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challenging the urban norm by reassessing the
relation between urban and rural

Siri Ersson
Master's thesis at Chalmers Architecture
Master's program Design for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

In today's society we are living by an urban norm where a power relation exists between different geographical areas and the center is superior to the periphery. We perceive cities as being innovative and sustainable, while rural areas often are identified as conservative and outmoded. The purpose of this master's thesis is to explore how the urban norm influences the contemporary Swedish spatial planning, with a focus on rural areas. The purpose is further to identify planning strategies that can answer to the issues of separating urban and rural, so that spatial planning becomes holistic and sustainable in a long-term perspective.

The studied case is the region of Dalarna and the municipality of Gagnef. In order to understand the consequences of the urban norm, interviews as a method is used as well as a content analysis of strategic documents and planning documents. To be able to comprehend the imbalance between urban and rural, the theory of power relations and center-periphery is studied. Based on the theoretical framework and the empirical studies, planning strategies are developed, focusing on the relationship between urban and rural, both on a regional and municipal scale.

One conclusion made is that the urban norm is visible in different ways in the studied region and municipality. For example, the largest cities are referred to as the engine of the region. Among the interviewed professionals there is also awareness about this problematic imbalance. In order to achieve rural transformation, changes on a regional level and questioning the norm is the key. For a rural municipality it is central to find local solutions and to reassess the own role. Collaboration across the administrative borders is essential and the planning strategies show that through spatial planning, different values can be strengthened.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

One of the main building blocks of the Western mind-set is the logic of separation (Swedish: särskiljandets logik). We understand the world by separating one from the other. We build dichotomous pairs of concepts such as the center versus the periphery, city versus countryside, women versus men. And not only that, we carefully highlight the differences in value between the different concepts.

Gunnel Forsberg, 1996, p. 33, author's translation

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Hills and arable land in Bäsna, Gagnef

Road passing Bäsna, Gagnef

Rural areas are filled with a certain content that makes certain actions and priorities possible while others become impossible. And this process is relational in the sense that rural areas are not created in a vacuum but constantly formed in relation to previous notions about the rural and not least, the city, the urban. And vice versa.

Malin Rönnblom, 2014, p. 4 , author's translation

chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the subject of the thesis is presented and placed in a larger context. The purpose, main questions and disposition are also presented.

An essential aspect of creating a sustainable development is to reassess the relationship between the urban and the rural as well as changing the perception of the two. A power relation exists between the urban and the rural - the center and the periphery, where one defines the other. Within contemporary Swedish spatial planning there is a need for highlighting this relationship because there is a tradition of emphasising urban development, and the municipal comprehensive plan for example, has become a city-oriented tool. There is a need for scrutiny of spatial planning as a tool for local as well as regional development because the tendency of uncritical use of urban planning principles, also in rural municipalities, have traditionally not been questioned and investigated (Westlund & Pichler, 2000). Regional planning is often characterised by centralisation and an unjust alignment between the urban and the rural (Fredriksson, 2015), where urban areas are the winners (Rönnblom, 2014). Knowledge is needed regarding what consequences the relation between space and power has and how this is reflected within spatial planning. There is also a need for new methods and approaches within contemporary Swedish spatial planning that responds to the issue of urban superiority.

The urban norm as a starting point

Urban areas are often the starting point, the norm, and considered to be superior to their surroundings. The urban norm is based on the assumption that urban is valued higher than rural. We associate the city with modernity, growth, success and development (Rönnblom, 2014) while rural areas are perceived as being from a different time (Massey, 2004). Cities tend to be referred to as the engine of growth (Björling, 2014; Fredriksson, 2015; Hagbert & Bradley, 2015). Reproducing the idea of the city as the engine and urbanisation that concentrates capital, resources and institutions, contributes to uneven living conditions and uneven development from a geographical point of view (Björling, 2014, p. 10 & 64). To place different geographical areas in a hierarchical order is not productive, since there is a mutual dependence between areas with different functions, such as smaller and larger municipalities (Björling, 2014, p. 63).

Urbanisation tends to be described as the only selfevident option and something natural while living in a rural area is a choice (Gustafsson, 2015). The general perception is that in today's knowledge society, people have to go the city in order to have a career or a certain lifestyle. At the same time it is considered to be a failure to be the one who stays behind. Within media and popular culture there is an image of rural areas as desolated places with a low knowledge level among the inhabitants (Ulver, 2012). The image of an entrepreneur, on the other hand, tends to be placed in an urban context (Scholten, 2005, p. 153).

The urban norm has been recognised more frequently in recent times and there are reactions in society leading to a more nuanced image of the countryside. The Swedish Television program series *Delat land* and *Stad och land* and the article series with the same name in the newspaper Dagens Nyheter contributes to this image. In the documentary *Lgh + bil + allt jag har och äger,* Clara Bodén reflects upon how life should be lived and the moving of people from (and back to) Jämtland (Bodén, 2014a). Bodén also reacts to the disregard of the rural that is openly expressed and consolidated because the power relation between urban and rural is not taken seriously (Bodén, 2014b).

The urban norm is visible within different parts of society, parts that often interlink. But since this master's thesis is exploring the urban norm within contemporary Swedish spatial planning, the question is how the urban norm is visible here. Municipalities are today competing against each other in an attempt to develop and grow (Mitander, 2015). But to what extents are local problems caused locally, and what possibilities are there for municipalities to have an impact and to solve problems locally? The rural landscape is a common asset in society and therefore also a common responsibility. But the knowledge of how humans depend on nature and the management of the rural landscape

is deteriorating because of increasing urbanisation and the lack of connection between urban and rural (Landsbygdsnätverket, 2012). In the budget proposition from 2012 the Swedish government raises the issue of the lack of a relationship between urban and rural and emphasises the importance of this relationship and interdependence (Prop. 2011/12:1):

> Sustainable living environments require a development of both urban and rural areas. The government acts to make towns and sparsely populated and rural areas be seen as interconnected regions of interdependencies. [...] Policy must support and encourage interaction between rural areas, towns and cities (Prop. 2011/12:1, author's translation).

Since 2012 this issue has been mentioned less and less, and in the budget proposition for 2016, rural areas are not mentioned in relation to urban areas at all (Prop. 2015/16:1). In 2012, there was also a debate article in the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter saying that the government is widening the gap between urban and rural. This article is based on an inquiry by the Research Service of the Riksdag[1] (parlament), which showed that one of the largest reforms since 2006 unilaterally favoured Stockholm at the expense of the rest of the country (Fridolin & Ehn, 2012, June 16).

The Swedish planning system is two-sided. National strategies have been developed in broad-based processes, grounded on the idea that all parts of Sweden should function and be alive, as a reaction towards an urban oriented society (Hela Sverige ska leva, 2016). The reality tends to be different and there are many aspects that together form an urban norm. The urban norm is based on the belief that the compact city is the sustainable solution and that the city is where innovation happen (Lillieström, 2016; Härifrån, 2016a). But to concentrate development on enhancing the green, sustainable city can become a problem. In an article by the Swedish Rural Network[2] it is stated that the sustainable city cannot stand alone but is dependent on the surrounding countryside (Louise E, Granvik & Landsbygdsnätverket, 2012). Gustafsson and Ljung (2013) stresses that 'there is a mutual dependence between city and countryside. Urban farming in all its glory, but that the city would be sustainable only by transforming itself is a utopia' (Gustafsson & Ljung, 2013, August 18). According to Gustafsson and Ljung (2013) urban areas use 200 times their land area to produce what is consumed. A surface 1000 times larger than the city is also needed in order to manage the emissions from the city (Gustafsson & Ljung, 2013, August 18). From a perspective on environmental justice, the city is also said to be consuming surrounding land rather than nourishing it (Hagbert & Bradley, 2015).

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[1] Riksdagens utredningstjänst, RUT
[2] Landsbygdsnätverket

It is not realistic to have continued growth while at the same time reducing the environmental impact. It is discussed that urbanisation, capital accumulation, growth and unsustainable use of natural resources are closely intertwined (Hagbert & Bradley, 2016). Gustafsson and Ljung (2013) discusses how we take the abilities of rural areas and ecosystem services to manage the negative impact from urban growth for granted: 'Rural areas provide us with food, water, energy, ecosystem services, labour and recreation as well as being the purification organ for the city. Despite these strong connections we rarely discuss the relationship between urban and rural' (Gustafsson & Ljung, 2013, August 18). New methods and approaches are required in order to bridge the gap between urban and rural within contemporary Swedish spatial planning on a regional as well as a municipal level. Westlund and Pichler (2000) highlight the need for a scrutiny of spatial planning as a tool for local as well as regional development. The tendency of uncritical use of urban planning principles in rural municipalities have not been questioned and investigated. In order for municipal planning to be a useful tool for local development, the authors stress a need to examine municipal planning and the outcome it has (Westlund & Pichler, 2000). Gustafsson and Ljung (2013) emphasises the need for valuing rural resources higher and creating contracts between urban and rural (Gustafsson & Ljung, 2013).

Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how the urban norm is visible in contemporary Swedish spatial planning on a regional and municipal level. The purpose is further to explore and identify strategies that can overcome the urban norm as well as the issues of separating urban and rural. A holistic approach within spatial planning is promoted in order to create a sustainable development in a long-term perspective. The region of Dalarna will be studied with a focus on the municipality of Gagnef. The strategies are geographically grounded in the region but also relevant in similar contexts.

Main questions

- How is the urban norm reflected in the planning practice and spatial planning and strategic documents in the region of Dalarna and the municipality of Gagnef?

- How can this be understood from a power perspective on space, focusing on the relationship between centre and periphery?

- Which identified strategies can contribute to creating conditions for balancing the relationship between urban and rural?

Method

Interviews have been conducted with professionals involved with spatial planning and rural development in the region of Dalarna and the municipality of Gagnef. A content analysis of the empirical material has been implemented, consisting of the interviews and documents from municipal and regional organisations. The documents are strategic documents, planning documents and rural development documents. For further information regarding the methods see chapter 3.

Disposition

In the introduction chapter, the background, research problem, purpose and main questions are presented. In the second chapter the theoretical framework is presented starting with a description of the urban norm by exploring the history and decisive events. How urban and rural are and have been described is also discussed as well as common definitions of the two. The theory of power and power as a process will then be described, based on the theory by Foucault. The focus will thereafter be on the theory of center and periphery and the urban interpretative prerogative.

The third chapter contains a description of the methods and empirical material of the thesis. An introduction on changing society into a bio-based society is presented in the fourth chapter. The reader is also introduced to parts of municipal comprehensive planning and Swedish regional planning. Three reference projects are also presented.

In the fifth chapter the case of Dalarna and the municipality Gagnef is presented and the empirical material is analysed on the basis of the theoretical framework.

Planning strategies are developed based on the analysis and presented in the sixth chapter. The strategies are a part of the result together with the analysis. The thesis is also linked together in the chapter *result and discussion*, combining a summary of the result and a discussion, which also includes suggestions for further research.

Bulletin board by Fänforsen, Gagnef
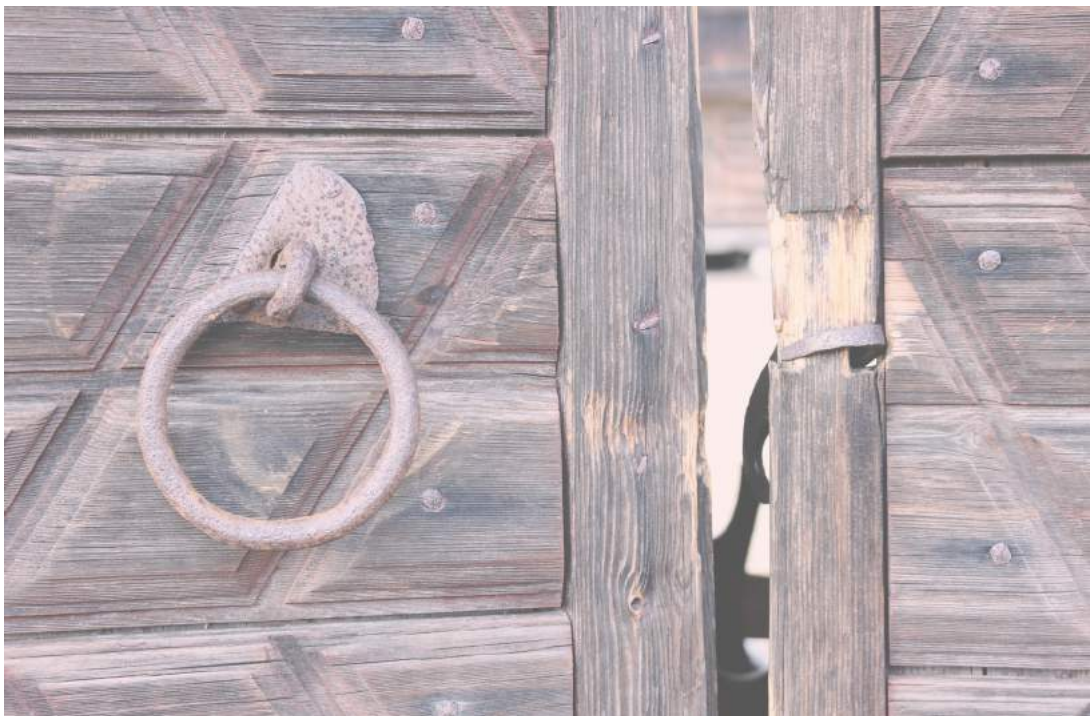
Gagnefs Minnesstuga, Gagnef

chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*In this chapter the theory, which is the starting point
for the work, is presented.*

To further explain how the empirical material and the results from the interviews have been evaluated, the theory of power relations and the relationship between the center and periphery have been studied. In this master's thesis it is assumed that an urban interpretative prerogative exists, which is also a part of the theoretical framework. A discussion on whether to define urban and rural areas or not is also visible in this chapter. Research stress that there is a need for new, more flexible terminologies regarding different urban and rural environments and some examples are raised here. In order to understand how the urban norm and this interpretative prerogative is manifested in society there is a need for going back in history to see what shaped this development.

Historical influences on the urban norm

In the 1930's, the number of inhabitants were the same in urban and rural areas in Sweden, as a result of the urbanisation during the industrialisation and the specialisation of production and services. Other fstakeholders have also contributed to urbanisation, such as the building of the million homes program between 1960-1970 and the resettlement allowances which were distributed to those who moved closer to the job opportunities in the cities (SCB, 2015). Other contributing fstakeholders to the urbanisation, aside from the emergence of

the urban norm, were the two larger municipal reforms that were implemented during the post war period, one in 1952 and the other in 1971. The number of municipalities decreased drastically and power and administrations was centralised. People moved from rural areas to both smaller and largeer urban areas. This change resulted in a need for meeting new requirements in urban areas since there was a larger demand for land and in rural areas it became harder for people to have a voice and to assert their own interests. Rural areas have not been prioritised in municipal and regional planning; instead the centre has been strengthened (Arén, 1994, p. 17). The architect and researcher Hans Arén (1994) discusses other fstakeholders involved in the process of weakening rural areas and a lot depends on the changing economic system and a greater dependence on large, centralised energy systems for example (Arén, 1994).

In 1971 National land use planning[3] was implemented in Sweden and according to this process, areas that were to be developed or preserved were identified on a national level. It was also a process of inventory, documentation and decision-making concerning the geographical natural resources and land and water usage. This resulted in investments continuing to go to already expanding areas. The principle of concentrating functions also had a great impact within spatial planning at this time (Bjur, Werne & Göransson, 1985). Centralisation of public services was looked upon as something positive from a centre's perspective, where the unification of municipalities was seen as a way of sharing the welfare and services between the centre and the periphery. And even though the access to public services improved for people living in rural areas, the downside was that the distances also increased (Arén, 1994).

During the 20th century, rural areas underwent a great transformation. Some rural areas today give an image of successful demographic tendencies while others are characterised by exodus and stagnation (Scholten, 2005). Until the 1950s, rural life was characterised by hard work in the rural landscape with production as the main purpose and the traditional suppliers being forestry and agriculture. Since then, agricultural policy has focused on rationalisation and operating concentration, which has contributed to a minimised need for human labour. The rural landscape became a place for recreation and leisure and not just production. Many people were at this time attracted by higher wages and better housing, which led to depopulation of rural areas and population growth in the city. This was also emphasised by politicians, researchers and artists during the building of the Welfare state, who saw the rural landscape as the 'loser in the modern society' (Isacson 2008). Scholten (2005) also describes that the distinction between urban and rural is partly unclear because of the building of the Welfare state and Folkhemmet and at this time, the disparities between urban and rural were reduced. But at the same time, an image is etched of what rural

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[3] Fysisk Riksplanering
[4] Jordbruksverket

life is and how people in rural areas are (Scholten 2005, p. 143).

