2. Discourse Analysis of the Objectives of Transport Policy

While traditionally conservative German political science has thus far examined public institutions and activities from the perspective of the state, the 'linguistic turn' has now also arrived in the field and the influence of language in the framework of political decision-making processes is receiving increasing attention. Before demonstrating this within the field of transport policy, I will first discuss some fundamental insights and present my own analytical approach.

2.1 On the Importance of Discourses and Guiding Principles for Processes of Social Development

In the context of social science research, discourse analysis has received increasing attention in recent years (cf. Keller et al. 2011). For policy research, Vivien A. Schmidt had already drawn attention to the special importance of discourses in establishing strategies to reform the welfare state (cf. Schmidt 2000; also Schneider & Janning 2006). As she sees it, social reforms can be explained neither solely by the diverging constellations of interests of the social actors involved nor by the institutionally hardened strongholds of opinion. Rather, she shows that beyond this, 'discourse matters': "Countries managed more or less successfully their adjustment to the external economic pressures beginning in the 1970s not only because of their greater or lesser economic vulnerabilities, their greater or lesser institutional capacities, and their better or worse policy

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responses, but also because of their more or less convincing legitimising discourses" (Schmidt 2000: 309).

Discursive practices are obviously characterised by their own logic, which is not restricted to the ensemble of political interests and institutionally consolidated, dominant opinions (cf. Beckert 2016). A superficial examination of the glaring discrepancy between the aspirations of the discursively conveyed model of an integrated transport policy and the actual development of transport policy makes this appear obvious, at least initially. At the same time, it would be wrong to assume a complete decoupling of discursive practices and concrete social development. Instead, following the model of "critical discourse analysis", [1] it is assumed here that, like material social structures, discourses involve social relations and they therefore have to be re-appropriated over and over again. The appropriation of material relations without symbolic practice is, of course, just as inconceivable as a symbolic practice that is independent of the respective historically specific context. Material practice and semiotic practice are mutually dependent and must therefore always be analysed in their relationship to each other. "Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 258).

2.1.1 Hegemony

By analysing the discourse of an integrated transport policy, the aim is to establish the connection between the discourse analysis and the concrete social relations as they are expressed in the specific interests of the respective social actors. Following the concept of hegemony developed

1 This Anglo-Saxon strand of theory is to be distinguished from the German "critical discourse analysis" (cf. Jäger 2015: 26ff.).

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by Antonio Gramsci, who used it to analyse social fields "in which 'leadership' is contested" (Bollinger & Koivisto 2001: 1258), it is assumed that a hegemonic discourse is always already socially contested (cf. Kebir 1991). This means that a hegemonic discourse is fragile in several respects. For a start, when viewed from the outside, it becomes apparent that other subaltern discourses exist parallel to the dominant discourse. These can be formerly dominant discourse strands that have been supplanted by the current hegemonic discourse.

In addition to the ongoing existence of old discourse formations, new subaltern discourses can also exist parallel to the hegemonic discourse. Whether these develop power of definition or are swallowed up by the existing hegemonic discourse, or whether the old discourse formations possibly experience a renaissance, depends on the respective social power relations.

> "Hegemony thus means the temporary domination of a discourse through power, with the simultaneous existence of competing discourses, which are subordinated, creating a relationship of domination between the hegemonic and the non-hegemonic discourses. [...] Social consensus is thus always only a hegemonic determination, where certain positions are privileged over others" (Dingler 2003: 178 f.).

In this respect, the "discourse of the transport turnaround" [*Verkehrswende*] of the 1990s was at no point hegemonic. However, for a short time it attracted increased public attention and became quite effective by influencing the debates regarding transport policy in politics, in research and the economy.

The fragility of a hegemonic discourse, however, is not only evident in the above-mentioned external perspective. Viewed from within, a dominant discourse formation also exhibits an enduring unstable relationship. After all, the achievement of a hegemonic discourse consists precisely in reconciling different interests. However, this also means that the respective actors go on pursuing their divergent interests. Even if this occurs within the framework of the hegemonic discourse, there is constant movement at work and thus a permanent potential

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destabilisation of the prevailing discourse formation. A hegemonic discourse can thus be described in two respects as a partially wide-ranging model of persuasion. Viewed from the outside, the hegemonic discourse extends to its boundaries, which are 'abraded' by other subaltern discourses. Viewed from the inside, the hegemony of the discourse extends to the divergent interests. The differences are minimalised through compromise solutions within the framework of the prevailing discourse formation, but they cannot be completely erased.

