral values, or world views (Bohman 1995:253-54, Rescher 1993). Pluralism and multiculturalism are by no means the only reasons why it can be hard to make collective decisions by dialogue in local communities. It is a general problem in communities plagued by conflicting interests that animosity can keep people away from planning processes and give them reason to utilise their mobility to create distance to local conflicts. From a social point of view this may be counter-productive particularly where such withdrawal tends to take place in communities much in need of inter-group dialogue to promote mutual understanding.

Assume now that it is agonizing and arduous to live in a particular territorial community.

(I)n cases where neighbors are anonymous and do not stay long enough to develop any emotional connection to the place, they tend not be committed enough to improve their own home, or to work with their neighbors and local agencies to improve the whole neighborhood (Manzo and Perkins 2006:337).

Unnerving participatory planning processes are just a symptom of the conflicting interests and values marring interrelations between social groups. It is worth noting that there are several stress regulating strategies besides physical distancing, and the ensuing list is not exhaustive. Each of these other strategies can also have negative consequences for public planning, as will be seen.

One such strategy is to cultivate the homogeneous fragments of the multicultural mosaic. This means that each individual takes refuge in his or her own group and leaves external interaction to representatives who become responsible for creating a harmonious pattern of the many diverse pieces. The forums of communicative planning would then be meetings of representatives, where presumably each participant would primarily be taken up with looking after the interests of the constituency in order to keep his or her back covered. Lower priority would be given to justifying their views about the best outcome by appealing to common interests or by arguing in terms of reasons that all could accept in the public debate. 'Collective decision should in some sense reflect an interpretation of the common good that could be justified by public reasons, that is, ones that are generally convincing to everyone participating in the process of deliberation' (Rehg and Bohman 1996:81). The problem is that the various constituencies might not be convinced, as they

have not attended the deliberations and have not had the opportunity to be swayed by the arguments of the other representatives.

A second strategy for relieving the stress of participatory planning is to unduly discount the future and lapse into a mode of thinking that centres on what one can have now. The link between waiting and expectation is broken (Gasparini 1995). The result is a culture of consumption and entertainment that places little weight on what might be achieved by patience and common effort. One shares the company of people belonging to other groups in the passive and noncommittal role of being an audience, but steps back from the more challenging task of accomplishing something together. Planning is part of a collective production process rather than consumption. It is, moreover, preparation for the future and does not pay off in the here and now. Hence, communicative planning processes have little to offer those who adopt this second strategy.

The third strategy manipulates the time dimension to a stronger degree than the second. The individual here opts for fully fledged time distancing. Stress in the present is kept at bay by seeking solace in 'the good old days' or in dreams of a brighter future. Nostalgia and trust in a coming redeemer both serve to lift the individual along the time axis so as to gain distance from a distressing situation. Utopias can have a similar effect (Jameson 2004), and even visions and plans might contribute to a spiritual reorientation away from present tensions. Some people might see such 'time travelling' as an easier way out of present problems than participatory attempts at planned social change.

Apart from physical distancing, the fourth and last strategy to be mentioned here is withdrawal from the public to the private sphere (Weintraub 1997), leaving the few that have not yet retreated to do their 'bowling alone' (Putnam 2000). It might seem that, on every front, 'the "public" is being privatized, the private is becoming oversized, and this undermines democratic life'. However, this is the diagnosis that Sheller and Urry (2003:107) find is often made by others, not the one guiding their own work. They hold that the border between the public and private domains is becoming blurred, and that 'cars, information, communications, screens, are all material worlds, hybrids of private and public life' (ibid.113). Not only citizenship and democracy, but also effective stress regulation, will depend on individuals' capacity to navigate these new mobile and hybrid worlds. Note that the analogy to physical distancing is not a one-way retreat into the private realm, but stress regulation by moving back and forth between these ever more unclear categories by ever more hybrid technologies. Involvement in planning processes exposes the individual to all the strains of arguing in public and will not seem like a good idea to anyone fighting off stress by seeking more privacy.