Since the late 1960s, demographic patterns have followed the political will formed during this time, which meant that smaller municipalities succeeded in attracting inhabitants from rural areas. When the agriculture and the forestry were rationalised decreasing population was managed by policies steering the moving of people. Urban planning in the larger cities became the norm also for smaller municipalities (Westlund & Pichler, 2000; Björling, 2014). Hans Westlund, professor in Regional Planning at the Royal Institute of Technology and Wolfgang Pichler, analysts in regional growth, discuss that according to this norm, rural areas were a place strictly for production and recreation, and not for living (Westlund & Pichler, 2000, p. 24). The increased population in rural areas has happened spontaneously and against political spatial planning intention. A conclusion made by Westlund and Pichler (2000) is that planning has not been adapted to the conditions in rural areas with an exception during the 1990's when politics was rather ambiguous regarding planning in rural areas (Westlund & Pichler, 2000).

In the 1970s, after about 120 years of urbanisation, the population in larger city regions decreased and the phenomenon is called counter-urbanisation. Counter-urbanisation refers to population shifts from larger cities to medium-sized and smaller cities. In the 1980s, the urbanisation process was again increasing, but at the same time, the population in rural areas increased slightly as well. Moving patterns showed a concentration as well as scattered development. Studying moving patterns from the 1990s, the trend was, just as during the 1980s, equivocal and polarized. But now the population was increasing rapidly in metropolitan areas while sparsely populated areas increased slightly and the smaller urban areas decreased (Westlund & Pichler, 2000). Westlund and Pichler (2000) describe the main reasons for counter-urbanisation as being increased housing costs in the center, forcing people with lower income to the periphery, social welfare policy and different forms of regional policy as well as changed attitudes and lifestyles. Reduced distances through improved commuting possibilities, opportunities to work from home and de-industrialisation are also fstakeholders that could impact counter-urbanisation. A part of the reason could also be the gentrification hypothesis, and to a large extent it is the middle class that represents the increased rural population. Swedish municipal spatial planning ideas of the time cannot explain the increased population in rural areas since the spatial planning rather has had a focus on urban development (Westlund & Pichler, 2000).

Urban and rural as opposites
Urban and rural, city and countryside, have traditionally been viewed as opposites. Manufacturing and services have been the basis of the urban economy while

rural areas have been dependent on forestry and agriculture (Westlund & Pichler, 2012). Categorizing the landscape into urban and rural is nothing new, but this dual way of thinking makes no room for what is in between. To separate urban and rural is in fact not that simple, or even relevant (Tunström, 2009; Westholm, 2008).

Researcher in urban planning, Julia Fredriksson, describes how industrialisation did contribute to a reformulation and loosening of the existing borders between urban and rural. Through urbanisation, urban and rural dwellers were now living closer together and legal reforms contributed to a changing view of these borders. Researchers are questioning if there is a need for a distinction between urban and rural and whether there are hierarchal differences between center and periphery (Fredriksson, 2014). Fredriksson writes in the project plan for her research regarding space and power in regional planning:

> The city and region have undergone profound structural changes, which means that the relationship between center and periphery and between urban and rural in many ways has been reformulated. However, the current planning is still largely dominated by a theoretical model based on a strict distinction between urban and rural, where the region is seen as a hinterland to the city and where the city is being promoted as a driving force for regional development (Fredriksson, 2015, p. 3).

It was established during the emergence of suburban areas and rural communities within an urban context, that the concept of urban and rural could not be understood as opposites. The idea of a rural-urban continuum where the lines were undefined and blurry was instead highlighted. Even in the 1960's there were discussions among researchers regarding neighbourhoods in rural areas with urban qualities and rural-like communities in the city (SOU 2003). It is still stressed today by researchers that it is important not to exaggerate the differences between urban and rural. Many rural areas today have access to high technology, mobility and are influenced by urban cultures. At the same time there is a ruralisation within urban development and many urban inhabitants tend to embrace countryside living (Ljung, 2015).

Re-ruralisation is a sub-trend, which means that people move to the countryside surrounding a city, to adopt a new lifestyle and find jobs within production. New trends are constantly being formed between what traditionally have been urban and rural. Tunström (2009) describes, among others, that because of this, new concepts are needed to talk about today's urban environments in order to develop them. More flexible concepts could be a way to free todays

urban planning from the 'traditional town' (Tunström, 2009; Fredriksson, 2014). This could mean the same for rural environments and a more open view of what is rural could contribute to a change in how we plan for these areas. Human geographer Gunnel Forsberg (1996) writes that there is a need for new terminology based on a relationship between urban and rural that is not tainted by the unbalanced dichotomy. New terminology can be an instrument in the development of the dialog between planners, researchers and politicians (Forsberg, 1996). Hagbert (personal communication, February 18, 2016) also explains a need for a reassessment of the relationship between urban and rural. Hagbert raises the question regarding what will happen when people, who traditionally have moved to urban areas for culture and work, now can find the same qualities in rural areas.

It has been argued that it is not relevant to talk about urban and rural as opposites and new concepts are required. Even so, attempts have been made to develop different definitions and some of these will be explained further. The Swedish Board of Agriculture[4] is the Government's agency and authority in questions regarding rural development and they have four categories in their systematic definition system of urban and rural. The definitions are divided according to population:

• Large urban areas: municipalities where 100 per cent of the population belong to the category TOT (urban areas with more than 10 000 inhabitants) or TON (close to other urban areas). These municipalities are only in the large urban regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

• Urban areas: municipalities with a population of 30 000 and/or where the largest urban settlement have at least 25 000 inhabitants.

• Rural areas: municipalities not included in the two previous classifications (large urban areas and urban areas) and with a population density of at least five inhabitants per square kilometer.

• Sparse rural areas: municipalities not included in the other three classifications, which has a population of less than five inhabitants per square kilometer.

Statistics Sweden[5] (SCB) explains that 85 per cent of the Swedish population lives in an urban area, compared to 200 years ago when 90 per cent of the population lived in a rural area. They present a second definition where urban areas are defined as areas with at least 200 inhabitants and where the distance between houses is less than 200 meters. This means that according to SCB, a municipality such as Gagnef in Dalarna has many urban areas, but is still

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[4] Jordbruksverket
[5] Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB

considered to be a rural municipality by the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SCB, 2016; Jordbruksverket, 2015). SCB does not define what rural is and it is rather seen as a residue.

A third definition is by the National Rural Development Agency[6] (now the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth[7]) and the definition is based on travel time to an urban area[8]. Areas further away than 45 minutes from an urban area is termed a rural area (Glesbygdsverket, 2008).

Whether it is important to have one standardised definition or not, the conclusion is that there is no established definition for what a rural area is. According to Erik Westholm (2008), professor in Nordic and European rural development and human geography, the reason for wanting to define the rural has to do with the perception of economical and social structures in rural environments as being a problem in society. Urbanisation has lead to a strengthening of the urban perspective and the urban lifestyle is seen as a norm.

At the same time, the resources from rural areas are not valued and used to their fullest, when in many cases these are environments of vital importance (Westholm 2008, p. 56-57). In a Government inquiry it is explains how rural areas are divergent because of the physical environment, the small-scale businesses and the non-profit involvement in local development. Two main differences are presented between urban and rural areas:

> The particular physical environment that characterises rural areas is the nature, the agricultural landscape and the built environment. The other part is the scattered structures and the distances, which affects almost all human activities. The physical environment and the sparseness of population must therefore be the basis for discussion on how the countryside is different from the city in other ways (SOU 2003, p. 79-80, author's translation).

It is here states that the differences are such that it is justified to see rural areas as special environments that have their own specific conditions and problems, even though a person in a rural area can have an 'urban lifestyle' (SOU 2003).

According to the same Government inquiry it is not possible to create just one definition that is useful in all situations (SOU 2003). A common 'forced' definition would be inhibitory for the discussion and development for both urban and rural areas (Westholm 2008). The problem with finding one uniform definition is that there is a large variation in social, economical and environmental conditions in different rural areas and many perceptions of what rural is. It is stated that even

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[6] Glesbygdsverket
[7] Tillväxtverket
[8] Tätort

though it is important not to get stuck in uniform definitions, it is key to see the different preconditions that exist in different urban and rural areas (SOU 2003).

Power and space

The relationship that exists between urban and rural areas constitutes a power structure and an arrangement of how that power is organised. This thesis is basing the theory on the power analysis by Foucault. Power is, according to Foucault, a constantly changing process (Larsson, 2016; Hörnqvist, 1996). This means that power is constantly shifting, never completely one-sided and always challenged. Power is also, according to Foucault, productive and produces identities, meanings, spaces, discourses and social relations. By producing identities and spaces for example, power can operate as limiting and excluding (Fredriksson, 2014)

Power can affect the individual in the way that the individual's position in relation to another position can alter the access to power. Power does not come from the individual but from the position the individual holds and from the relation to others. From this perspective, power cannot cease to exist, and can only be distributed in different ways (Fredriksson, 2014). Furthermore, Foucault (1987) states that the perception of normality becomes an instrument by which hierarchies and power relations are maintained (interpreted by Svensson, 2006). According to Morrison (interpreted by Svensson, 2006) the relation between a norm and a deviation is hierarchical, which means that a norm could never exist by itself, only in relation to a supposed antithesis (Svensson, 2016).

By understanding power as a process, the relationship between urban and rural is produced and reproduced based on their relation to each other (Hörnqvist, 1996). It is explained by political scientist, Malin Rönnblom (2014), that by understanding how power relations work it becomes possible to change these (Rönnblom, 2014). In this thesis, the starting point is that power and space is relational. Viewing space as something that is constantly shifting is a perspective that has become commonly accepted (Fredriksson, 2014). The center and the periphery does not just exist in a definite function, they are rather created through actions (Fredriksson, 2014; Rönnblom, 2014). A space can thus not be a result of natural processes (Fredriksson, 2014).

Center and periphery

There are different definitions of what a periphery is and it can be used in many different ways. Social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey explains the periphery as perceived as being from a different time, within the discussion on modernity. At the same time, the center is perceived as a part of the modern society. Difference is made between urban and rural on a geographical level and

it is therefore a differentiation both in a historical sense and a geographical sense (Massey, 2004). Forsberg, (1996) describes tendencies of creating dichotomies such as center and periphery and differences in value are assigned to the terms. The differences become more important than the relationship and the similarities between the two, even though they are dependent on each other for their existence. We should rather discuss center and periphery as a part of the same development process and not as parallel opposites (Forsberg, 1996). There is a need for a deconstruction of the center-periphery dichotomy because it is creating hierarchical orders and is applying a degree of modernity to a place as well as a difference in value.

Social scientist, Gry Paulgaard (2008), discusses the need among young northerners in Norway of having to move to an urban context to be modern. This has to do with the hegemonic view of the modern center and the out-dated periphery. The center is looked upon as civilized while the periphery is primitive (Paulgaard, 2008). As Rönnblom (2014) puts it: 'The city as the representative of modernity, growth, success and development needs the rural, needs the cousin from the countryside to demonstrate its excellence' (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 4). Young people who do not grow up in a city will have their self-image affected by this to some extent, by not living in a center (Svensson, 2006).

Forsberg and Grenholm (2002) express (interpreted by Svensson, 2006) that the relationship between center and periphery is very much a power relation and what is considered to be the natural or normal reflects this relationship. To be in the center is to be actively appropriating the room, to represent the norm and hold onto power (Svensson, 2006). Massey (2004) discusses how we should respond to unknown and distant places in the same way we relate to the past. This is because we have a certain responsibility for our past. In the same way we should have responsibility for people, not only in our immediate surroundings, but also further away from us (Massey, 2004).

The rural other and the urban interpretative prerogative

The capital of Sweden is often regarded as the centre of Sweden. It is where the Parliament is located and it is an economic center in some sense. Together with other larger urban areas, Stockholm is often described as the nurturing part of Sweden while rural areas are portrayed as being consuming (Eriksson, 2010). The city as the engine is a common argument for making investments in the city and focusing on urban development. According to rural strategist, Christel Gustafsson, it is also commonly argued that what favours the larger urban center also favours the rest of the country:

> What favours Stockholm favours the whole country, what favours the

regional center favours the whole region and what favours the urban center favours the entire municipality. The result is that tax revenues are centered, from the periphery to the center. Ultimately, the loss of investment in rural areas will contribute to dismantling of large parts of Sweden. Parts that can contribute in areas that are vital for society as a whole (Gustafsson, 2013, January 7, author's translation).

To analyse power relations can mean different things and power can take different forms. To hold a position where you get to decide what should be discussed or what decisions that should be made is an expression of power. It can also be about having a preferential right of interpretation regarding what is the norm and what is divergent. Rural areas tend to be explained in a certain way, which gives these areas limited opportunities and by this, it is predetermined what the priorities should be. This process is relational, meaning that rural areas are constantly created in relation to previous notions about what is rural and/or in relation to urban areas. But urban areas are also created and understood in relation to rural areas, the difference is that the urban tends to be the beneficial party, whether it is conscious or not (Rönnblom, 2014).

Rönnblom (2014) has studied Governmental documents in order to see how rural areas are constructed in these documents. Rönnblom (2014) states when analysing the *National Innovation Strategy*[9] that even though the importance of looking at the relationship between urban and rural is recognised it does not say how to work with this relationship. It is stated that different areas have different conditions but even so, a general policy seems to be enough. Rural areas should, according to Rönnblom's observations, be transformed but at the same time act within traditional frameworks. It is also stated that inhabitants in rural areas have a responsibility to provide services and infrastructure for themselves, while inhabitants in cities are not responsible in the same way (Rönnblom, 2014 p. 4 & 8).

Rönnblom (2014) explains how rural areas, unlike urban areas, are described by their physical attributes such as the nature and cultural landscape, as well as on the basis of distance, lacking accessibility and sparseness. Rönnblom (2014) interprets this as saying that the city is what is normal and that it is an example of an urban preferential right of interpretation. But it could also be a way of saying that the city is more special since it differs from the rest of the country or that closeness is a distinctive feature for the city. Rönnblom's point is that analysing two areas as opposites and referring to areas because of their particularity or special features is likely to strengthen a vulnerable position (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 14-15). Pointing out distance as one of the characteristics of rural areas can also be misleading since distance is a relative term (Svensson, 2006, p. 12).

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[9] Den nationella innovationsstrategin
[10] Regeringens landsbygdsstrategi

In the *Governmental Rural Strategy*[10], it is stated that the differences between urban and rural are often described as being too large and in need of reduction. At the same time, there are fundamental differences between urban and rural that cannot be changed. According to Rönnblom (2014), there is a risk of fortifying the urban norm by pointing out differences in rural areas. Forsberg (1996) states that rural areas do suffer from problems, but it is not because they are undeveloped but rather because rural areas are distanced from cities. It is not the physical space that is the problem, but it is the people that are ascribed the problems (Forsberg, 1996). Another aspect of the strategy that enhances the urban interpretative prerogative and the urban norm is the point that rural areas tend to be developed for the whole country's sake and not just for the rural area itself (Rönnblom, 2014, p 11-12). This is also an issue raised by Forsberg (1996) and it is described how urban and rural areas need to be developed in balance since the urban areas need the rural environments for recreation and waste disposal (Forsberg, 1996).

Rönnblom raises the discussion on whether rural areas should be termed in policy since this can further reproduce their subordinated position. She states that to change this order we have to make the power relation visible. The important part is to reflect upon what it means to do so and what consequences it might have (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 15). It is also discussed how the rural should be communicated in policy making and Rönnblom raises three alternatives that are visible in the documents and discusses the paradox of terminology. If there is a more general approach to development, there is a risk that the urban interpretation is strengthened: 'If the neutralisation has the effect that a marginalised position is strengthened further, maybe the politics of terming (refers to terming the rural in policy) is still required' (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 16, author's translation). The same goes for only mentioning the rural, even though the intention might be different; if urban areas are given certain resources on the cost of rural areas, this might be something to discuss in a rural strategy. By terming both urban and rural, urban areas can be challenged to take a larger responsibility (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 16).

chapter 3

METHOD AND EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

*In this chapter the methods (interviews and content analysis)
is presented together with the empirical material and
approach.*

This chapter will clarify how and why information has been collected, by presenting the methods that have been used as well as the empirical material. A content analysis of the empirical material has been conducted, which contains relevant documents and interviews with professionals. A part of the result has been to develop strategies that relate to the analysis of the empirical material. Initially, the chapter will present the studied region and municipality, Dalarna and Gagnef.

A study of Dalarna

The region of Dalarna and the municipality of Gagnef have been chosen for this study. The focus has been on the County Administrative Board of Dalarna[11], Region Dalarna, the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge[12] and the municipality Gagnef. The County Administrative Board have an important role in the planning of rural areas, in their role as representative of state interests. The board also possess the power to influence the planning in the municipalities as well as facilitate the municipalities in different issues. The County Administrative Board of Dalarna are working with rural development in different ways and a part of their work is to demonstrate how the region takes the *Rural Development Programme for Sweden*[13] into account.