2.1.2 Guiding Principles (*Leitbilder*)

In connection with the formation of a hegemonic discourse, guiding principles, such as that of integrated transport policy, fulfil a special discursive function. Disparate, abstract, in short, confusing discourse constellations are tangibly condensed in the guiding principles, which facilitate a conceptualisation of the discourse, as it were. In this way, they can fulfil a number of very different tasks. Research into guiding principles distinguishes between the guiding (*Leit*) function and the image (*Bild*) function (Dierkes et al. 1992: 41 ff.). On the one hand, the guiding function has the task of collective projection. Starting from the horizon of people's everyday experience, a conceivable line of development is drawn that reaches beyond the feasible and is directed towards the horizon of a common aspiration. In addition, the guiding function fulfils the task of a *synchronous* pre-*adaptation*. In this process, individuals who have divergent horizons of experience are directed towards a common horizon of perception. "The various personal mechanisms of evaluation that result from the diversity of individual dispositions, the diversity of social positions and the specificity of the respective cultures of knowledge to which they belong are pre-synchronised" (ibid.: 46). Following this mental adjustment, a further function consists in the effect of the guiding image as a *functional equivalent.* Guiding principles thus function for different traditions of thought as a rough orientation grid in the establishment of a new scientific paradigm. They serve as a hinge, as it were, between the old, persistent patterns of thought and the new thought structures that have yet to emerge. Through this

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reorientation, the old orientation routines fade away and make way for new prospects. "Metaphorically speaking, the longer the actors in the process of interference move around in the space of interference, the more they open up – on the level of communication – to unfamiliar and hitherto alien modes of argumentation and evidence, and on the level of individuation to unfamiliar directions of thinking and decision-making" (ibid.: 50).

In addition, the guiding principles also fulfil an image function. To a certain extent, this supports the abstract guiding functions described above through vivid image metaphors. By reducing the complexity of different cultures of knowledge to a single perspective, the image supports a core meaning held in common and has the effect on the participants of a *cognitive activator*. However, the image function not only influences people's thinking, but also moves them emotionally and in this way brings about *personal mobilisation* along with cognitive activation. Lastly, by bringing different people together by means of a pictorial metaphor, the image function fulfils the task of an *interpersonal stabiliser*. "Guiding principles bind people together who are bound together by nothing else; people who perhaps belong not only to different social milieus, but above all to different cultures of knowledge, whose perception, thinking and behaviour may therefore under certain circumstances not simply deviate, but follow downright opposing orientations; people who are neither bound to each other by external social constraints, nor attracted to each other by mutual sympathy" (ibid.: 57).

2.1.3 Critique of Ideology

Recent research on guiding principles has contributed to an understanding of the formal functioning of social guiding principles. By describing their functions in a factual manner, the research undoubtedly lives up to its own claim not to contribute to the idealisation of social conditions (cf. Dierkes et al. 1992: 58). However, by not taking into account the ideological function of guiding principles, it fails to critically question the discourse formations that these principles generate (cf. Adorno 1967). If the latter is the aim, then it is necessary to go beyond the reconstruc-

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tion of the effects of guiding principles and to inquire into the interests of the social actors. For if guiding principles succeed in establishing a hegemonic discourse above and beyond diverging interests, social power relations and relations of domination are articulated in a specific way. "The task of ideology critique is thus not to confront norms with 'real' reality or to denounce the general dominating character of discourses, but rather to show how discourses contribute to the formation and unity of a historical bloc and thus to a specific collective way of life. The object of the critique is the specific form of the antagonistic social relations of volition that constitute reality, the specific historical, capitalist unity of being and consciousness and the collective forms of life" (Demirovic 1988: 71).

To that effect, the following chapter will carry out an ideology-critical reconstruction of the hegemonic discourse of integrated transport policy, based on certain theoretical-methodological premises (cf. Hirseland & Schneider 2003: 395f.). On the one hand, the discourse oriented towards the principles of an integrated transport policy is contextualised historically and socio-politically. Both through the historical genesis of the model of integrated transport policy as well as through its embedding in the current socio-political context, it becomes clear that this is a discourse formation that has always been contested. Furthermore, the ideology-critical analysis reveals an unspoken, latent level of meaning of the discourse of an integrated transport policy. Facilitated by the paradigm shift in the discourse of sustainability, a notion of sustainable transport development in the sense of sustainable transport *growth* has become established. In this way, integrated transport policy is implicitly reduced to a perspective of economic integration. Lastly, I adopt a perspective taken from the sociology of domination, with reference to the different interpretive strategies of various actors in the field of transport policy. I demonstrate the respective definitional power of the actors in articulating their specific interests.

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2.2 The Talk of an Integrated Transport Policy

In the following, the insights of discourse theory are applied to the field of transport policy. A historical retrospective reveals a persistent discrepancy between the political objectives and actual transport development. In order to understand the reasons for this discrepancy between aspiration and reality, the most recent discourse of transport policy is then examined more closely. This shows that the objectives of transport policy are oriented towards the paradigm of economic growth, according to which sustainable transport development is to be achieved through sustainable transport growth. The guiding principle of an integrated transport policy in turn stands for sustainable transport growth.