Withdrawal can take many forms. One set of measures is to create a 'fortress' that fends off smaller or bigger zones from what their inhabitants consider threatening. This can be done at the macro scale; for example, 'fortress Europe' restricting the influx of Africans and Asians to the EU. It is also done at the micro scale, where gated communities are one kind of fortress – enclaves of homes surrounded by walls, often with security guards (Grant and Mittelsteadt 2004, Luymes 1997). The lowest level is the single home. Crime and other serious disorder in the neighbourhood can scare people to stay indoors,

withdrawing from the public sphere (Miethe 1995, Taylor 1996). This strategy for regulating stress seriously restricts mobility, in contrast to O-motivated travel out of the troubled area.

As demonstrated above, there are several alternatives to physical distancing as stress regulation. One might then surmise that it does not matter much if high mobility, converted to physical distance regulation, were to exacerbate the conditions for discourse ethics and thus communicative planning. People would often use the alternative strategies for reducing stress anyway. However, the above description of the four alternative strategies purports to show that even these forms of stress regulation render social dialogue difficult in local communities that are really in need of consensus building processes. The set of stress regulating strategies discussed here therefore does not help to dissolve the dilemma addressed in this section: High tensions in a community increase the need both for dialogical consensus building and stress regulating travel, but the lifestyle of being constantly on the move seems likely to make discourse ethics and thus communicative planning less workable. Admittedly, the practical significance of this dilemma is uncertain, as very little empirical knowledge is available about the amount of wayfaring relative to transport, on O-motivated travel in conflict-ridden local communities, and on the effect of hypermobility on dialogue in public planning processes. Hence, it is not known for certain that physical distancing is the most important of the stress regulating mechanisms that might negatively impact communicative planning. For the sake of keeping the essay within acceptable bounds, it is still legitimate to concentrate on physical distancing and explore the problems that stress regulating use of high mobility might create for social dialogue.

A partial 'solution' to the deficit of face-to-face dialogue might be found in the enormous growth of mobile communication technology, which blurs the distinction between presence and absence (Licoppe 2004, Sager 2006); examples are mobile phones, e-mail, peer-to-peer voice, Skype, and MSN. There is reason to place the word 'solution' here in inverted commas as such technologies are also part of the problem in that they are an integral part of the set of technical-economic developments that allow for a highly mobile society in the first place. On the other hand, mobile communication devices allegedly allow for long distance dialogue. By providing individuals with information and knowledge that they would not otherwise have access to, 'mediated quasi-interaction can stimulate deliberation just as much as, if not more than, face-to-face interaction in a shared locale' (Thompson 1995:256, as cited in Sheller and Urry 2003:118). Etzioni and Etzioni (1999) reach a similar conclusion regarding computer-mediated communications (CMC), finding that 'there are no conceptual reasons or technical ones that CMC-based communities...could not become full-fledged communities'. Even so, the new technologies have not empirically been found to substitute for face-to-face contact (Licoppe and Smoreda 2005, Wellman et al. 2001).

In any case, new distance regulators are emerging that are based on the convergence of technologies for communication and transport (Sheller 2004). They have the potential for reinforcing the effect of physical distance regulation by efficiently managing personal approachability, as people simply press buttons on wireless devices. Physical distancing

is generalised by technologies that make it easier to slip in and out of different public and private domains, social settings, relationships, and even identities (Kronlid forthcoming). The result is stress regulation not only by geographical movement, but through 'more complex possibilities for coupling and decoupling across time and space' (Sheller 2004:48).

Final remarks

Public planning is a vehicle for systematic reflection on many of the problems that call for consensus building in pluralistic societies (Connolly 2005, Rescher 1993). Dialogue and discourse ethics fuel this vehicle. However, hypermobility makes it difficult to provide high quality fuel. In order to implement discourse ethics in practical communicative processes, a break with subject-centred reason is called for. The derivation of the Universalisation principle takes the subject-centred approach to the point where it must be abandoned. Individuals only possess their autonomy by virtue of their prior mutual recognition of one another. Such solidarity involves both concern for one another's welfare as individuals and reliance on a social network within which such recognition alone makes sense (Rehg 1994:109). However, the development towards hypermobility is to a large extent driven by the aim of individual utility maximisation and the idea of personal freedom as the ability to choose from the greatest possible set of goods and activities. Hence, the forces behind hypermobility encourage subject-centred reason. This makes for a deep-rooted dissonance between discourse ethics and hypermobility.