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[11] Länsstyrelsen Dalarna
[12] Falun Borlänge Regionen
[13] Landsbygdsprogrammet 2014-2020

1. Avesta
2. Hedemora
3. Smedjebacken
4. Säter
5. Ludvika
6. Borlänge
7. Falun
8. Gagnef
9. Vansbro
10. Leksand
11. Rättvik
12. Malung
13. Mora
14. Orsa
15. Älvdalen
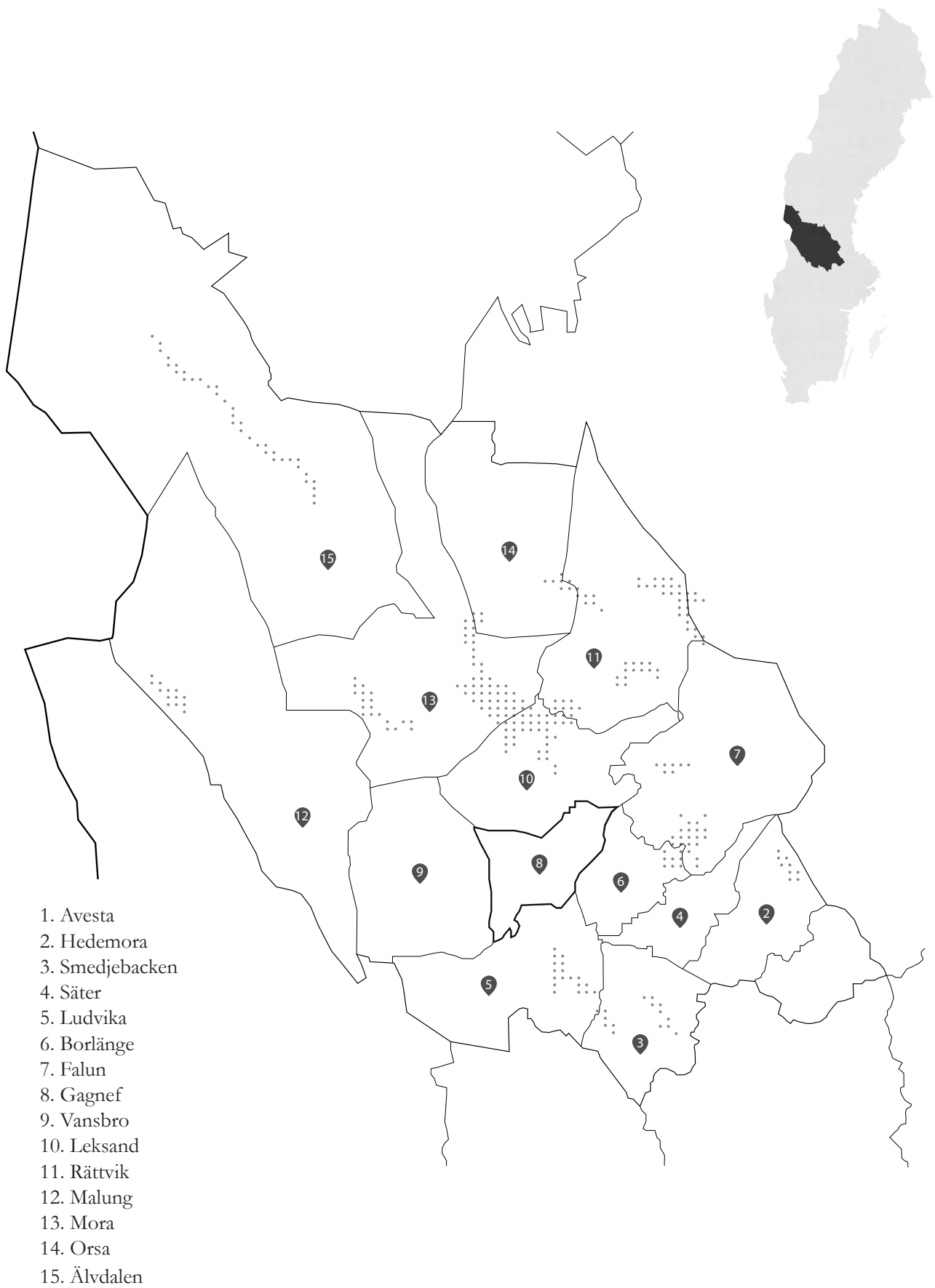
Region Dalarna is a relatively young organisation, founded in 2003. The role of Region Dalarna is to manage, coordinate and improve the efficiency of regional development in Dalarna. A part of its work is to see to the opportunities in the region and promote regional development within different areas, with a focus on growth and employment. The influence Region Dalarna has within spatial planning and rural development is limited. If planning is moving towards a more regional perspective, Region Dalarna could be developed into having a more central role within a few years. The ambitions are to facilitate cooperation within planning across the municipal borders and enhance the positive impacts and reduce the negative effects of regional expansion (Region Dalarna, 2014a). One of the benefits that come with Region Dalarna is that they can follow the municipal planning process closer than the County Administrative Board, due to the fact that they do not have a scrutinising role.

The sub-region of Falun and Borlänge is studied since the municipality of Gagnef is a part of this collaboration and it is identified as an important part of the region. The municipality is one of the smallest municipalities in Dalarna considering the number of inhabitants. The Swedish Board of Agriculture defines the municipality as a rural municipality (Jordbruksverket, 2016). One of the reasons for choosing Gagnef is that the municipality does not have a natural center and therefore it is interesting to study how the urban norm is reflected.

Interviews

In order to get an understanding of the region of Dalarna, the sub-region of Falun and Borläge and the municipality of Gagnef, semi-structured interviews have been conducted. Key officials involved in spatial planning and rural development in Dalarna have been interviewed. The County Administrative Board of Dalarna, Region Dalarna, the municipality of Gagnef and Dalälvarnas development area[15] are the four stakeholders. At the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, an interview was conducted with the process manager for rural development. At Region Dalarna, an interview was held with project manager for spatial planning and at the municipality, the city architect and the enterprise developer were interviewed. At Dalälvarnas development area the executive director was interviewed. Dalälvarnas development area covers ten municipalities around the river Dalälven.

When conducting a qualitative interview much focus lies on the interviewee's perspective and opinion (Bryman, 2008). The interviews should be allowed to develop in an unplanned direction, depending on what the interviewee finds to be relevant and important. A qualitative interview allows for follow-up questions and the discussion can therefore be developed depending on the topics that come up during the interview. The comparison of the interviews and the

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[14] Gles landsbygdskommun
[15] Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområde

planning documents can therefore be interesting. Through the interviews other information can become visible, such as discussions that were not included in the documents. But since what is included in the documents was considered to be the most important part, the documents are still viewed as the intended goals of the organisations. The interviews are analysed by comparing and discussing common features from the different interviews. Disparities in the studied documents and in the information from the interviews will also be highlighted in the analysis.

The political intentions are found in policy and planning documents, but there is often more to the discussion than what is visible in these documents. Since politicians in municipalities are decision-makers regarding municipal as well as regional planning it would have been valuable to also interview one of the politicians in the municipality of Gagnef or a member of the commission within the organisation Region Dalarna. The thesis would also have gained from a dialog with a professional in one of the larger municipalities, Falun and Borlänge, in order to get an understanding for their view of the relation between urban and rural areas for example.

Content analysis

The empirical material, which includes planning documents and the interviews, has been analysed based on guiding questions. Widen (2009) describes a analysis dimension within content analysis, which is suitable for this work. The analysis dimension is about viewing the selected text in a larger, societal, context (Widen, 2009). The main questions are the starting point for the content analysis and in order to map out the result from the analysis, guiding questions have been formed to limit the search.

A content analysis is used to analyse documents and texts in a systematic way and the method is fruitful together with other methods. The intent with the method is to draw conclusions of what characterises a document (Bryman, 2008). When using content analysis as a method, the author must be careful not to draw conclusions on the basis of preconceived ideas. There is also a risk when using content analysis that the context is lost when only part of the text is analysed (Widen, 2009). This is also the question of the delimitation of the work; something might touch upon the subject but is not discussed in the analysis due to the questions asked when reading the material.

The research method is open in the sense that it is simple for the reader to go back and understand how the selection was performed, and it is therefore easy to monitor the work. The method is advantageously used in research situations where the studied material is simple and direct. Thus content analysis is a suitable

method to use in this study due to the fact that the material is directed to the public and is therefore intended to be understood by a broader audience. Subtle meanings should thus not exist (Denscombe, 2009).

The documents have been chosen by formulating criteria. These criteria are that the documents should be public documents by an authority or organisation involved in the regional development in Dalarna and handle questions regarding spatial planning and regional or rural development. The documents should also be up to date. Documents by the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, Region Dalarna and Dalälvarnas development area have been studied in order to understand the perception of the relationship between urban and rural in the region and municipality. As for documents from the municipality, the comprehensive plan has been studied in order to get a deeper understanding for the municipality, but since it is out-dated because it is from 1998 and not relevant for the municipality, it is not a part of the analysis. How the work with spatial planning is conducted is studied in the different levels of society, from the state to region and municipality. The guiding questions asked when studying the material are:

- How is the discussion of the relationship between urban and rural visible?

- Are there tendencies of an existing urban norm in the documents? If yes, how is it visible? Is the empirical material conscious of the urban norm?

- How are rural and urban areas characterised and what roles does urban and rural areas have? Is a power relation visible, and if so, how?

- What are the intentions for municipal and regional transformation in urban and rural areas within the spatial planning?

Planning strategies

Strategies are developed with a norm critical approach to respond to the identified problems, and the hypothesis saying that an urban norm exists. The strategies aim to bridge between urban and rural and find solutions for a just prioritizing within spatial planning. The strategies are responding to the spatial injustice that exists today, which benefit larger urban areas. The strategies also examine solutions adapted to the local environment and aim to emphasise the importance of rural areas.

The strategies are divided into two parts, focusing on regional and municipal transformation. The planning strategies emphasises transformation rather than development since development implies that an area is undeveloped, which

underpin the rural stereotype. Forsberg (1996) question rural development because why does rural areas have to be developed? Forsberg askes if that is really the problem for rural areas and in that case, undeveloped in relation to what? (Forsberg, 1996, p. 36). The regional and municipal strategies overlap and the strategies are connected to and depend on each other. The strategies are limited in the way that they do not aim to adress all the challenges within regional and municipal planning but are rather a way of giving an alternative perspective and starting point within the spatial planning. The strategies are geographically anchored but aim to be inspirational and adaptable to similar regions and municipalities.

Forest in Bäsna, Gagnef

chapter 4

MEANS AND ENDS IN A TRANSFORMATIVE PLANNING

*In this chapter the transition towards a bio-based society
is discussed together with planning tools on a regional and
municipal level.*

In this chapter it is explained why it is important to exceed the dichotomy of urban and rural and what tools are used within contemporary Swedish spatial planning. The geographical differences in regional development are increasing within contemporary Swedish spatial planning. A transition to a bio-based society is a solution for strengthening the value of rural areas as well as the relationship between urban and rural (Ljung, 2015). This chapter begins with a presentation of what role a bio-based society and ecosystem services approach can play within planning, both on a municipal and regional level. Thereafter, the comprehensive plan and the regional plan, which can work as planning tools for implementing these ideas will be presented. In the end of the chapter, three reference projects (in a municipal and regional scale) will be highlighted.

Transition towards a bio-based society

In the thesis it has been highlighted how the view of rural areas has changed, from an area of production with agriculture and forestry in focus, to a recreational area and living environment. The view of rural areas has at times been fragmented, but prejudices still influence the general picture. Industrialisation and urbanisation changed the demography in rural areas and the technological development has rationalised the production in rural areas.

Ecosystem services are the beneficial parts that nature and its ecosystems provide for humans. Ecosystem services are the basis for life and meet our basic needs by providing food and energy as well as the cultural landscape, which have a positive impact on our health and well-being. Regulating functions such as pollination and basic functions such as water circulation are also types of ecosystem services. Some of these ecosystems are valued today, but most of them are not. In a bio-based society, it is required that all ecosystem services are valued in the same way as fossil and mineral-based products for example, which can be replaced by new products and services - ecosystem services (Ljung, 2013). However, criticism exists regarding the approach of ecosystem services according to Ljung (2015) since they are based on human perspective and humans' right to exploit nature. It is also problematic to put a price tag on nature when effort and value will only be ascribed to the functions that have a price (Ljung, 2015).

A very central question in this thesis is how to enhance the value of rural areas and local development in a regional perspective. Ecosystem-based resources tend to be surpassed by the urban focus in society. By shifting to a bio-based society, where ecosystem-based resources come from natural processes and can be transformed into ecosystem services, the role of rural development can be enhanced (Björling & Fredriksson, 2016 (forthcoming)).

The prerequisite for developing ecosystem-based resources and assigning a more central role to ecosystem services in both local and regional situations is to enhance the value of these. Local development in rural areas is restricted by the central position of urban areas. Without assigning rural development a higher value, which today mainly is given to urban development, the development that is implemented in rural areas becomes just an isolated event (Björling & Fredriksson, 2016 (forthcoming)). The flows between urban and rural areas are today linear, from rural to urban (Ljung, 2015). By having a starting-point in ecosystem-based resources and more circular flows in planning, the linear flows can be challenged. A better balance between local and regional transformation can be a result from this. Björling and Fredriksson (2016 (forthcoming)) explain how a changed perspective can contribute to connecting different planning levels and exceed the dichotomy center-periphery. By having an urban-rural landscape perspective it is possible to connect the different planning levels (Björling & Fredriksson, 2016 (forthcoming)).

The comprehensive plan and regional planning as a tool

The need for planning differs from different categories and levels within spatial planning. National interests can sometimes seem poorly grounded locally. Organisations in charge of national interests might expect understanding for their requests because it is considered to be for the common good, while local

conditions are overlooked (Bjur, Werne & Göransson, 1985). The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning[18] stresses that all rural areas might not be able to survive and that we have to plan for dismantling of some areas (Boverket, 2012). Swedish municipal comprehensive planning has become a city-oriented tool, with less focus on rural planning (Stenqvist, 2009), although, together with a will to plan for a long-term sustainable development, arable land has been recognised as an important resource. Due to the European Agricultural and Rural Convention, rural areas have also been identified as a resource for the whole society and as a part of the solution to achieve cultural, economical and ecological sustainability goals. It is emphasised that there is a need for a stronger focus on rural areas in the municipal planning. Agriculture and forestry are of a national interest and together with a need for sustainable planning principles, the role of rural areas have been more and more acknowledged (Stenqvist, 2009).

In a guidance document by the County Administrative Board of Skåne, it is suggested that rural development should be a part of the comprehensive plan and be equally valued as urban development. Rural areas have traditionally been viewed as homogeneous places, which urban areas can expand on (Stenqvist, 2009). According to the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, this image is becoming more nuanced, allowing rural areas to become as important as urban (Stenqvist, 2009). Elsa Grip from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences expresses in the same guidance document the importance of changing our view on the value of the land and food supplies for example, which could be a matter for the comprehensive plan. According to Grip, 'if rural areas are to be alive people must be able to live there' (Stenqvist, 2009, p. 20), which might sound obvious, but still needs to be stressed. Robert Werner from the municipality Skurup believes that it is important to use the comprehensive plan to point out the municipality's guidelines for rural areas. It can be a tool to point out where to develop as well as where it is important to protect the landscape (Stenqvist, 2009). Arén (1994) also describes the municipal comprehensive plan as an important tool for asserting interests in different parts of the municipality (Arén, 1994).

A challenge that is difficult to manage within the context of the comprehensive plan is regionalisation and issues that need to be managed across the administrative borders of different municipalities (Björling, 2016 (forthcoming), p. 55-66). Regional planning[19] is not very common in Sweden, and Stockholm and Gothenburg are the only regions that have set up a planning body (Johnson, 2013). But other regions do also practice regional planning in different forms such as the region of Skåne and the region of Örebro. Regional planning is becoming an increasingly important work for all geographical areas in Sweden (Björling, 2016 (forthcoming), p. 55-66). Regional planning is a tool that is used

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[18] Boverket
[19] According to the *Planning and Building Act*

for handling questions that involve several municipalities. What to include in a regional plan is for the region itself to decide (Johnson, 2013). In 2015, the Swedish Government published a report with proposals for a new regional planning. It is identified that the coordination between different stakeholders is characterised by discrepancies and that there is no regional stakeholder that leads a comprehensive approach (Björling, 2016, p. 55-66).

According to Björling (2016) a more dynamic concept for regional transformation is eligible, without the latching of administrative borders. The borders could rather change depending on the issue that is tackled and for example be based on topography or infrastructure formations (Björling, 2016 (forthcoming), p. 55-66).

Reference projects

Three reference projects have been studied in order to get an overview of different regional and municipal development projects. The parts of the reference projects that are presented concern similar situations and issues as the ones identified in the region of Dalarna and the municipality Gagnef, which will be examined in the analysis. The first project is explained more in detail since it correlates more to some of the issues that are raised in the thesis.

Structural image for Skaraborg

The overall goal of the structural image of Skaraborg is growth in the whole sub-region. A structural image is a developed tool to achieve a mutual vision for the development of a region. Strategies have been developed in order to realise the structural image. The strategies involve meeting places, accessibility, housing, local development close to nature and culture, integration, management cooperation and a collegium for the built environment. The overall goal is economical, ecological and social growth, which cannot be achieved without all the strategies. In the strategic document, the core of the strategies is described:

> The landscape in Skaraborg is characterised by a great diversity with different conditions and interdependencies. The interplay between the cities, towns and rural areas are vital for sustainable economic, social and ecological growth (Skaraborgs kommunalförbund, 2015, p. 3, author's translation).