2.2.1 A Historical Genealogy of Failure

The formation of the current hegemonic discourse of integrated transport policy goes back historically to the 1920s. From the time of its first appearance, the guiding principle has experienced several renaissances. Historically, the guiding principle of an integrated transport policy has always come to the fore when a climate in society as a whole emerged in which a fundamental reorganisation of the transport sector was deemed necessary. In each instance, the motives for the demand for such a reorganisation were quite different. When it first emerged in the 1920s, at a time when lorries were becoming increasingly widespread and beginning to compete with the railways, it was primarily economic reasons that seemed to speak in favour of an integrated transport policy. At the time, there was a widespread consensus that an increasingly fragmented transport system and the competition this sparked between the different modes of transport would lead to frictional losses, which in turn would have a negative impact on the entire national economy. This was exemplified in 1930 by the German Industry and Trade Conference, which came to the conclusion in its memorandum on the reorganisation of the German transport system that a nationwide integration of the modes of transport was necessary in order to promote efficient

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economic performance in the sector: "Just as an organic cooperation between the railways (*Reichsbahn*) and the postal system (*Reichspost*) is necessary, a similar cooperation should also be sought between the two national administrations, the motor transport companies and the remaining licensed motor vehicle enterprises" (DIH 1930: 71). In addition to technical and economic integration, the idea of an integrated transport policy at the time also included the social, political and, to some extent, even the ecological dimension of the idea of integration, which meant that it already encompassed all five strategies of integration familiar to us today. Moreover, even back then the debate was not unique to Germany. The question of integration in the transport sector arose simultaneously in virtually all European countries and beyond. [2] Nevertheless, the implementation of the model of an integrated transport policy did not advance beyond the early stages. Despite individual attempts at cooperation between different modes of transport, which for a short time were also reflected in joint agreements, the momentum of economic competition ultimately reasserted itself, as a result of which the implementation of a cross-modal strategy of integration failed, due to individual economic interests.

After the guiding principle of integrated transport policy had been forgotten for some time, it experienced its first renaissance in the 1960s. This time, however, it was not economics that triggered the demand for a new orientation in transport policy. It is true that economic arguments for an integrated transport policy were again proposed. In addition, rudiments of ecological criticism of the development of motorised individual transport made themselves heard, the response to which was a push for greater integration of public transport. The dominant argument at the time, however, was a social one. [3] The main grievance

2 For the international debate, cf. for England (Sherrington 1929), Switzerland (ibid. 1929), the USA (Rudolphi 1929).

3 It is true that several of these arguments were consistently invoked concomitantly. For example, the criticism of motorised individual transport cited here as a socially motivated argument goes back to the beginnings of motorisation and also appeared as early as the 1920s. Here, however, our concern is to em-

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concerned the displacement of people by the automobile, especially in urban areas. The debate was initiated in the early 1960s by the so-called Buchanan Report, which had been commissioned by the British Ministry of Transport. This was the first time the term "integrated policy" had been explicitly coined. The report was taken as an opportunity by many European countries to commission their own studies, and once again a Europe-wide discussion developed. In Germany, the discourse of an integrated transport policy became established with the study 'Municipal Transport Problems in the Federal Republic of Germany' (*Die kommunalen Verkehrsprobleme in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) by Josef Hollatz and Friedrich Tamms, which was published in 1965 and made explicit reference to the Buchanan Report. The study thematised the problem of essentially unregulated traffic development since the end of the Second World War. In cities in particular, it seemed, traffic was developing in line with private investment decisions, while the interests of the residents were literally being pushed aside. An integrated transport policy was meant to more closely correlate economic and social concerns, but once again competing economic interests prevailed and prevented the implementation of the model of an integrated transport policy.

The model did not experience a second renaissance until the beginning of the 1970s, when the social-liberal government coalition initiated a paradigm shift in transport policy with its *Course Book for Transport Policy*. This questioned the undifferentiated application of free-market principles to all areas of transport and instead formulated the aspiration to "resolve the growing conflicts between the satisfaction of social needs on the one hand and private interests on the other" (Bundesministerium: 11). Since private-sector profits can involve macroeconomic losses, the *Course Book* saw a need for balance in the transport sector at the macroeconomic level.

The political objectives of the *Course Book* were flanked academically by the expert report of the German Advisory Council on the Environ-

phasize which *motives* determined the discourse on integrated transport policy at the time.

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ment, entitled 'Auto und Umwelt' ('Automobile and Environment'), which appeared in the same year (cf. Nebelung & Meyer 1974). The explicit thematisation of the environment expresses the new ecological perspective, which increasingly shaped the discourse of an integrated transport policy. Like the *Course Book*, the report of the Advisory Council on the Environment presented a comprehensive analysis of the transport problem, in which transport policy was understood as a central component of social policy. The authors were convinced that transport development could not be viewed in isolation from other areas of society on which it has an effect or by which it is influenced. "Rather, the Council has to analyse the entire range of interactions between the individual motor vehicle and the sphere of human life, up to and including the regulatory and socio-political implications, which are documented, for example, in the economic interlinkages of the automobile industry and in the means used to advertise it" (ibid.: 57). Accordingly, the Advisory Council also saw the solution to transport problems in "integrated transport planning" (ibid.: 58). However, while the debate on reforming transport policy was still given special attention in the context of the oil crisis in the early 1970s, a fundamental change of mood set in once the energy crisis was overcome in the mid-1970s. From then on, the global recession also dominated strategic considerations in transport policy. In coping with the economic crisis, public authorities turned their attention to the economic significance of the automotive industry and aligned their policies with its interests. On the other hand, the far-reaching plans in favour of an integrated transport policy were not even rudimentarily implemented. "This demonstrates two things: first, how quickly approaches to genuine structural reforms have to be thrown overboard when, in the rollercoaster of economic cycles and crises in private commodity production, state policy has no other option than to protect jobs by unconditionally stimulating new private investments; second, it becomes clear how high the costs of such policies of accommodation are. Against our better judgement, short-term reactions have to be bought at the price of later follow-up costs, social and environmental problems as well as the needs of society as a whole have to take a back seat to the constraints of the profit-driven market economy"