This essay suggests that stress regulation is an important function of mobility. When tension builds up in the neighbourhood or the local community – sometimes spilling over into emotionally challenging planning processes – people will attempt to regain peace of mind by adjusting psychological distance. The regulation of physical distance is one strategy for achieving this and thus stimulates an unknown number of wholly or partly origin-motivated trips. It is potentially problematic that communicative planning processes based on discourse ethics make moral and behavioural claims that might become harder to satisfy in highly mobile societies that increase the use of travel as stress regulation. Face-to-face dialogue implies proximity but sometimes motivates the search for distance. The aim of this essay has been to argue that this dilemma is worth studying, especially in liberal and multicultural societies with escalating mobility. Even so, the question mark in the title of the article is best retained, as little is still empirically known both about O-motivated travel and the effects of hypermobility on dialogue in public planning.

Empirical research on the relationship between communicative planning and extensive travelling could start by asking small samples (students) about their origin-motivated travel. If the results are promising, researchers could ask residents in areas afflicted by disorder and conflict about their attempts to temporarily 'get away from it all'. To what extent do residents use the escape strategy of regulating physical distance? If residents make significant use of this strategy, the study could be followed up with a more

comprehensive questionnaire. Questions should deal with the ways that easy escape from the distressed area – temporarily or permanently – affects attachment to the place and the motivation for participating in discussions with fellow residents about planned neighbourhood improvements.

Notes

1   The following definition of 'community' is used in this essay:

Community is a combination of two elements: A) A web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (rather than merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships). B) A measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, to a particular culture (Etzioni 2000:188).

It is considered problematic that relationships in many territorial communities are not sufficiently laden with positive affect and do not reflect sufficient commitment. The community might then cease to be a territorial 'social entity that has the elements necessary (bonds and shared values) to contain conflict within sustainable boundaries' (ibid.).

2   It is well known that travelling can cause stress, both when driving a private car and using public transport (Bricker 2005, Cox et al. 2006, Evans and Wener 2006, Evans et al. 2002, Gatersleben and Uzzell 2007, Gulian et al. 1990, Ivancevich et al. 2003, Koslowsky 1997, Wener et al. 2003).

3   The means-ends scheme is hardly relevant to all types of travelling. When the movement is a core characteristic of the traveller's lifestyle, the scheme collapses. For nomadic people, the 'destinations' might be seen as the means for further travel, just as much as travelling is a means to reach the 'destinations' (Cole 1975, Cresswell 2001, Johnson 1969).

4   Talvitie (1997) challenges the economic theory that underlies transport models by introducing psychoanalytic understandings of travel behaviour. This allows for the possibility of directing attention to the escape motive, but Talvitie does not pursue this line of research. In a recent article, Talvitie (2006) suggests the reintroduction of incrementalism as a model for transport planning. He calls attention to the strategy of moving away from ills, but still does not link this insight to the possibility of O-motives shaping travel behaviour.

5   In principle, positive O-motives might exist. Some experiences at the origin may be so good that individuals feel they have to be shared with others, no matter whom. In addition, superb ideas might have emerged that need to be diffused throughout society. Hence, there is a kind of missionary travel that is undirected and O-motivated in a positive way.

6   Rational consensus is explained by Habermas in an earlier work on the Legitimation Crisis:

Since all those affected have, in principle, at least the chance to participate in the practical deliberation, the "rationality" of the discursively formed will consists in the fact that the reciprocal behavioral expectations raised to normative status afford validity to a

common interest ascertained without deception. The interest is common because the constraint-free consensus permits only what all can want; it is free of deception because even the interpretations of needs in which each individual must be able to recognize what he wants become the object of discursive will-formation (Cited from Rehg 1994:39).

7   In some cases, the question of exclusion relates to groups that do not share the liberal commitment to autonomy. In Habermasian (2005) dialogical theory, such groups are tolerated, but their demands cannot form part of a reciprocal discourse that pushes beyond contested interests and values in search of a common form of life (Baumeister 2003:749). A critique of Habermas's response to the demand for recognition of difference is also voiced by Bohman (1995) and Cooke (1997).

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