The importance of an interaction between urban and rural is emphasised in the strategic document. The importance of promoting a variety of landscapes and meeting places is also highlighted:

> Meeting places for people facilitate exchanges of goods, services

and ideas. It is of great importance for Skaraborg's development to promote a diversity of landscapes and meeting places, in different contexts and at different times (Skaraborgs kommunalförbund, 2015, p. 3, author's translation).

In the structural image, Skaraborg label themselves as being the most peripheral area in Västra Götaland and this is also something they wish to change by creating a stronger connection and relationship to surrounding regions. A better placing in the region is described as important (Skaraborgs kommunalförbund, 2015). A stronger connection to Gothenburg is not emphasised, which can be interpreted as Skaraborg not wanting to place themselves in a position where they are dependent on the largest urban region in Västra Götaland.

In the structural image, Skaraborg wants to develop the areas connecting to the natural and cultural landscape. A connection between local development and the utilisation and improvement of resources, with a focus on ecosystem services, is enhanced. Innovative solutions should be developed in these areas. The strategies also stress the handling of conflicting interests such as development and biodiversity. Resource issues and water accessibility are important questions for sustainable development. By creating cycles of energy, food production, waste, drainage systems, material, transportation etc. in cooperation between municipalities, a more sustainable Skaraborg can be achieved.
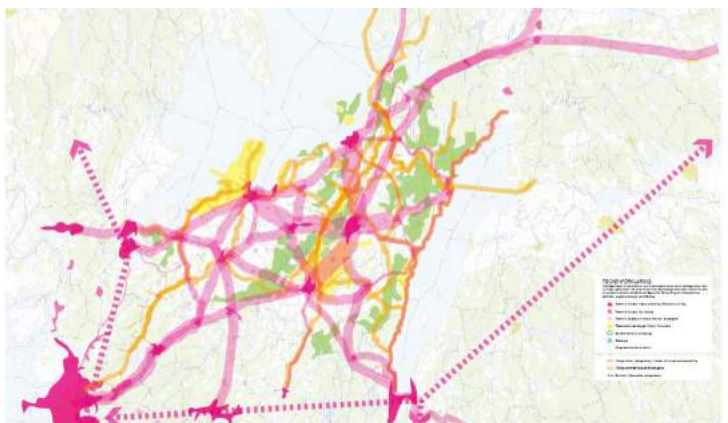

Figure 1: Structural image, Skaraborg, Skaraborgs kommunalförbund

Figure 2: Structural image Skåne, Region Skåne

Structural image for Skåne

The structural image for Skåne has been studied since the strategy is based on the idea that Skåne should develop several cores, improve the access and link the region together. The strategy has an urban focus, which is visible through the concentrated effort on the largest cities as well as a multi-core region. The main focus is on cities as engines for economic competitiveness, but it is also stated that the largest cities have to cooperate in order to develop as innovative centres (Utveckling Skåne, 2016).

One of the five strategies reads 'grow efficiently with a balanced and sustainable land use'. In the structural image for Skåne it is also stated that all areas should develop their specific values and they emphasise that the regional planning have to be anchored in local development (Utveckling Skåne, 2016).

Malmö comprehensive plan

In the comprehensive plan for Malmö several strategies have been developed. The strategies that involve rural development and ecosystem services have been studied. In Malmö's comprehensive plan they intend to manage ecosystem services from a sustainable long-term perspective. It is stated that ecosystem services should be valued and their role be strengthened within planning (Malmö stad, 2014), which is the main reason for studying the comprehensive plan.

According to the comprehensive plan, maintenance is important in order to strengthen the attractiveness of rural areas. It is also said to be important for making natural values persist and increase. The natural areas that are unique for the municipality should also be protected and made into nature reserves (Malmö stad, 2014).

It is also stated in the comprehensive plan that an interaction between urban and rural is important for a sustainable society, although this is mainly to attract people for recreational activities and to link different attractions:

> The links between urban and rural needs to be strengthened in order to attract a broader group of people for recreation and excursions, and better connections and strategically located main points should be created and linked (Malmö stad, 2014, p. 53, author's translation).

It is also described in the municipality that by building more dense cities, land can be saved, which is explained as being important and that conservation of agricultural land for food and energy production should be managed in the planning (Malmö stad, 2014).

chapter 5

THE CASE

In this chapter the reader will gain an understanding of the studied case Dalarna and the analysis of the empirical material.

In this chapter an analysis of the empirical material will be presented. In the first part of the chapter, a description of the region and municipality will create an understanding of the area. The analysis consists of different parts that overlap. The analysis of the interviews and the planning documents will be presented. Different statistics will also be studied and analysed.

Dalarna

This part has been divided into three sections: the region of Dalarna, the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge and Gagnef municipality. The sub-region of Falun and Borlänge has been studied because the municipality of Gagnef is a part of this sub-regional cooperation. Falun and Borlänge are also referred to in different documents as being the center of the region.

The region of Dalarna

Dalarna is a region in the central Sweden with 15 municipalities. It is highlighted that the area is as large as Belgium, but compared to the 10, 5 million people living in Belgium, about 300 000 people live in Dalarna. The sparseness of the region is something that is emphasised (Länsstyrelsen, 2016; Dalarna, 2016). There are approximately 10 people per square kilometre compared to the average in

forest

water

urban area / larger village

open land

bare mountain

The region of Dalarna
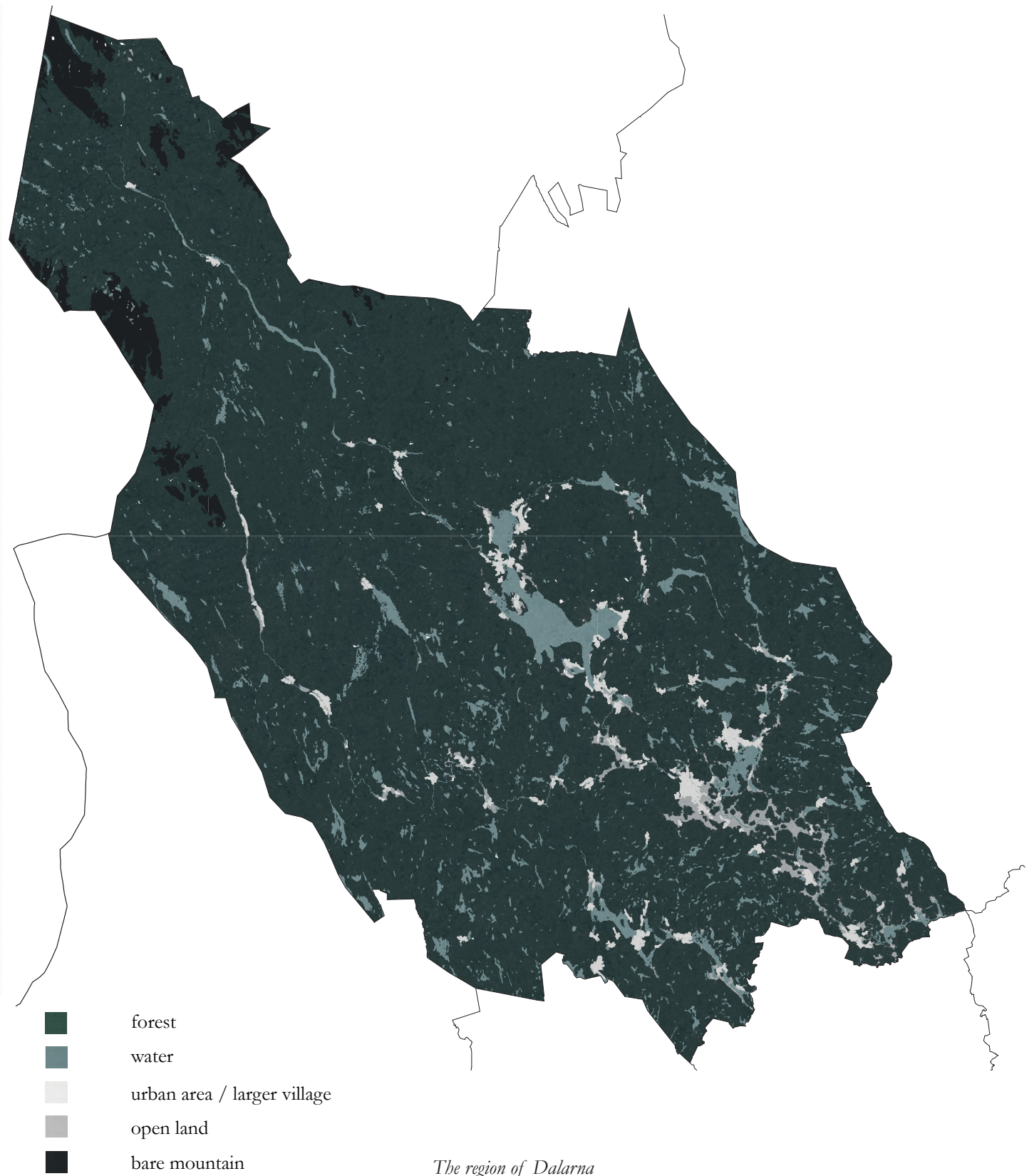
Sweden, which is 23 inhabitants per square kilometre (Region Dalarna, 2014c). The number of inhabitants per square kilometres is something that varies in the region: in the municipality of Älvdalen in the north there is one person per square kilometre and in the municipality of Borlänge there are 84 inhabitants per square kilometre (Länsstyrelsen, 2011).

The region of Dalarna has the fourth largest tourist industry in Sweden (Länsstyrelsen, 2011). It is now the industry that has the largest amount of employees in the region (Region Dalarna 2014a). The economy in Dalarna is also dominated by forestry and manufacturing (Region Dalarna, 2014c).

In the south of Dalarna there is a fertile agricultural landscape, small lakes and varied deciduous and coniferous forests. Towards the north, the landscape becomes more typically northern with large continuous areas of coniferous forests, clear spring water lakes and vast areas of marshland. The southernmost parts of the Scandinavian mountain chain are to be found in the northwestern part of Dalarna (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2016b).

Dalälven is a water system that runs through large parts of the region connecting many lakes. In the municipality of Gagnef the western and the eastern part of the river meet. Here is also the border between Bergslagen in the southern parts and the 'real' Dalarna. This boundary is not visible in the landscape, but it is an old cultural boundary that is seen only in the bedrock (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2016b). Above lake Siljan the landscape is characterised by highlands and deep valleys (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2016b).

Forests cover a large part of Dalarna and is an important part of employment within the industrial sector. Cultivated forests consist mainly of pine and spruce, but birch, larch and lodgepole pine also occur. More than 80 percent of the forests are owned by private agents or private companies while the remaining part is owned by the state or state-owned companies. The forests in Dalarna are quite fragmented and the owners are many. Half of all Swedish forest parcels are located in Dalarna. Reallocation of parcels is an important and extensive process that is currently happening in Dalarna. The goal with improved and rationalised ownership structures is to provide a more productive forestry with the possibility of increased employment.

The agriculture in Dalarna is varied. There are more than 60 000 hectares of arable land, which is 2,3% of the arable land in Sweden. In 2013, 61% of the arable land in the region was used for haymaking or pasture and 27% was producing grains (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2016c).

Looking at the land use historically, arable land and pasture have decreased since the 1950's. The productive forestry has on the other hand been quite constant.

The population growth in Dalarna has remained at a relatively constant level due to immigration. From an overall perspective, the population has decreased during the 2000s and many people are moving closer to urban areas[20]. Trends show that the population in rural areas is declining, while the population in urban areas and rural areas with good accessibility to an urban area have increased. Variations occur and there are examples of both urban and rural areas that have reduced or increased their population.

All municipalities in Dalarna have inhabitants that are commuting to and from the municipality and commuting is increasing. There are more people commuting in the central parts of the region and particularly between Falun and Borlänge and from Gagnef and Säter to Borlänge (Region Dalarna, 2014c). Dalarna has among the highest amount of cars per capita in Sweden and 574 inhabitants out of 1000 own a car (Region Dalarna, 2014c).

Land use in Dalarna
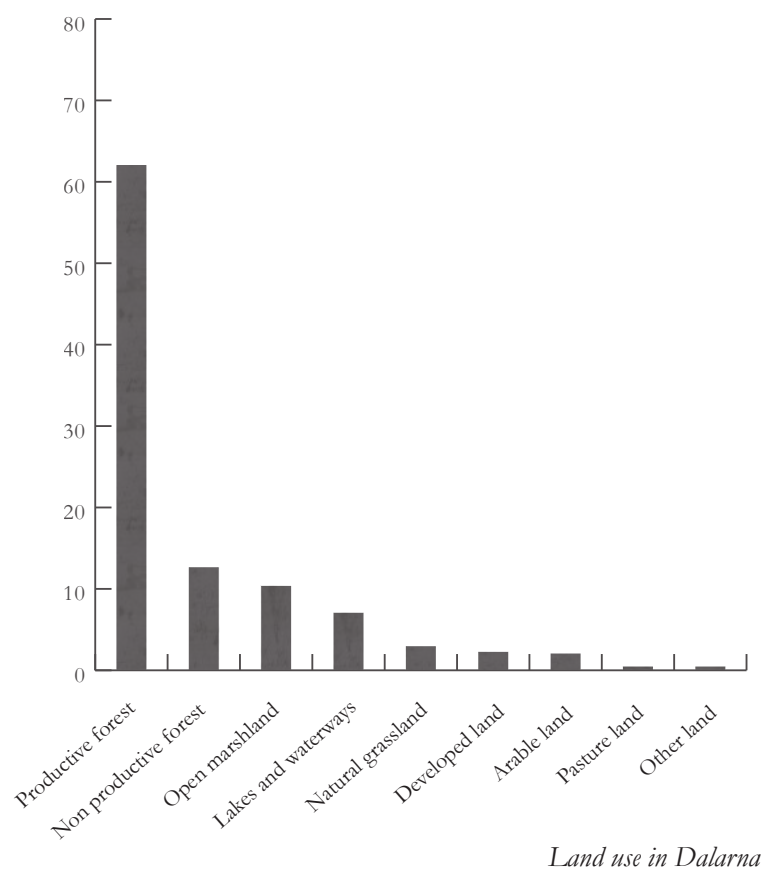
[20] Tätorter

Älvmötet in Djurås, Gagnef

Charcoal kiln, Dala-Floda

The sub-region of Falun and Borlänge

In the south of Dalarna, the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge has been formed, which besides Falun and Borlänge includes four other municipalities; Smedjebacken, Säter, Malung and Gagnef. The sub-region call themselves the engine for growth in Dalarna (Swedish translation: dalarnas tillväxtmotor) and 166 000 people lives in the sub-region (Falun Borlänge Regionen, 2013)

1. Smedjebacken
2. Säter
3. Ludvika
4. Borlänge
5. Falun
6. Gagnef
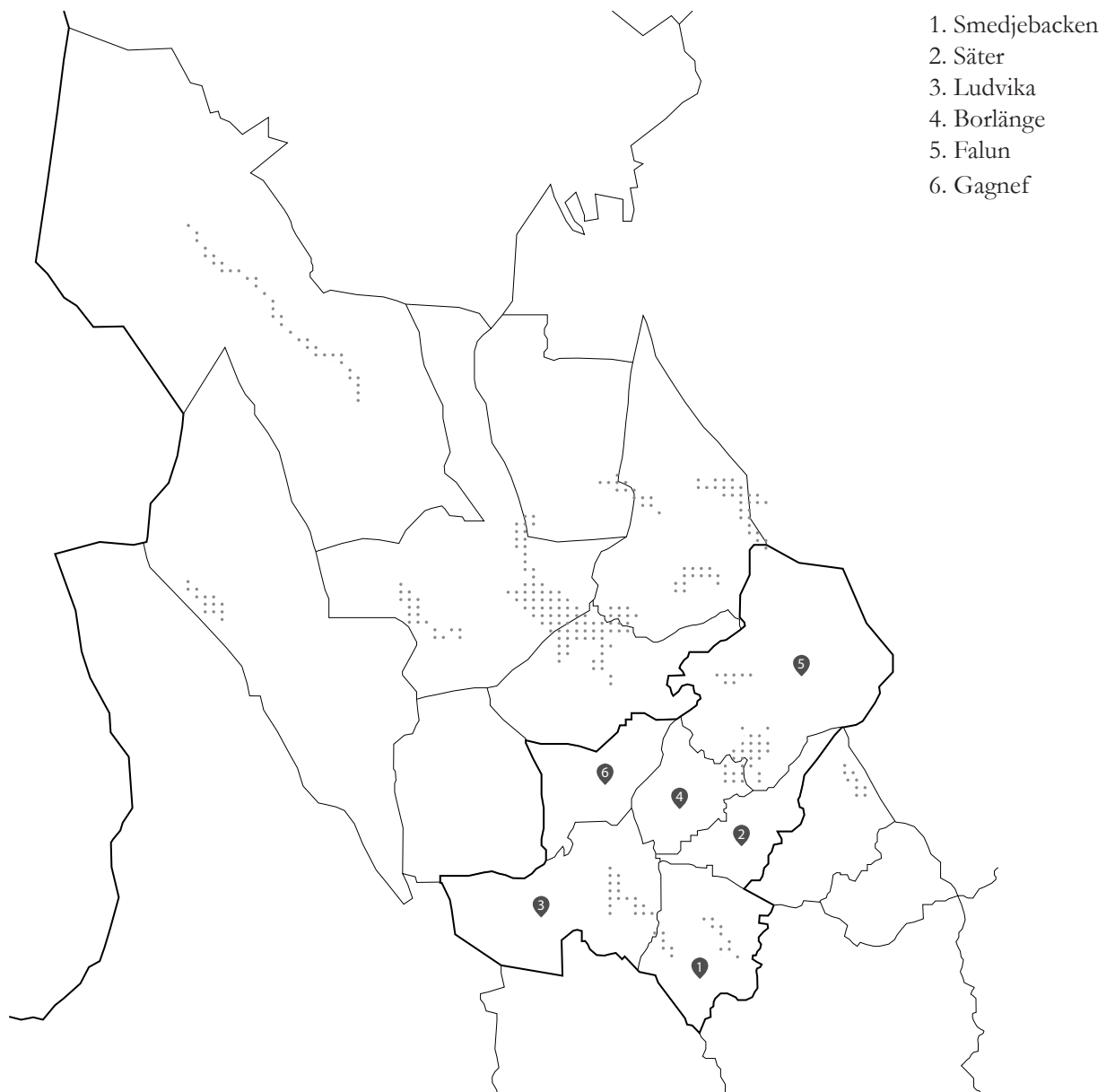
The sub-region of Falun and Borlänge