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(Linder et al. 1975: 65). In this way, despite the criticism of the problematic development of transport and the intermittent incorporation of integrated transport policy into the discourse, the principle of free-market competition reasserted itself and transport developed along the same lines as before.

2.2.2 Sustainable Development through Sustainable Growth

Following the recurrent failure to realise the guiding principle of an integrated transport policy, an initially conflict-laden debate on the ecological question in transport policy was ignited in the 1970s/80s. Following on from the 1972 report *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows & Meadows 1972) to the Club of Rome, which foregrounded the clash between continued economic growth and limited natural resources, the effects of economic and transport growth on natural resources were also addressed in the transport sector. "Political ecology" examined the question of to what extent it was conceivable to resolve the contradiction between economic and transport growth on the one hand and the protection of nature on the other – in the given socio-political framework with an economy committed to the logic of growth – and touched on fundamental questions of the boundaries of social systems.

By way of contrast, a paradigm shift took place at the end of the 1980s with the publication of the so-called Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future". Whereas previously natural resources had been identified as constituting the absolute limits to growth of the capitalist economy, the Brundtland Report brought about a fundamental change in perspective by interpreting the limits to growth as obstructions to modernisation in human development. Absolute limits tied to natural resources were no longer problematised; instead, relative limits were identified, dependent on the respective state of technological and social development.

> "The concept of sustainable development does imply limits – not absolute limits but limitations imposed on environmental resources by the present state of technology and social organisation [...]. But tech-

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> nology and social organisation can both be managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth" (WCED 1987: 8).

This new perspective ultimately resulted in an equally new understanding of sustainable development. For if the limits to growth can be pushed aside by technological and social innovations, then in principle limitless economic growth is possible. Moreover, economic growth creates the very resources on the basis of which social progress in the sense mentioned above is possible at all. The formerly system-critical argumentation, which was fed by the recognition of "limits to growth", is inverted in the Brundtland Report into the system-immanent perspective of the "growth of limits". The core statement of the new discourse of sustainability can be reduced to the formula that sustainable development is synonymous with sustainable growth.

> "Economic growth is thus not part of the problem of the anthropogenic overexploitation of nature, as is argued in the discourse of political ecology, but rather part of the solution. Growth can thus be seen as a strategy for overcoming the ecological crisis. The adherence to the imperative of growth within the framework of a strategy of sustainable development can be assessed as the essential paradigm shift and fundamental discursive break from the earlier debate on sustainability and the discourse of political ecology, which was specifically initiated by the Brundtland Report" (Dingler 2003: 243).

This new strategy is still being pursued today within the framework of the Agenda 21 process initiated at the Rio Conference in 1992 (cf. BMU 1997). Here, in contrast to the Brundtland Report, in which poverty in developing countries was held responsible for the unsustainable use of resources, the problematic economic practices of the developed industrial nations take centre stage. However, it is not the growth imperative of these countries that is called into question, but rather their lack of efficiency is bewailed. Accordingly, it is not about restricting growth, but

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rather modernising the economy in a way that is conducive to more efficient use of resources (cf. Görg & Brandt 2002; Tremmel 2003).[4]

> "It is increasingly recognised that production processes, technologies and management practices that use resources inefficiently produce residues that are not reused, generate waste that has adverse effects on human health and the environment, and manufacture products that continue to have harmful effects after they are used and are difficult to recover [...]" (BMU 1997: 256).

In order to achieve the sustainable development striven for in the growth paradigm, five procedures are invoked within the hegemonic discourse of sustainability: The *first* and most important approach refers to a general systemic revolution in efficiency as developed by Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Amory and Hunter Lovins (1995) with their factor-four approach. According to the central thesis, technological progress would make it possible to use natural resources four times more efficiently, which would contribute to a corresponding eco-efficiency. The *second* approach is very similar, since it also focuses on technological innovations with the goal of being able to re-use raw materials as often as possible in the future in order to reduce the overall consumption of natural resources. The *third* approach consists in striving for global environmental management, which is intended to facilitate a rational use of resources. *Fourthly*, the dematerialisation of the economic system is expected to lead to sustainable effects. This refers to the change from an industrial to a service society, which is associated with a decrease in the consumption of energy and resources. *Fifthly* and lastly, cost transparency is expected from the internalisation of externalised costs, which is meant to contribute to more (responsibly) aware and thus more sustainable behaviour.