The municipality of Gagnef

With 10 079 inhabitants (2015), Gagnef is the 11th largest municipality out of 15 in Dalarna. Unlike many other municipalities, Gagnef does not have a natural urban center, but around fifty towns and villages. Not having a natural urban center is something that the municipalities in the western parts of Dalarna (Swedish translation: Västerdalarna) have in common, which is described as a curse by writer and editor in chief at the newspaper Dala-Demokraten, Göran Greider (Greider, 2001). Out of these villages in Gagnef, there are eight urban areas (Swedish translation: tätorter), according to the definition by SCB: Björbo, Dala-Floda, Mockfjärd, Bäsna, Djurås, Sifferbo, Djurmo and Gagnef (Gagnefs kommun, 2016). Although, some would say that the village Gagnef[21] is the center of the municipality with 1032 inhabitants, at least this was the idea, but because of the road structure, Djurås has become an important node with 1271 inhabitants (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, author's translation; SCB, 2014a). Djurås is referred to in the comprehensive plan as being the administrative center of Gagnef (Gagnef 1998). The largest urban area considering population is Mockfjärd with 1919 inhabitants (SCB 2014a).

Planning in the municipality of Gagnef

Different functions have traditionally been placed in the different villages, which could be the reason for not having a natural center in the municipality. Althoug, this way of thinking is changing, with new inhabitants and a new view of what a municipality should be (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, author's translation).

The comprehensive plan is from 1998 and was declared as current in 2011. It is now considered to be out-dated due to the fact that most of the plan is completed, and what has not been implemented is no longer suitable in today's situation (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, author's translation). According to the comprehensive plan, almost all urban areas should develop as a place for services, housing and work. The overall goal for the comprehensive plan is an ecological sustainable development and economic growth, which the municipality aim to achieve by balancing the protecting of the environment, the supply of natural resources and the use of natural resources (Gagnefs kommun, 1998).

The municipality is in the progress of developing a housing program[23]. There is an expressed need for detailed development plans as well as rural planning close to water[22] since there are many lakes in the municipality (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, 2016).

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[21] One of the villages has the same name as the municipality, but when only mentioning Gagnef, it refers to the municipality
[22] Landsbygdsutveckling i strandnära lägen, LIS
[23] Bostadsförsörjningsprogram

The municipality of Gagnef is part of a local development approach called Leader (*Links between actions for the development of the rural economy*), which is based on cooperation and collaboration between the private, voluntary and public sectors. Besides Gagnef, the local development approach involves the rural areas in Borlänge, Falun, Leksand, Malung-Sälen, Mora, Orsa, Rättvik, Vansbro and Älvdalen. The local development strategy is created based on the European Commission directives and regulations together with national, regional and municipal guidelines using a top-down approach. At the same time it is described

The municipality of Gagnef

forest

water

urban area / larger village

open land
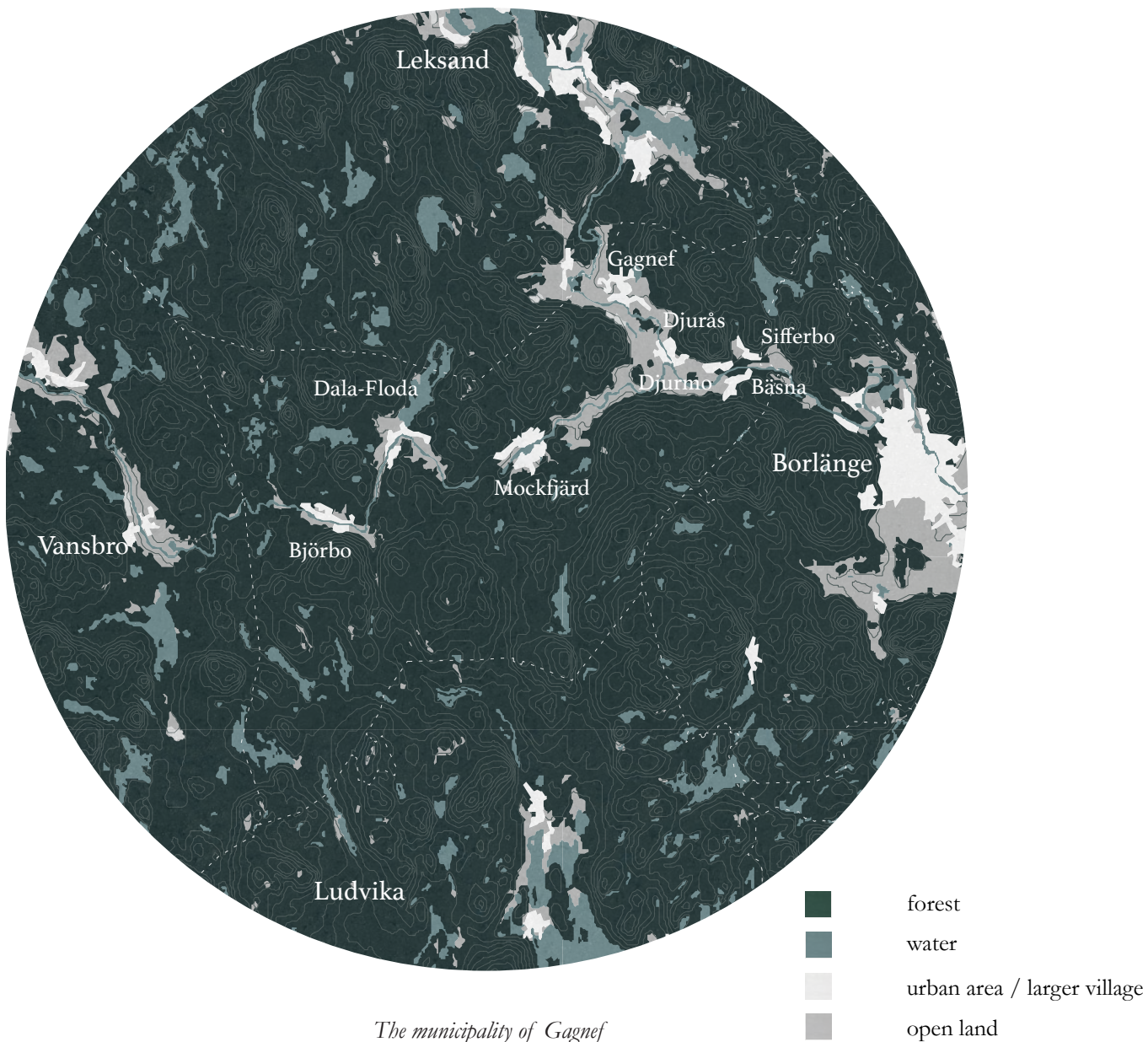
Flosjön in Dala-Floda, Gagnef

Winter at Flosjön in Dala-Floda, Gagnef

as a bottom-up approach since the emphasis of the strategy lies with the people living and working in the area as well as on creating a joint involvement in the local development. The vision of the development strategy is based on a few objectives that have been created for the areas. The vision involves creating competitive and cooperative rural areas through knowledge and innovation, create economic growth through new competencies and developing a strong and sustainable business sector and create a viable countryside for all (Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområden, 2014).

Gagnef

The acreage in Gagnef is 76 km² and the municipality is primarily covered by forest. 75 % of the land is productive forestry and 10 % is non-productive forest. Developed land amounts to 3,5 % and arable land covers 3 % of the surface, compared to the 2% arable land in the region (Länsstyrelsen Dalarnas län, 2013).

There are 14 municipal nature reserves in the municipality, the largest being Tryssjöberget, Örjasänget, Djurmo klack-Oxberget (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, author's translation; Länsstyrelsen, 2011).

There is a need for housing in Gagnef. The areas where the demand for housing is the largest are Djurås, Gagnef, Bäsna, Djurmo and Sifferbo, but according to the municipality there are only a few vacant plots to build on within a planned area. There is also a need for a variety of housing since there are mostly single family houses in the municipality today and it is the municipality with the largest amount of single family houses in Sweden. There is also a need for a retirement home and it is difficult for elderly to find accommodation, which is also a very important political issue at the moment (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, author's translation; SCB, 2014c).

The population is increasing slightly in Gagnef and between 2013 and 2015, 19 people have either been born or moved into the municipality. The population trend has for a long time been the opposite and decreased since the 1990's. People who move to Gagnef mainly move from another municipality in Dalarna, but also from other regions. People that are most likely to move away from Gagnef are in the age group 18-24. The largest age groups in the municipality are 45-64 and 65-79 (SCB, 2014a).

The unemployment in Gagnef is 4,2 %, compared to the average in the region which is 7,1 % (Ekonomifakta, 2016). There are about 700 registered businesses in Gagnef and 20 % of the workers in the municipality work in these businesses (Interview with enterprise developer, Gagnef municipality, 2016). Men operates more than double of all the businesses. The largest sector is within health and social care, which provide jobs for 20 % of the inhabitants. The second largest
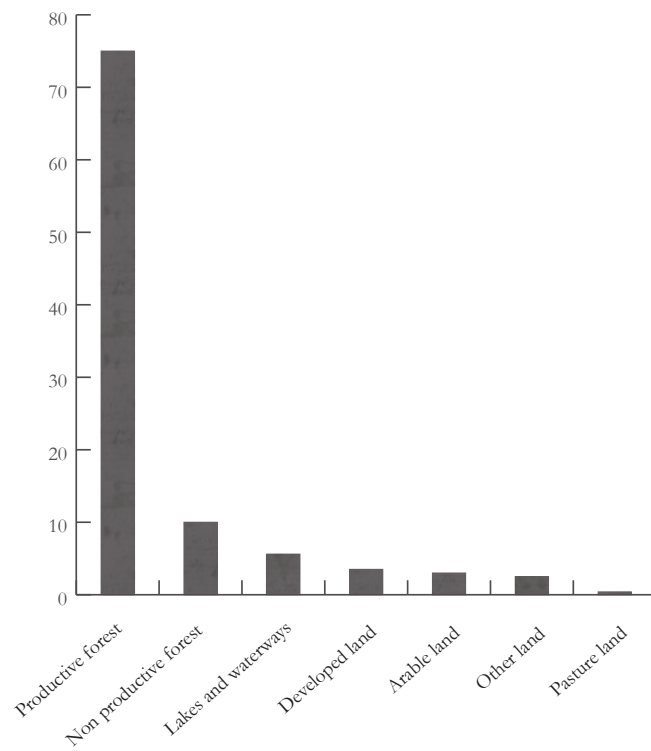
Land use in the municipality of Gagnef
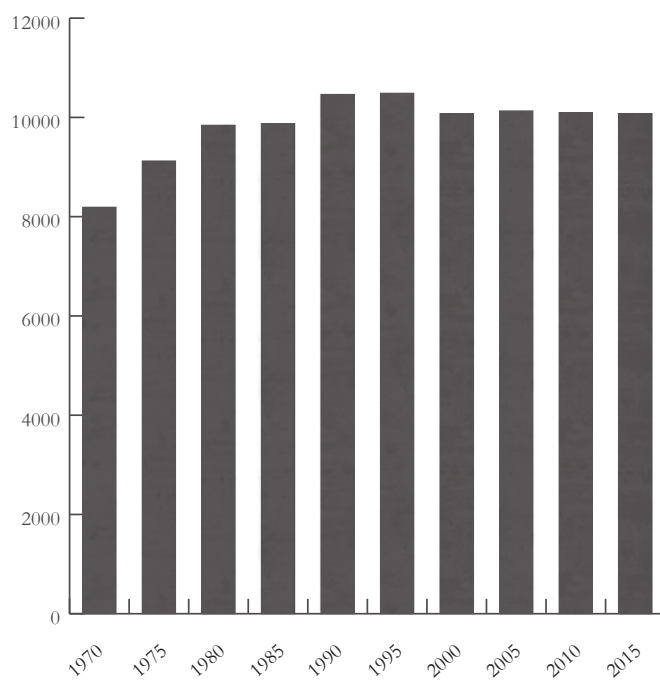
Population n the municipality of Gagnef

Parking lot in Djurås, Gagnef

Supermarket and service station in Dala-Floda, Gagnef

sector is the manufacturing industry (SCB, 2014b). The area in which Gagnef is located has been described as being undeveloped when it comes to tourism (Greider, 2001, p. 21).

About 2 300 people commute from Gagnef to other municipalities in Dalarna and Stockholm. Most people go to Borlänge, Falun and Leksand. About 620 people commute to Gagnef from surrounding municipalities, mainly from Borlänge and Leksand (Region Dalarna, 2014c).
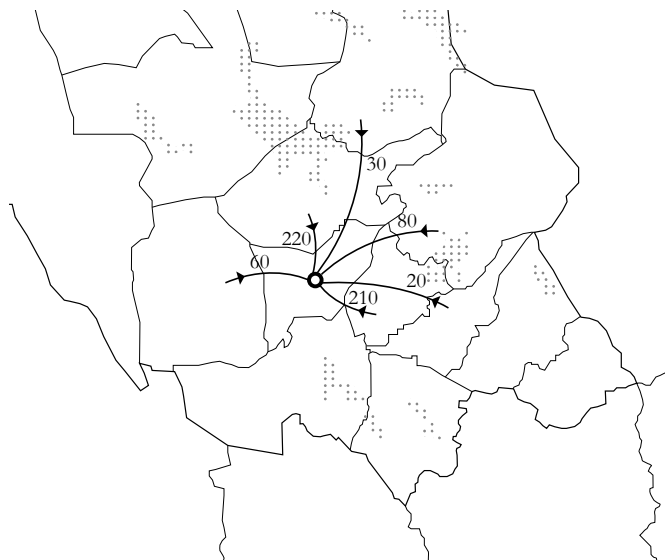
Commuting to the municipality of Gagenef
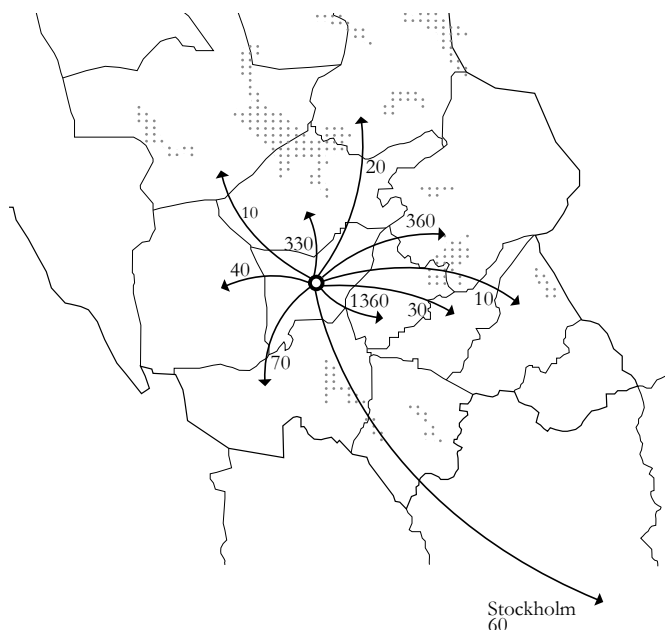
Commuting from the municipality of Gagnef
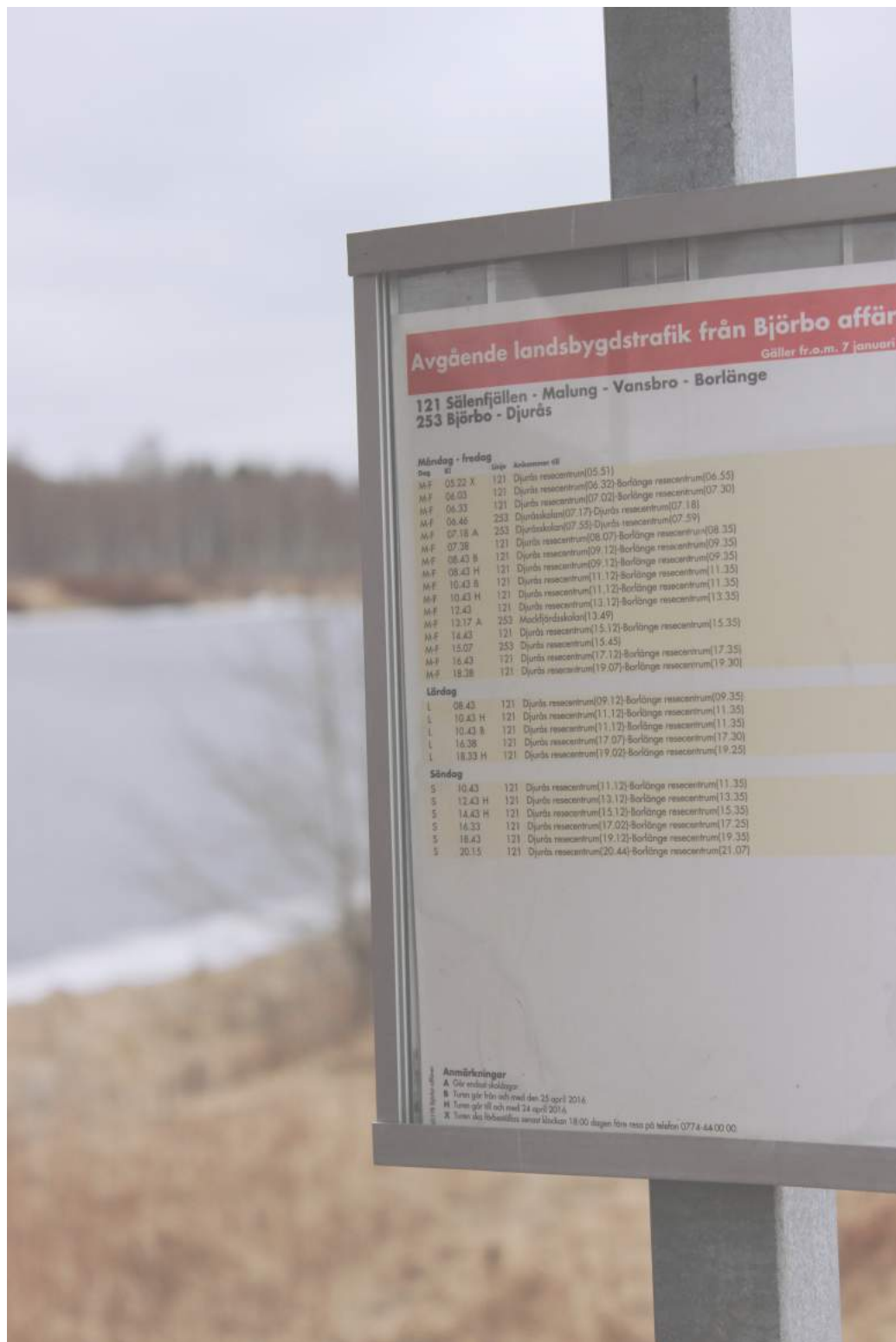
Bus stop in Björbo, Gagnef

Ice rink in Björbo, Gagnef

Analysis of empirical material

In this part the analysis of the interviews and planning documents will be presented. Conflicting views are highlighted and the theoretical framework is considered in the discussion. The interviewees are the process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, the project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, the city architect at Gagnef municipality, the enterprise developer at Gagnef municipality and the executive director at Dalälvarnas development area. All cited documents and interviews have been translated by the author.

The city as the engine

One of the questions asked in this thesis is how the urban norm reflects on the spatial planning and policy making in the region of Dalarna and Gagnefs municipality. In a strategic document[24] by Region Dalarna (2014a), Falun and Borlänge are described as the engine of the region. By this, Region Dalarna mean that Falun and Borlänge are the engine for development:

> Dalarna is a region where all municipalities are taking an active role in the regional development and where Falun and Borlänge, as the engine of development in Dalarna, is a region for living as well as for labour and leisure, and one of the ten largest urban regions in the country (Region Dalarna, 2014a, p. 6).

This can be seen as an attempt to compete with other large urban regions in Sweden. The strategy was met with some criticism in other parts of Dalarna, mainly in the north (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, January 29, 2016; Interview with process manager for rural development, County Administrative Board, February 8 2016, author's translation). For Gagnef municipality, it was seen as something positive, due to its location close to the larger cities (City architect at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, January 29, 2016). The project manager for spatial planning in Region Dalarna reflects upon the designation of Falun and Borlänge as the engine:

> Looking at the tourism industry for example, it is not the engine. But Falun- Borlänge is often the perspective, which is a shame. We had a discussion about it, and we tried to steer it in another direction. But here we have an informative mission; it is not so easy for politicians to act both as municipal and regional politicians. But it is the largest number of inhabitants here and a lot of people commute to Falun and Borlänge. Also the labour market is larger in Falun and Borlänge (Project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, personal communication, 28 January, 2016).

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[24] Dalastrategin - Dalarna 2020, Regional utvecklingsstrategi för Dalarna, 2014

The view on Falun and Borlänge as being the engine differs quite a lot between different municipalities depending on the municipality's location in the region. The municipality of Gagnef is quite positive towards the strategy since it also can benefit from it. Gagnef is involved in the cooperation of the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge. The city architect in Gagnef municipality argues:

> Clearly we see Falun and Borlänge as the engine. The situation is different in Rättvik and the area around Siljan where they have a tourist dominated industry and their own business structure. There they had some discussions about Borlänge and Falun being referred to as the engine. Here it is obvious; Gagnef is so close and benefit from the location (City architect at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, 29 January, 2016).

The city architect in Gagnef municipality mentions the need for the municipality to contribute with attractive plots for development when discussing the relationship to Falun and Borlänge: 'It is just for us to get started with development of housing and to find attractive plots' (Interview with city architect, Gagnef municipality, January 29 2016, author's translation). According to Region Dalarna (2014c) an increasing number of municipalities consider that development of larger cities are of great importance for the own municipality, even though the distance may be 100-200 kilometres from there, since many people commute to these urban centres (Region Dalarna, 2014c p. 18). The County Administrative Board of Dalarna has a continuous dialogue with the municipalities in the region and possess knowledge of the reactions that came with the strategy where Falun and Borlänge was referred to as an engine. The process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board of Dalarna explains:

> It caused a lot of discussion in the countryside regarding Falun and Borlänge being referred to as the engine of the region. Just merging Falun and Borlänge and saying that we are 100 000 and a metropolis. But when travelling between Falun and Borlänge, the only thing you see is forest. Also some [municipalities] feel left aside in this strategy, because Dalarna is a large region. The distance between Falun and Stockholm is as far as the distance between Falun and Grövelsjön. What should we do with the rest of Dalarna, other than just a recreational area? We have to talk about why it is important that people live in the whole region (Process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board, personal communication, February 8, 2016).

Region Dalarna (2014c) also describes Falun and Borlänge as important transportation nodes in the region (Region Dalarna, 2014c). The sub-region

of Falun and Borlänge promote themselves by saying that you can live in the countryside but still have easy access to world-leading companies in the cities. Rural areas are also described as recreational areas, with many opportunities for sport and access to forests and lakes (Falun Borlänge Regionen, 2013):

> In the region of Falun and Borlänge, you can choose to stay in the countryside, close to nature, while having an exciting job at one of our world-leading companies. […] Outside the city center is a living countryside, close to forests and lakes. In the middle of the region is Dalarna's second largest lake, Runn, a meeting place for skaters and boaters. The region offers a variety of recreational activities during both summer and winter (Falun Borlänge Regionen, 2013).

This paragraph is directed to people that are interested in moving here, and so the information is adapted accordingly. It is clear that rural areas are presented as recreational areas for urban dwellers or for living, and that nature is what symbolises the rural. As for labour, it can be interpreted that the exciting job opportunities are concentrated in the cities. This is consistent with the view that is often describing urban areas as representative of modernity, growth, success and development (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 4). It might also say something about what type of inhabitant the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge wish to attract. Region Dalarna also describes how people do not have to coordinate work and housing since it is easy to travel between different cities and towns:

> Dalarna is a functionally balanced region with a relatively high population density with a concentration of the industry to the central parts of the region, where Falun and Borlänge is a clear two-core center. Around the larger urban areas, Dalarna has also a relatively dense structure of cities and towns with different characteristics and within a short travel times, which, gives residents opportunities to choose living environment and work more independently (Region Dalarna, 2014a).

Besides from the two-core center of Falun and Borlänge, it is also stated that there are many cities and towns within a close radius. The focus here is on the travel time between the different urban areas, which can be interpreted as rural areas being something you drive past to get to your urban destination. Region Dalarna were debating whether they should refer to Falun and Borlänge as the engine, since the two larger municipalities are already self-driven. In the discussion they considered Mora as a municipality to promote (Interview with project manager for spatial planning, Region Dalarna, author's translation). Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area interprets the tourism industry as an engine of

the region as well as Falun and Borlänge:

> The tourism industry is an asset for the region and something that can be lifted in a national, European and international perspective. We have places in Dalarna that are congested and the communications to places in the north, such as Sälen, are in many cases substandard based on the traffic load. It is not a normal road standard but a lot of dimples. One might think that a road standard can be a bit poor if you chose to live in a certain place, but it should not be so bad that there is a risk of running off the road. If you come up to Älvdalen municipality, the car is the means of transportation available, but it is dangerous to drive here. We must look into what are the industries that drive the region. Tourism is an important engine (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

The tourism industry in Dalarna is the fourth largest in Sweden and has been referred to as an engine by several interviewees (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, 24 March, 2016; Project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, 28 January, 2016; Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, 23 March, 2016). The tourism is also referred to by Region Dalarna (2014a) as an important industry for growth in the region. At the same time the standard of the roads in these areas is poor. The executive director at Dalälvarnas development area continues:

> They are different. Falun and Borlänge together could be an engine. But in Malung Sälen and Idre, the ski tourism is indeed a huge engine too. Falun and Borlänge as an engine, absolutely! But they have many sensitive components with constant cutbacks. […] An engine is very dependent on who is behind the wheel. If it is not the right actor, it does not matter (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

It is here identified that the urban areas, Falun and Borlänge, can be an engine, but it is not the only engine. Rönnblom (2014) describes how an area can be assigned a certain feature, which affects the opportunities of an area (Rönnblom, 2014). There is a common predetermined image of cities being the engine, which prioritises the urban (Björling, 2014; Härifrån, 2016b). Because if the city is the engine, what is the rural? If a rural area is never given the opportunity to be further considered, prioritised or developed because of this predetermined image of what development and growth should look like (and if these ideas are constantly being reproduced) rural areas are limited within these structures.

Even though the intention in the organisation Region Dalarna was to challenge or widen this understanding, the 'safe' way was to explain development and the city as it is always being explained.

In Dalarna, Falun and Borlänge are referred to as the urban engine. But what is the relationship to places outside of Dalarna? If the perspective changes, there is also a center-peripheral relationship between Dalarna and larger urban regions. An example is lifted concerning the relation to Stockholm during the interview with enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef:

> It will probably take 45 minutes longer to go from Borlänge to Arlanda Airport since the track is in such a poor condition and the trains must therefore run slower[25]. At the same time, 150 billions is invested in the train lines between Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. The politicians in rural areas has to become tougher on the Parliament level; they do not take hold of the problem and stand up for it, at least not from what you see in the media. The politicians should stand up more collectively (Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, 23 March, 2016).

There are relational spaces in different scales. The train connections to Dalarna are a low priority compared to the largest cities in the country. It is important to bear in mind since this is also something that can affect how politicians choose to prioritise in Dalarna.

Problematizing the rural

Rural areas are explained to have many challenges in Dalarna. In a *Rural Policy Programme* it is proposed to primarily take advantage of and support the existing development potentials in rural areas. According to Region Dalarna (2014b) the large distances contributes to rural areas have special prerequisites (Region Dalarna, 2014b). To describe sparseness as a problem only for the rural area and not for the region in its whole enhances the idea of the rural only being developed for its own sake. Sparseness is also described as a problem for rural areas by the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen, 2015, p. 135). The County Administrative Board of Dalarna also ascribe small businesses in rural areas some problems in their action plan for rural development:

> However, there are some obstacles for continued growth of small businesses in rural areas. A negative development of public and commercial services can have a negative effect, and at the same time, the deployment of fibre networks for broadband is slow. Neglected infrastructure development in general can be seen as an obstacle

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[25] The conditions have changed since the interview March 23, 2016, and all involved municipalities have acted together and held a meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure.

both for the tourism industry as well as for manufacturing companies (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 31).

Changes in the demography and an aging population is also described as a problem for rural areas by the County Administrative Board:

> The population in rural areas in Dalarna is getting older while the influx of younger inhabitants is low. This, together with the social services in many parts of rural areas at risk of deterioration, constitutes a major problem for rural areas (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 110).

While some characteristics and development patterns are ascribed as rural problems, Region Dalarna (2014b) describes the resources in rural areas as being important and Region Dalarna emphasise a holistic perspective in their *Rural Policy Programme:*

> The countryside in Dalarna is a resource for the entire region. To take advantage of this asset requires a holistic approach that extend across many policy areas and development areas (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 20).

Broadly speaking, the problems in rural areas are mainly described as problems for the rural, but the resources in rural areas are resources for the whole region. As Rönnblom (2014) describes, rural areas are seen as something that should be developed for other areas and not just for the area in itself (Rönnblom, 2014).

We tend to problematize the rural by ascribing these areas a need of special solutions. According to Rönnblom (2014) there is a risk of further strengthening the urban norm by pointing out the differences in rural areas in comparison to the city (Rönnblom, 2014). By ascribing a need for *other* solutions in rural areas, rural areas become the problem (Gustafsson, 2015). This issue is quite paradoxical and it is worth questioning if rural areas should be mentioned in policy making. Rönnblom (2014) makes a comparison to the feminist paradox, 'by naming the women's subordinated position in society, we contribute simultaneously to reproduce it. But at the same time it is difficult to change an order if it is not visible. As I see it, this logic can be applied to any power relations, and my approach to the dilemma is that it is important to put it in words while reflecting on what the risk is by doing so' (Rönnblom, 2014, author's translation). Forsberg (1996) argues that it is not the rural areas in themselves that are the problem, but rather the fact that they are distanced from the urban areas and therefore possess a characteristic of otherness (Forsberg, 1996).

The spectrum of urban and rural

The awareness of the connections between urban and rural is noticeable both at the County Administrative Board of Dalarna and Region Dalarna. The interviewees are well aware of how rural areas are inferior in society and can see tendencies of this in Dalarna. According to the project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, to establish in the strategy that the region has a countryside was a big step (Interview with project manager for spatial planning, Region Dalarna, 2016). Region Dalarna (2014b) stresses in the *Rural Policy Programme* that the interaction between urban and rural should be addressed and it is said to be an important starting point for rural development. Region Dalarna (2014b) describe how rural areas tend to be defined:

> There are many ways to describe the countryside. The basis is that one distinguishes between urban and rural, and that there exists a relationship between the center and the periphery. Some of the descriptions are based on how and where people live, while others are based on the distance to services (Region Dalarna 2014b, p. 4).

The relationship between urban and rural is important for the whole region since rural areas contribute with labour and the urban centres with work opportunities. But what other important exchanges are there? Region Dalarna explores the exchanges further in the *Rural Policy Programme:*

> Rural areas are an important resource for the entire region when it comes to development and growth. There is entrepreneurial and developing power to find here, but also an attractive living environment that has become increasingly important for regions that strive for growth. Today, most municipalities highlight rural development and these issues permeate a large part of their actions. But the coordination between different efforts for rural development and sustainable regional growth need to be strengthened both on a national and regional level (Region Dalarna 2014b, p. 3).

It is identified that there is a lacking coordination when it comes to rural development, both on a national and a regional level. Region Dalarna make it clear that rural areas are an important resource for growth, partly because there are attractive living environments there, which have become increasingly important. Gagnef municipality is referred to as a housing and commuting municipality: 'Roughly put you can say that Gagnef is a housing community' (Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, 23 March, 2016) and 'we are a large housing municipality' (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

Regarding what Gagnef can contribute with in the region of Falun and Borlänge, it is according to the municipality housing (City architect at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, January 29, 2016).

Region Dalarna (2014a) also describes rural areas and the importance of the resources there in one of their objectives:

> Dalarna makes use of the rural attraction value and growth potential and see their unique natural and cultural heritage as an asset for both local and regional development (Region Dalarna 2014a, p. 6).