4 In contrast, the follow-up report by Donella and Dennis Meadows "The New Limits to Growth", also published in 1992, represents the old growth-critical strategy of reduction (cf. Meadows et al. 1992). The relatively faint response to this report at the time already pointed to the emerging reorientation.

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This represents a shift from the so-called sufficiency approach, which is oriented at renunciation – doing without – in the widest sense, to the so-called efficiency and effectiveness approach, which comprises elements such as the most effective possible use of natural resources and energy, reduction of emissions, a circular economy with recycling of waste products, economic clusters (industry interlinkages) and utilisation efficiency. Thus: a technical-industrial pattern of thought aimed at a radical increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of all metabolic processes involving nature (cf. Huber 2011: 304 ff.).

The consequences of this strategy for the transport sector are already hinted at in the Agenda 21 report. For example, it assumes further growth in transport – in particular an increase in automobile traffic – which is supposed to be channelled into sustainable pathways through the increased use of technologies (BMU 1997: 70). Karl-Werner Brand and Georg Jochum (2000) have described this discursive shift in the international context for Germany. They see the paradigm shift as having been completed with the report of the German parliamentary enquiry into "Protection of the Earth's Atmosphere" (1994). There it also becomes clear that this transformation in the discourse of sustainability affected the transport sector in particular. In the sub-report "Mobility and Climate: Paths to a Climate-Friendly Transport Policy", the report by Eckhard Kutter et al., which adhered to the 'old' idea of sustainability, is relegated to the status of a dissenting, minority opinion. At the same time, the debate with the representatives of the majority opinion impressively demonstrates the strategic reorientation. In their response to the dissenting minority, the representatives of the majority again recapitulate the different approaches. Since they still determine the orientation of transport policy today, they should be quoted here in detail: "We understand the mandate of the parliamentary enquiry for the transport sector primarily as a call to develop proposals for reducing the emissions of climate-relevant trace gases by motorised vehicles and thus to achieve the CO_2 reduction target set by the Federal government for the Federal Republic of Germany. In the parliamentary enquiry into "Protection of the Earth's Atmosphere" there was agreement from the outset that the report on transport should not only address proposals and demands for

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the reduction of climate-relevant trace gases in the transport sector, but that the consequences of such proposals for the overall economic framework and jobs must also be included in the presentation, if the report is to have any prospect of having a serious effect on the decision-making process and on opinion in the political and public spheres. We do not think much of recommendations for action that merely reflect wishful thinking without any chance of implementation. Such recommendations are cheap. On this basic question, fundamentally different views soon emerged and it became clear that the representatives of the dissenting minority were aiming to bid farewell to the automobile-centred society while the representatives of the majority wanted to continue developing the mobile society and therefore demanded rigorous measures for the transport sector to reduce emissions of trace gases that have an impact on the climate" (Enquete-Commission 1994: 365 f.).

The reformulation of the discourse on sustainability is expressed in the commitment to a mobile society that has to learn to live with a large volume of traffic. The latter is therefore to be moderated in a climate-compatible fashion with the help of "rigorous measures". The "old" strategy of traffic avoidance seems antiquated in comparison. This strategic reorientation still dominates the discourse on sustainability today and has also brought about a readjustment of transport policy. (DGB 2004)

2.2.3 Sustainable Transport Development through Sustainable Transport Growth

Since the strategy pursued with the guiding principle of integrated transport policy was essentially aimed at sustainable transport development, the discourse of integration in transport policy was, from the outset, closely linked to the discourse of sustainability outlined above. In fact, a similar paradigm shift can be discerned in the transport sector, just as Johannes Dingler (2003) was able to show for the discourse of sustainability. Parallel to the paradigm shift in the discourse of sustainability, a change in strategy took place within the academic debate on transportation. At the end of the 1980s, researchers who advocated critical positions on transport policy, positions that until then had been

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prominently represented, increasingly went on the defensive. While the latter were oriented towards the paradigm of the "limits to growth" and accordingly advocated a "turnaround" in the transport sector in the sense of a resource-saving strategy of "traffic avoidance" (cf. Hesse 1993), for the first time the Federal Ministry of Transport thematised an integrated transport policy (BMV 1992a; 1992b). But just like the discourse of sustainability, the talk of integrated transport policy only developed its full persuasive power in the course of the 1990s (cf. Beckmann 1992; 2002). A similar development took place in all member states of the European Union (cf. Janic 2001). By the end of the 1990s, the discourse had prevailed in most member states or had even made its way into political concepts of transport and had been elevated to an official government strategy (BMVBW 2000). A final expression of its hegemonic claim to validity was the proclamation of integrated transport policy as a guiding concept in the European Commission's 'White Paper' in 2001 (cf. COM 2001). Thus the – by then – fourth renaissance of the guiding principle had also become a European phenomenon.

The transport policy objectives of the White Paper were entirely oriented towards the central premises of the new discourse of sustainability (for details, cf. chapter 4.2). Economic and transport growth are not problematised as such, but rather accepted and desired as a prerequisite for, and necessary consequence of, the European integration process. "Strong economic growth that creates jobs and prosperity is difficult to imagine without an efficient transport system that enables optimal use of the internal market and the globalisation of trade" (ibid.: 13). A reciprocal relationship is established between European economic growth and transport growth. On the one hand, economic growth necessarily leads to transport growth, but on the other hand, it is also concluded that increasing transport growth contributes to more economic growth. In this mutually reinforcing dynamic, a strategy for avoiding traffic no longer has any purchase. Instead, growth forecasts in the transport sector become a necessary prerequisite for the economic growth that is desired on all sides. Sustainable transport development is no longer to be achieved by avoiding traffic, but by regulating the expected as well as the targeted processes of growth. Existing bottlenecks in the transport

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system and the looming additional bottlenecks caused by economic and transport growth are to be widened in advance in order to cope with the expected and desired dynamics of development. For "[t]he congestion seriously endangers the competitiveness of the European economy" (ibid.: 12). The task of an integrated transport policy is thus to moderate transport growth, in the interest of sustainable transport development. In the context of the European integration process, it is meant to create the conditions for a smooth flow of traffic across national borders, in order to mobilise the common internal market. Unlike in the past, the economic, social and ecological goals of an integrated transport policy now stand as equals in the sustainability triad, side by side, at least conceptually.

In keeping with the new discourse of sustainability, five procedures can also be identified in integrated transport policy, by means of which the relative ecological limits of transport growth are to be shifted in order to contribute to sustainable transport development: *First*, the integration of European transport markets is expected to increase the efficiency of the way transport is managed. The European Commission hopes that the elimination of existing frictions in cross-border transport and better synergy brought about by organisational, technological and institutional coordination will lead to a more acceptable ecological balance. *Secondly*, it is pursuing reduced consumption of resources through technological innovations, whether through more economical motors or by enhancing the flow of traffic by means of telematics systems. *Thirdly*, it is striving for European traffic management, whereby traffic flows can be coordinated in a more targeted fashion. *Fourthly*, the European Commission hopes that the dematerialisation or virtualisation of transport will reduce the consumption of material resources. *Fifthly* and lastly, it is striving for the internalisation of externalised costs in the transport sector in order to achieve cost transparency. This is because, so goes the thesis, transport behaviour that is oriented towards the true costs is ecologically sustainable as a result.

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2.2.4 Sustainable Transport Growth through Integrated Transport Policy

On the basis of the programmatic draft papers, I have shown that the new discourse in the field of transport research follows the paradigm shift in the hegemonic discourse of sustainability, now meaning sustainable growth. Just as in the hegemonic discourse of sustainability sustainable development in general is equated with sustainable growth, in transport research sustainable transport development in particular is now equated with sustainable transport growth.

Beyond the adaptation of the growth paradigm articulated in the hegemonic discourse of sustainability, however, the new discourse in research on transport fulfils another function. While the growth paradigm reconciles ecological sustainability and economic growth in the idea of sustainable growth, the new discourse in transport research also combines the formerly antagonistic principles of economic competition and political cooperation. As was shown in the historical perspective, the guiding principle of integrated transport policy has repeatedly failed in the past due to the factual competition between the modes of transport. A systematic linking of modes of transport was regularly thwarted by the individual pursuit of single economic market interests. With the adoption of the logic of economic growth in the transport sector as described above, the necessity arises again today to reconcile the principle of competition inherent in market logic with the procedure of political cooperation, in the interests of an integrated transport policy.

The study carried out by Klaus Beckmann and Herbert Baum, *Integrated Transport Policy* (2002), commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing, attempted to conceptually link political cooperation and economic competition in a way that was conducive to an integrated transport policy. Based on a dual regulatory framework consisting of the market-based transport sector and the public interest represented by the State, the study sees the distinguishing task of an integrated transport policy as linking both of these social sub-logics through an integrated market strategy. "The focus of an integrated transport policy is on sustainably securing and strengthening the

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functionality of the transport system as well as reducing the burdens, nuisances and encroachments that are attributable to transport" (ibid.: 314). However, as the study sees it, it is the requirements of the economic system that constitute the starting point of an integrated transport policy: "Ensuring a functioning transport system primarily involves tapping into market forces and competition, which are, however, incorporated into a framework that facilitates compatibility" (ibid.: 314). Within the framework of the economic dynamics driven by economic forces, social and ecological aspects are to be taken into account in the public interest. "Transport markets are to be stabilised, complemented and expanded to include the public interest" (ibid.: 314). The public interest, which was seemingly without central significance in the transport sector in the past, is now to be systematically taken into account for the first time in the context of an integrated transport policy. At the same time, it becomes clear that, for the foreseeable future, politics will continue to be assigned a marginal role in the articulation of public interest in the transport markets, marginal in the sense of a functionally equivalent 'add-on programme'. The different functional logics in the fields of economics and politics, as well as the resulting conflicts, remain unaddressed. Accordingly, the principles of economic competition and political cooperation suddenly find themselves reconciled in a future perspective: "The vision could be a policy of 'cooptition' (a combination of cooperation and competition) with competitive and cooperative elements, which could enjoy a high level of social acceptance" (ibid.:314).