Region Dalarna (2014a) continues with a more nuanced image of what are important focus areas when it comes to rural development in order to accomplish growth:

> Areas where the rural perspective must become clearer are physical infrastructure, communications, business and entrepreneurship, housing, services, education and culture. All this helps to improve the conditions for growth in rural areas (Region Dalarna 2014a, p. 4-5).

Region Dalarna also highlights the entrepreneurial and developing power in rural areas, which can be compared to Falun Borlänge Regionen (2013) who mainly describe rural areas as recreational areas and living environments:

> In Falun Borlänge region, you can choose to stay in the countryside, close to nature, while having an exciting job at one of our world-leading companies. […] Outside the city center is a living countryside, close to forests and lakes. In the middle of the region is Dalarna's second largest lake, Runn, a meeting place for skaters and boaters (Falun Borlänge Regionen, 2013).

Region Dalarna (2014b) continues with a more diversified image of the rural parts of Dalarna as well as pointing out that the resources from rural areas constitutes a foundation for urban life:

> In rural areas, many of the resources constitute a basis for urban life. Resources are site-specific, such as arable land, water, buildings, mountain environments, cultural values, minerals and forests and they are used for the production of raw materials, energy, food and experiences. In Dalarna the green industry (companies that have land, forest, garden or rural environment as basic resources) play a major role, particularly when it comes to food production. But also

for the maintenance of an attractive living environment, which is so important for both the tourism industry and for those who live in Dalarna (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 12-13).

Furthermore it is explained that the culture in the region is a great asset and tourism is important for rural areas as well as a strong entrepreneurship:

> The culture of Dalarna is also a resource and entrepreneurship in the cultural sector is growing strongly. The tourism industry plays a major role in the countryside of Dalarna and there are many companies who have partly or all of their income from tourism. In addition to these industries, there are many skilled craft businesses in the construction, energy and engineering industry as well as in the textile industry. There is diversity in the economy that creates good conditions for growth (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 12-13).

Region Dalarna (2014b) highlights not only the traditional attributes that often are associated with rural areas, but also more innovative functions that often are ascribed to the city. Furthermore, the County Administrative Board of Dalarna points out that innovation in rural areas is something to prioritise (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 2). The importance of having a holistic approach when it comes to development of urban and rural is emphasised by the enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef:

> I am working with rural development in Gagnef, because we are a rural municipality, but I do not see that you should separate urban and rural. Everything must of course be developed in this municipality. Because we are a rural municipality, rural development comes automatically (Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

Rönnblom (2014) raises an important point when it comes to how we talk about urban and rural. Rönnblom's conclusion is that depending on what terms we use, the result can differ. By having a neutral term for development and saying that the whole area is to be developed there is a risk of strengthening the urban interpretative prerogative. But to only speak about the rural, which the County Administrative Board of Dalarna does in their *Action plan for rural development,* tends to have the same consequences even though the intent probably is different (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 16; Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015). Rönnblom argues that 'certainly it is possible to say that a rural strategy should focus on the countryside and not the city. But if the problems that rural areas are confronted with in part has to do with the fact that the city is attributed certain potential and resources,

in a way that puts the countryside in the shadow, perhaps a strategy for rural areas is more likely a strategy for territorial challenges in Sweden?' (Rönnblom, 2014, p. 16, author's translation). Region Dalarna (2014b) is mentioning both urban and rural in the *Rural Policy Programme:*

> An important basis for questions regarding rural development is to address these questions in strong interaction between urban and rural (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 3).

By naming both urban and rural it becomes possible to confront the urban interpretative prerogative. It is mainly the challenges in rural areas that are addressed and not the challenges in urban areas, but the positive part is that the urban becomes responsible of the rural challenges together with the rural.

Focus on growth

This part of the analysis discuss a general focus on economic growth in the empirical material. The discussion regarding a bio-based society has not been visible in the empirical material, but a green economy is something that is emphasised by Region Dalarna (2014a) and the County Administrative Board discusses a climate resilient economy (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015).

In the documents by Region Dalarna, economic growth is a very central issue, and this is also one of the main focuses for the organisation (Region Dalarna, 2013; Region Dalarna, 2014a). According to Region Dalarna and the *Rural Policy Programme,* rural areas have an important role when it comes to growth: 'Rural areas are an important resource for the entire region when it comes to development and growth' (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 3). Region Dalarna explains their view on economic growth in Dalarna further in their strategic document:

> Dalarna's importance as an area for growth, especially for industry and tourism, will be strengthened in the coming years. Planned investments in mining, trade and the tourism industry are expected to create more than 3000 new jobs. There will be new jobs in the service and transport sector. The green economy is another growth area of development where Dalarna can adopt a prominent position (Region Dalarna, 2014a, p. 4).

The paragraph shows that the focus on economic growth in Region Dalarna is clear. Region Dalarna also mention that Dalarna should develop the green economy and the focus should be on renewable energy, energy efficiency and the reduction of emissions (Region Dalarna, 2014a). Growth is also a long-term goal with the Leader approach that Dalälvarnas development area is practicing

(Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområde, 2014)

The County Administrative Board of Dalarna emphasises a transition to low carbon emissions and a climate resilient economy as well as restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015). The possibilities in rural areas regarding a bio-based society and ecosystem services are in general in the chosen empirical material not discussed widely. When discussing the value of rural areas it tends to be connected to growth (see *The spectrum of urban and rural*).

An urban perspective and the responsibility of the individual

In previous chapters it has been argued that the individual has a larger responsibility for their surroundings in rural areas than in urban areas (Gustafsson, 2015; Rönnblom, 2014). The urban interpretative prerogative has also been discussed together with the urban norm, which according to the theoretical framework is visible in the contemporary Swedish spatial planning (Stenqvist, 2009; Westlund & Pichler, 2000). From the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, comes an explanation of how the urban perspective and interpretative prerogative can be expressed:

> There is a discussion in Dalarna about creating balance between urban and rural, and that the two need each other. But people feel marginalised in rural areas. The reality that is described in society is not about people in rural areas. For example, the housing bubble that is about to burst is not visible here. This information constantly needs to be reinterpreted for people in rural areas. Inhabitants in rural areas are often viewed from an urban perspective (Process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board, personal communication, 8 February, 2016).

The interviewee continues by discussing how inhabitants in rural areas are responsible for functions, such as transportation, while inhabitants in urban areas are not to the same extent. What happens in Stockholm tends to be viewed as a national concern, which is considered to be a problem:

> For example, take the transit links in Stockholm; people here might wonder why they should pay for it, when the bus does not even swing past the village anymore. It is up to the individual how to get to Leksand or Falun, but when people in Stockholm are going to their jobs, then it becomes a national concern. This is not good, and shows a lack of respect. City and countryside in collaboration mostly becomes just words and the two are really pulled apart. One challenge

is that people are expected to fix their lives themselves in rural areas. These areas survive with the help of individuals (Process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board, personal communication, 8 February, 2016).

The responsibility for one's own life tends to be larger in rural areas, which is something that is emphasised by Gustafsson (2015) at the Swedish Board of Agriculture. It is considered to be a choice to live in a rural context while urbanisation is seen as a natural process (Gustafsson, 2015). Also Rönnblom (2014) have made observations that show that inhabitants in rural areas have a responsibility to see to services and infrastructure, while inhabitants in urban areas do not have the same responsibility (Rönnblom, 2014). Region Dalarna raises the question regarding rural areas being dependent on individuals and expresses it as a part of making rural areas attractive, although, it is becoming increasingly challenging to find the engagement among people and they wonder how to make more people feel it is worthwhile to get involved. Region Dalarna also describes one of the solutions for having a service supply in rural areas are to make use of the civic society (Region Dalarna, 2014b). Inscribing this in a document for rural development in a region implies appointing people living in rural areas to be in charge of services that urban inhabitants can take for granted. Furthermore, a cooperation between volunteers, local businesses and the public sector is emphasised (Region Dalarna, 2014b). This is strengthened by the following paragraph:

> The relationship between the civic society and the public sector is changing. There are opportunities to be found by highlighting non-profit organisations and other stakeholders who might have solutions for the societal challenges. Initiatives among the inhabitants in rural areas do exist, but means are needed to support the initiatives (Region Dalarna, 2014b, p. 19).

Surely there is strength in local initiatives but when does the responsibility become too much for the rural population? In Gagnef they have 14 municipal nature reserves but not the capacity to take care of these in the way that is needed. People can donate money to a conservation fund for these reserves, but there are not enough voluntary forces to take care of them according to what the law requires. The municipality of Gagnef is described as a municipality of many voluntary organisations, and the municipality is not responsible for many public spaces. Besides the municipal nature reserves, roads are also managed by individuals in road associations. On the question whether it is functioning well the answer is that it does (City architect at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, 29 January, 2016). In the *Development strategy* by Dalälvarnas

development area a lot of the responsibility is put on organisations in rural areas when it comes to preserving and developing services:

> The population is decreasing in rural areas and to prevent this trend, the position of local associations and communities need to be strengthened in order to maintain and develop the service in rural areas (Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområden, 2014, p. 37).

It is also stated during an interview at Dalälvarnas development area that it is often up to the individual to develop and manage their own surroundings, and that goes for both rural and urban areas. The municipality is given much of the responsibility by the inhabitants to maintain and develop, but the resources are often limited. The interviewee stresses that there is a need for a change in the attitudes among people if they want a change; they should take responsibility for that to happen. The village Dala-Floda in the municipality of Gagnef is highlighted as a good example because of the economic association and the local communities:

> In Dala-Floda they have the right persons in the right places. It is unique. There, they have created a model that is a recipe for success. But it took time in Dala-Floda too, and the attitude was at first that someone else should do it. The municipality should fix everything. It took a year to reach the realisation that they could do it themselves. It is not only in Dala-Floda people think that someone else is responsible. I can imagine myself sometimes in Falun where I live, 'why don't they do something about that'. We cannot be angry because nothing happens. We have to think that this is not good, but also what do we do about it? And we need to look at what others do (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

It is further discussed during the interview that people in urban areas have some advantages but also that people in urban areas have a responsibility for their surroundings as well. The executive director at Dalälvarnas development area

During a walk around the village Dala-Floda in the municipality of Gagnef, I stopped by some neighbours who talked about the upcoming village community meeting. They also began discussing things they wanted to change in the village and spoke about a meeting regarding a bicycle network, organised by the municipality. From there, they started talking about the old illuminated track in the forest, which is in need for a boost. They noted that they could probably be sponsored with chip for the road surface. Thereafter they began to discuss the lake, which needs to be cleared from reed. Before we parted a man ended the conversation by saying: 'all good ideas will sooner or later lead to hard work'.

More than a hundred people gathered in Björbo to discuss the expansion of the fiber network in the municipality of Gagnef. There are now two companies fighting to build in Dala-Floda and Björbo and the interest associations will now decide which company to choose. During the presentation a guy representing one of the companies says 'fiber is not a right but one has to pay for it'.

(2016) does not believe people get more service in a city:

> I do not know if it is so great in a city either. You have certain advantages in urban areas with the supply of specialisations. But for some target groups, for example a family, there might be a good selection of schools and activities, but how fun is it to queue to the swing at the playground? Land is more expensive but people get easier access and more services because there are more people in the same place. But wherever we are, we are our own employer. If we want change we have to do it ourselves, because nobody else will (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

The County Administrative Board of Dalarna (2015) is contributing with a somewhat nuanced perspective in their action plan for rural development:

> Local conditions must direct the layout of service solutions. Through a broad community involvement with local authorities taking the lead, and with the County Administrative Board of Dalarna as a coordinator, rural areas in Dalarna can be developed based on the distinctive local conditions of different areas (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 36).

According to the County admisistrative board in Dalarna, the local community should be involved but the main responsibility lies on the municipality and the County Administrative Board.

Center and periphery

How urbanisation is described tends to vary in the empirical material. Sometimes the focus has been on the relationship between a larger urban region and a rural Dalarna. But in this thesis, the focus has mainly been on urbanisation within Dalarna looking at Falun and Borlänge, and the rural areas in relation to these larger urban areas. But there are different levels of urbanisation and a relationship between a center and a periphery exists both between Stockholm and the rural parts of Sweden and in Gagnef between the larger village Djurås and the smaller village Bodarna. The interviewee at Region Dalarna stresses that the relationship between center and periphery can be found everywhere:

> The conflict between city and countryside, urban and rural, is there all the time. Even in Gagnef and in Grängesberg. There is a center, an urban area, and then you end up in the periphery (Project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, personal communication, January 28, 2016).

Region Dalarna (2014b) asks whether they can offer the inhabitants an urban life in the rural areas in Dalarna. They also explain that more people live an urban lifestyles even though they do not live in an urban area (Region Dalarna, 2014b). This is explained further during the interview at Region Dalarna:

> If you work with forestry for example, you might live a less urban life, but you are simultaneously connected, watch the same TV and have the same needs. If you widen the urban concept into a way of life, we are quite urban in Dalarna (Project manager for spatial planning at Region Dalarna, personal communication, January 28, 2016).

In Gagnef municipality it is expressed that there is no natural center. Traditionally there have also been political tendencies in the municipality with the intention to divide functions. The view on having one center varies among the interviewees. One perspective is that if they were to focus only on the urban area Djurås for example, there would be a risk of counteracting the own municipality:

> We do not have a natural center in Gagnef. We want the whole community to be alive and function. Our politicians are spread out in the municipality, and that is great, but when it comes to making decisions, what is made with the heart and what is made with the brain? I cannot say that there is a political orientation that we focus on a certain area in Gagnef, and politicians find it difficult to take decisions regarding centralisation in areas where it is possible. The hockey culture is great in Björbo for example, Mockfjärd has a horse back riding arena. Each area has its speciality and strength, and that is what should be developed! That might mean that functions are spread out but you have to find what the different areas are good at (Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, 23 March, 2016).

There are different views on whether focus should lie on one area or the whole of the municipality. The common understanding is that the different parts of the municipality need to be developed in a way that is adapted to the local context.

> My experience of Gagnef is that you do not focus on anyone. There is a conflict when it comes to rental apartments, which is something that they want to build in Björbo. Politicians who have the mandate do not dare to say that 'we believe that this is what we need to do instead, on this basis of that information'. For Gagnefs part, it feels like we are running around and we invest a little here and a little there and in the end, nothing will come from it. In the end, perhaps everyone will feel

that they did not get any support (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

An example that has been raised in two of the interviews is the building of apartments in Björbo, and whether it would be the best idea for the whole municipality:

> Many voices have been raised to build apartment blocks in Björbo. I think it is easy to think, how can we support them with this? But you have to look at whether it is a suitable place for new apartments. Maybe there is a queue for apartments in Djurås, and then we must build there and make other efforts in Björbo, that are suitable for Björbo. Dare to stand up for the whole municipality's spatial planning (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

Generally during the interviews in Gagnef, the discussion evolves around an urban focus. When asking if some geographical areas are prioritised over others the discussion tend to be directed towards the urban areas and their relationship to one another.

The importance of collaboration

The importance of collaboration is stressed in the different interviews and in the empirical material. The strongest voice on the subject comes from Dalälvarnas development area and their development strategy. During the interview with Dalälvarnas development area, the tradition of not accepting help from others and being bad at cooperating as having to do with proud traditions, was discussed:

> Something we are good at and highly value is our tradition and culture. This is something that is extremely important to us and make us feel like we belong. While we stand strong united this can do that we are bad at accepting help from others outside of Dalarna. If we want to sell our products we have to find buyers outside of Dalarna as well. And if we want to challenge ourselves in the development we should perhaps look to places that are different from here (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

During the interview at Dalälvarnas development area it is discussed how Dalarna need to seek collaboration outside the region as well as within the region. This is important partly because of the low number of inhabitants. According to the executive director the development is limited by their own hidebound attitude:

> We have a joke here; 'it's like having a bead with only Gagnef on it', as if Gagnef was the whole world. It is that way with Dalarna as well, a bead with just Dalarna on it. We have become narrow-minded (Executive director at Dalälvarnas development area, personal communication, 24 March, 2016).

At the municipality, the value of collaborating is also emphasised but their own interests should always come first:

> We should collaborate as much as possible but as soon as there is something we should shout Gagnef. It is important to stand out a bit. We try to be useful and provide assistance in the collaboration with the region of Falun and Borlänge. But it is important that we express our opinion too (Enterprise developer at the municipality of Gagnef, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

It is stated that even though the municipality is small it is important to have a voice. The enterprise developer at Gagnef municipality also states that in order to compete with others they have to collaborate. There is an expressed need for platforms where people can meet locally, in the region and even on a national level. The importance of cooperation and having a place to meet, a platform, is one of the parts discussed in the development strategy by Dalälvarnas development area:

> Platforms for collaboration create a local opportunity to have an impact that can serve as a guiding example for the creation of cooperation on a local, regional and national level. Collaboration also creates a stronger local spirit where we see each other as partners rather than the other way around (Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområden, 2014, p. 29).

Dalälvarnas development area stresses the importance of cooperation between the public sector and the local business community in order for the local business community to perform tasks that traditionally have been done by the public sector (Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområden, 2014). The County Administrative Board of Dalarna also discuss the need for creating opportunities for meeting, and the process manager for rural development explains that they work with creating platforms in the region:

> We are working with creating platforms where people can meet. This easily becomes a bit fuzzy but it is a mind-set. This is something

that we began working with recently and we are working with a broad group of people and we have good collaboration with the municipalities (Process manager for rural development at the County Administrative Board, personal communication, February 8, 2016).