Of course, this not only fails to clarify but actually tends to obfuscate the historically well-known political-economic problem in the transport sector, which in the past has repeatedly been reflected in the discrepancy between political aspirations and economic requirements and has been resolved in favour of the latter. Instead, the two functional logics are forced together in the artificial term "cooptition". The strategy of integrated transport policy is thereby tied to the new discourse of sustainability. Striving for sustainable transport development in conjunction with sustainable transport growth simply means that the economy is assigned central significance. In the wake of the global financial and economic crisis in 2008, this development has intensi-

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fied even further. In order to protect the German automotive industry from the economic consequences of the crisis, the German government launched several economic stimulus programmes, which were intended to support the development of electric mobility in particular through comprehensive subsidies. The fixation on the electric car constitutes yet another one-sided orientation towards the economic interests of the established industries (cf. Schwedes 2021).

2.2.5 Avoidance versus Decoupling

In the debate on sustainability in transport policy, in addition to the shift in the discourse described above and the concomitant strategic reorientation, a conceptual vagueness has become established that repeatedly contributes to misunderstandings. This is especially true for the two conceptual approaches of traffic avoidance and decoupling. As I pointed out, the strategy of traffic avoidance was originally intended to reduce economic growth. The close linkage and interdependence of economic and transport growth seemed to make such an approach necessary. With the increasing de-thematisation of the growth paradigm, a strategic reorientation in traffic avoidance also took place in the 1980s. Inspired by the successes in the energy sector, in which it had proved possible to achieve a decoupling of energy consumption from economic growth, there was also a plea in the transport sector to strive for traffic avoidance by loosening or even breaking the connection between economic and traffic growth. However, two fundamentally different approaches emerged, both pursuing the same goal but favouring different ways of achieving it. Herbert Baum and Markus Heibach (1997: 3f.) summarised the differences as follows:

> "– Traffic avoidance follows a top-down approach: The avoidance strategy assigns priority to the goal of reducing traffic. By shaping the immediate determinants of demand (e.g. prices or the costs of transportation services, the supply of transport infrastructure, traffic management, slowdown of economic growth), transportation services are reduced. The strategy of traffic avoidance does not ask what

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repercussions the reduction in traffic has on production and sales in the upstream or downstream economic sectors. Decisive here is solely that a reduction in demand for transport is achieved. It remains open which adjustments and changes in the economy and population compensate for the decline in demand for transport. Therefore, the overall economic effects of an avoidance policy are difficult to calculate.

– Decoupling follows the bottom-up principle. It starts at the origin of transport in the fields of action upstream of transport demand and endeavours to reduce the necessity of processes involving transportation for the creation of economic value. It does not directly change demand, but exerts an indirect influence by reducing the need for forms of transport. The aim is to reduce 'transport intensity', i.e. the ratio of transport services to total economic value creation. This is made possible by promoting transport-saving 'structures' in the population and the economy (e.g. production technologies, product development, forms of organisation, choice of location). In this respect, decoupling does not pursue the reduction of demand for transport by setting certain market parameters, but rather by changing the constellations that generate transport."

However, the clear-cut analytical separation of the two approaches postulated by Baum and Heibach does not stand up to scrutiny. They themselves cite the "Sustainable Germany" model presented by the Federal Environment Agency in 1997 as an example of a decoupling strategy, only to note that in the actual implementation a traffic avoidance strategy is pursued, with *dirigiste* measures such as making road transport more expensive and steering investment and supply in favour of public transport (cf. Baum & Heibach 1997: 5).

In fact, the decoupling strategy favoured by business representatives, which essentially aims at a systemic increase in efficiency, can readily be integrated into the traffic avoidance strategy. A combination of top-down and bottom-up methods was proposed here early on (cf. Weizsäcker 1989). Markus Hesse, for instance, distinguishes three dimensions of traffic management:

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> "The necessary structural change to 'less traffic' is linked to various conditions: first, to turning away from the principle of catering unrestrictedly for demand in transport and infrastructure policy, combined with a stronger assessment of the transport consequences of spatial development (precautionary planning); second, to conceptualising space(s) instead of traversing spaces (structural traffic avoidance); thirdly, to contributions from the economic system to easing the burden on transport, especially from corporate and structural policy (low-traffic economy, closing regional resource cycles, increased commitment on the part of companies to remaining local, etc.)" (Hesse 1994: 3f.).

The situation is obviously different from the point of view of business representatives when they categorically exclude top-down procedures. While the pure decoupling approach pursues a limited strategy oriented towards criteria of economic efficiency, the avoidance approach is in principle characterised by greater openness.

In light of this conceptual clarification, the development of the discourse of transport policy can be described as follows: whereas in the 1970s traffic avoidance was discussed in close connection with curbing economic growth, deemed necessary at the time, this connection has hardly been thematised since the 1990s. Instead, the traffic avoidance strategy was increasingly oriented towards the goal of decoupling economic and transport growth, with the energy sector as a model. Initially, particular emphasis was placed on restrictive measures aimed at forcing a decline in transport growth. Since then, there has been an increasing focus on a decoupling strategy oriented towards increases in efficiency, brought about by technological innovations. [5] Instruments of political

5 This is currently demonstrated by the example of electric mobility, which is primarily aimed at replacing the relatively inefficient internal combustion engine (30% efficiency) with the highly efficient electric motor (90% efficiency). However, this does not take into account the energy and resource consumption required in the production of electric cars, nor the negative effects of the mass use of electric vehicles, such as land use and consumption, which are no different from the combustion-engine vehicle. Again, the electric car only contributes to

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control are increasingly taking a back seat. Economists, in particular, justify this with the fundamental impossibility of influencing transport development politically (cf. Aberle 1993). This is the starting point for the discourse on an economically-inspired decoupling strategy, described above.

Finally, the concept of decoupling has recently been used for the purposes of an even more greatly reduced ambition. The research framework on *mobility* adopted by the German government in 1996, for example, speaks of "decoupling mobility growth and traffic congestion" (BMBF 1997a: 3). This variant still stands alongside the aspiration to decouple transport growth from economic growth. At the same time, it already points to a further step, which reduces the decoupling strategy to decoupling the negative social and ecological consequences from an ostensibly natural, unstoppable growth in traffic. In reality, this no longer has anything to do with traffic avoidance.[6]

2.3 First Interim Summary – from Healthy Shrinkage to Beautiful Growth

The model of integrated transport policy is the result of a "scientific paradigm shift" (Kuhn 1978), which is based on a peculiar logic of argumentation. It is precisely the 'scientification' of the model that contributes to its persuasiveness. However, the significance of the transport policy model only becomes apparent against the background and in the context of the new discourse of sustainability. What has now become the hegemonic discourse in transport research initially follows a line of reasoning that sees sustainable development being achieved through

sustainable transport development if it constitutes one component of mobility within the framework of a strategy of integrated transport development (cf. Schwedes/Keichel 2021).

6 After the decoupling of economic and transport growth had been formulated as a goal in the European Commission's first White Paper on Transport in 2001, it was abandoned in the current White Paper, which dates from 2011.

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sustainable growth. By 'ecologising' economic growth by means of various processes – especially increases in efficiency – it can help to shatter the existing systemic limits to growth. The formerly external, natural systemic boundaries are shifted inwards through a kind of internal 'land grabbing' with system-internal innovations. When applied to the transport system, this perspective leads to a strategy that pursues sustainable transport development through transport growth. Sustainable transport growth is to be attained through system-immanent optimisations, to be coordinated by an integrated transport policy. Integrated transport policy aims to contribute to an increased functionality and social compatibility of the transport system, first, by eliminating frictions between the different social actors in the transport sector (social integration); secondly, by avoiding 'frictional' losses due to inefficiency between the different ministries (political integration); thirdly, by supporting a competitive dynamic mediated by the market (economic integration); fourthly, by avoiding negative external effects (ecological integration); fifthly and lastly, by promoting synergy effects between the individual modes of transport (technical integration). Integrated transport policy thus pursues an increase in efficiency in the transport system with the goal of sustainable transport growth: transport policy as growth policy!

Moreover, on this understanding, the model of integrated transport policy supposedly eliminates the factual contradiction between political cooperation, which follows from the aim of integration, and economic competition, which underlies the growth paradigm. By committing themselves to the common goal of economic growth in the conceptual framework of the model of integrated transport policy, the real conflict of interests between political policy and the economy simply vanishes behind a common discursive strategy: 'cooperation and competition' are forced together in the concept of 'cooptition'. It is thus perfectly consistent that questions of political regulation that go beyond the common economic goals, such as the social or ecological aspects of transport development – if these are addressed at all – then take on a subordinate status, at best. This is consistent to the extent that the sustainable transport growth that is the aim of an integrated transport policy encompasses the sustainability triad that takes into account

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social and ecological aspects, in addition to economic ones. In other words, the strategy of sustainable transport growth, pursued with the model of an integrated transport policy within the framework of the new hegemonic, academic discourse on transport has as its goal a one-sided *economic integration of the transport sector.*

If this is an adequate outline of the new hegemonic discourse in transport research, it remains to be noted that in addition to the position outlined above, there are still dissenting contributions to the discussion, which are, however, subordinate to the hegemonic discourse. This confirms that hegemony is always the result of conflicts, disputes and struggles for dominance. In that these competing alternatives are at least acknowledged, the claim to absoluteness of the hegemonic discourse is relativised. This becomes clear when we look at the representatives of transport policy with their sometimes very different policy orientations. But before examining the actors in the field of transport policy, the practical consequences of the paradigm shift for transport policy should first be discussed.

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