The importance of dialogue and platforms for meeting is emphasised in the *Action plan for rural development* by the County Administrative Board of Dalarna (2015):

It requires consensus, coordination and consultation between different stakeholders involved in various areas, in order to maximise the impact from the efforts made. Platforms for meetings can facilitate this work, as well as communication, information, external environment monitoring and learning (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 36).

Collaboration between different stakeholders in different areas as well as communicating and sharing information is emphasised by the County Administrative Board of Dalarna. It is also one of the measures taken: 'Cooperation is an important part for strengthening the sustainable development over time in rural areas characterised by problems that are a result of sparse structures' (Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015, p. 135). In order to handle the challenges in rural areas, cooperation is seen as a part of the solution.

Summary of analysis

To summarise the analysis of the empirical material, both conflicting views and common features have been highlighted. Some of the main discussions of the analysis will be discussed further in this section.

Looking at the largest cities as the engine is something that has been discussed in the analysis as well as in other contexts (Björling, 2014; Fredriksson, 2015; Hagbert & Bradley, 2015). The empirical study shows that if it is positive or negative to refer to Falun and Borlänge as the engine of the region depends on where a municipality is located in relation to the largest cities. It also depends on whether there are other larger urban nodes in a region that would benefit from being identified as an engine. In this case the problem is not that an urban area is identified as an engine, but rather that the wrong urban area is. It is revealed that larger urban centers are in competition with each other, something that underpins the urban norm. There is a clear power relation between the largest urban areas and the rest of the region. These larger urban areas are attributed as the driving force and the center of the region. Even though rural areas are identified as being very important and a resource both locally and regionally, it is generally not

strongly stated that there needs to be a balance in the relationship between urban and rural, aside from in the *Rural Policy Programme* (Region Dalarna, 2014b).

The tourism industry is referred to as a potential engine by some of the interviewees, which is an activity that can be associated with rural environments. There is a conflict in the information received from the documents and from the interviews. Reflections on the decisions that formed the documents were expressed, and the general impression is that there is a will to challenge the urban focus.

In the empirical material, rural areas are identified as possessing many challenges, when these challenges are really challenges for the whole region. For example, Region Dalarna (2014b) and the County Administrative Board (2015) describe the large distances and sparseness as problems for the rural areas. At the same time, the resources in rural areas exists for the whole region (Region Dalarna, 2014b).

A discussion that is visible in the empirical material is how to prioritise in a municipality with no natural center. The common view is that it is important to focus on the strengths in each area. Generally the urban areas and larger villages have been the focus in the discussion on what to prioritise in the municipality of Gagnef.

In the studied empirical material, the image of what rural areas are is often quite limited. Rural areas tend to be described as recreational areas or attractive housing environments which of course are correct images, but other relevant descriptions are not as prominent. The municipality of Gagnef is described as a commuting and housing municipality. The discussion of the role of rural areas regarding ecosystem services in a bio-based society is rather absent in the analysed material.

The empirical material indicates a strong entrepreneurship and active individuals in rural areas, and the dependence on the individual might be hard to overcome or change. This is also said to be one of the strengths in rural areas. The view on what responsibility the individual has differs in the empirical material and on the one hand it is advocated that the individual has a large responsibility while on the other hand the municipalities and the County Administrative Board have the largest responsibility for development (Dalälvarnas Utvecklingsområden, 2014; Länsstyrelsen Dalarna, 2015).

Recurrent in the empirical material is a need for collaboration. It is about collaboration between different stakeholders as well as about collaboration across

the administrative borders of the different municipalities. Collaboration with stakeholders outside of the region of Dalarna as well as seeking good examples in other regions is also emphasised as being important in order to challenge challenge oneself in the development. There are initiatives for collaboration today and it is emphasised by the municipality of Gagnef that even though they are a small municipality they must make themselves heard in the collaboration with the sub-region of Falun and Borlänge.

Winter at Flosjön in Dala-Floda, Gagnef

chapter 6

PLANNING STRATEGIES

In this chapter the planning strategies that have been developed from the analysis of the empirical material, the analysis of the municipality and region and the theoretical framework are presented

This chapter is one part of the result of the thesis along with the analysis of the empirical material. The overall objective of the planning strategies is to create an alternative to the planning practice today, which tends to have an urban focus. In order to secure long-term sustainable environments, both in urban and rural areas, it is important to have a holistic approach, which means that urban and rural planning is not separated. It is about a changing mind-set, from urban planning to spatial planning, and creating an understanding of the importance of planning for the whole society. By seeing the gradations and layers that characterises spatial planning and by strengthening the relationship between urban and rural areas in the region, the planning can become more holistic. It is important to highlight the interdependence between urban and rural areas.

A norm critical approach has been the starting point for the development of the strategies. The focus has to large extent been rural transformation as well as a holistic approach, developing urban and rural areas together. This has been a discussion throughout the work, whether to focus on rural transformation (but why separate urban and rural?) or the interdependence of urban and rural areas. The result became a mixture of both perspectives since the two depend on each other. Planning in rural areas is important since we need ways of planning for

Tree in Kvarna in Dala-Floda, Gagnef

differences in these areas and not following traditional urban planning principles. Acknowledging that there are many different rural areas and not a homogeneous place is a part of a change in mind-set. However, this is not something that has been discussed to a large extent in this thesis. Challenging the urban interpretative prerogative within spatial planning means ensuring that the value of rural areas is equal to the urban. Through avoiding designating the urban as the normal, urbanisation as a natural process and by always having a norm critical approach, new discussions can be developed.

The aim of the strategies is to respond to the most distinguished discussions in the analysis. Problems have been identified and the strategies are responding to these problems. The strategies mainly focus on spatial planning, which is a limited part. The physical environment is but a small element of a larger societal problem, but to move forward we need a discussion in different parts of society. The starting point for the strategies is the preconditions in Dalarna and the strategies are geographically grounded in the region and the municipality of Gagnef. The strategies are not a solution for all regions and municipalities struggling with issues regarding urban and rural transformation, but can act as an inspiration in the discussion within the contemporary Swedish spatial planning.

Strategy 1-4 is mainly conducted on a regional level and strategy 5-7 is to be implemented on a municipal level, although the strategies tend to overlap and strengthen one another. The strategies can therefore not work alone since they depend on one another.

Three challenges have been identified and presented to the right. The first one focuses on the challenge that comes with changing the way we traditionally plan our society, where the urban areas are the engines. The second challenge is about challenging the functions and flows that usually are identified as well as bringing a higher value to rural flows. The third challenge referrers to the challenge of planning and collaborating across administrative borders.

Challenges

Today, the whole region is not highlighted and there is a strong focus on the two-core centers, Falun and Borlänge

Linear flows from rural to urban are mainly being identified in planning today and at the same time as they are not valued high enough
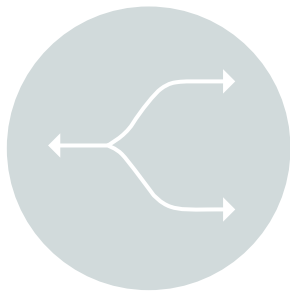
There is a lack of cross-border meeting places and collaboration accross the administrative borders

Planning strategies

1. Highlight the differences

The strategy responds to Falun and Borlänge being referred to as the engine and the aim is to highlight other land uses and functions in the whole region. The region depends on more than one engine.

2. Identify the flows

In the analysis, rural areas have been described as important for urban areas. Urban and rural areas depend on each other, which this strategy aims to show. The flows should be circular rather than linear.

3. Let's go bio

The analysis shows that there is a focus on the largest urban areas and economic growth in the region of Dalarna. A way for rural areas to be valued higher is a transition towards a bio-based society.

4. Create platforms for interaction

In order for all of the strategies to function, planning across the administrative borders is a necessity. The County Administrative Board of Dalarna highlights creating platforms for meeting in the analysis.
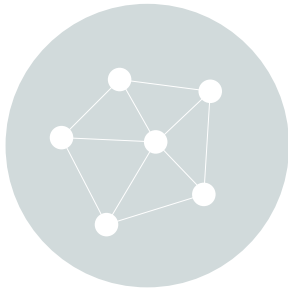
5. Establish a diversity of centers

The strategy responds to and challenges the idea of a municipality having one urban center. The municipality of Gagnef does not have just one urban area and the strategy aims to focus on all urban areas and larger villages.

6. Create a sharing society

In the analysis, the responsibility of the individual is described to be larger in rural areas compared to urban areas. According to the analysis, this is both a strength and a weakness. The strategy aims to make social networks visible and facilitate the process.
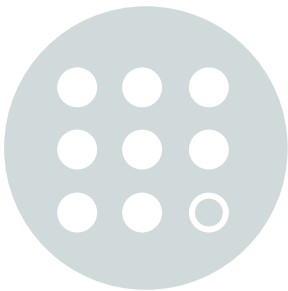
7. Build for different needs

The municipality of Gagnef is described to be a housing municipality and it has the largest percentage of single-family homes in Sweden. There is a need for a diversity of housing and the strategy responds to this need.

1. HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENCES

Identifying interventions for the local situation in different areas and highlight not just one engine can improve the conditions in rural areas. By acknowledging the complexity, avoiding old habits and safe choices and perceive situations from different perspectives, both urban and rural areas can benefit. By simplifying too much in strategic planning, we tend to lose important information. By daring to see the different layers, the planning can become more holistic and in this way we can improve the integration between urban and rural. Breaking the dichotomy between urban and rural by having a holistic approach, a regional transformation where the benefits that are assigned to the center can be extended to the periphery in a functional interaction.

If rural areas are to be valued in a different way we need to rethink the way rural areas are presented, and discuss rural in relation to urban and vice versa. It is important to discuss the two together since they affect each other. By having a more general approach in the comprehensive planning there is a risk that the urban interpretative prerogative is further strengthened. The ambition with the strategy is to balance the encounters between interests such as agriculture, forestry, conservation of natural and cultural values, housings and settlements and other exploitations of land. Knowledge is needed regarding how to develop different categories of the landscape.

In order not to reproduce the urban norm by further strengthening other urban areas, it is important to question and challenge the urban focus. Challenge the idea of only highlighting rural areas around an urban center, just because of the geographical location, is important. The strategy does not aim to neglect urban areas, rather to bring up other values. It also stresses the need of not separating urban and rural, but rather emphasise place transformation with a holistic approach. Sub strategies have been developed in order to concretise the strategy:

- Highlight the different strengths in all municipalities
- Identify differences in land use
- Develop knowledge on how to work with different categories of land use in the landscape
- Bring value to a variety of places and strengthen different identities
- Identify weaknesses and seek solutions across the administrative borders

In Dalarna, where 80 % of the region is covered with forest, it is crucial to see to the whole of the region when planning. The high values in the natural and cultural landscape, and the resources that this part of the landscape bring, need to be emphasised. Since tourism is one of the largest industries with most

▲	forest
⋰	lake
◉	important node
⫽	strong labour market
▦	fertile farmland
▢	nature reserve
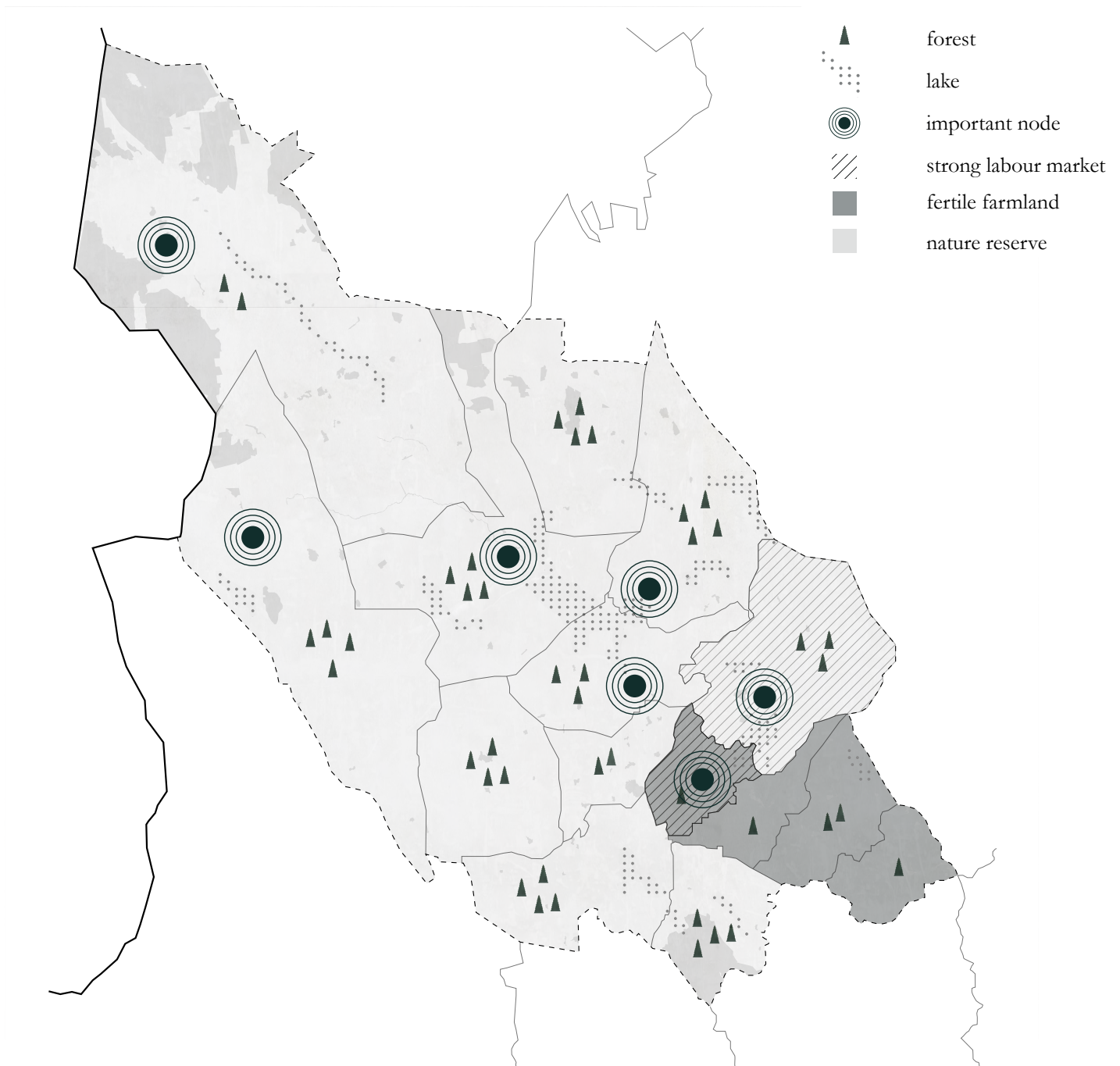
employees, this part could be considered a driving force for the region as well as the urban areas Falun and Borlänge. In areas where there are conflicting interests regarding land use, the strategy can play an important role. By having a holistic approach, these conflicting interests can be balanced better.

The illustration shows some of the strengths in the region, which could be emphasised in planning.

2. IDENTIFY THE FLOWS

Connecting to the first strategy, in order to understand the importance of rural areas and how they contribute to society, it is important to identify the flows from rural areas to urban areas and vise versa, and identify the exchange of resources and people. Qualities and structures that enable flows are also identified. By identifying the flows between urban and rural, the interdependence can become visible. It can also lead to a strengthening of the flows. The flows tend to be quite linear today, from rural to urban (Ljung, 2015). By this strategy it can also become visible just how dependent urban areas are of rural areas. But at the same time, these flows are not very visible since we tend to talk about the sustainable dense city as the solution without discussing how dependent these cities are on rural areas. The interplay between local transformation and the production, distribution and refining of resources is important to highlight.

The strategy also promotes circular flows where the yield of the local values can be re-invested in the local community. Food, energy, water and waste are some areas where it is important to look at the whole cycle. These cycles are not closed within a municipality and therefore it is important to have a regional perspective, which is also a part of the sub strategies below:

- Identify the flows to shows the mutual dependence between urban and rural areas
- Highlight flows locally as well as regionally, nationally and globally
- Strengthen and improve the possibilities for flows across barriers and administrative boarders
- Strengthen the flows based on local conditions
- Promote circular flows

By enhancing the different flows and structures that enable flows, urban and rural areas in Dalarna can connect and be integrated. The strategy can contribute to giving a higher value to ecosystem services and identify how resources are distributed. It can also lead to opportunities when it comes to bringing the right skills to different companies, sharing ideas and knowledge between municipalities or communities in villages. In Dalarna, many people are moving across the administrative borders every day, and it is important to identify these flows of people in order to understand and optimise them.

The illustration to the right is a schematic way of showing that there are different exchanges between all municipalities. The diagrams exemplify what these exchanges are. There might be a risk of further strengthening the differences between urban and rural by separating the flows. Some of the flows that are characterised as urban can also exist in a rural context, such as education or

lake

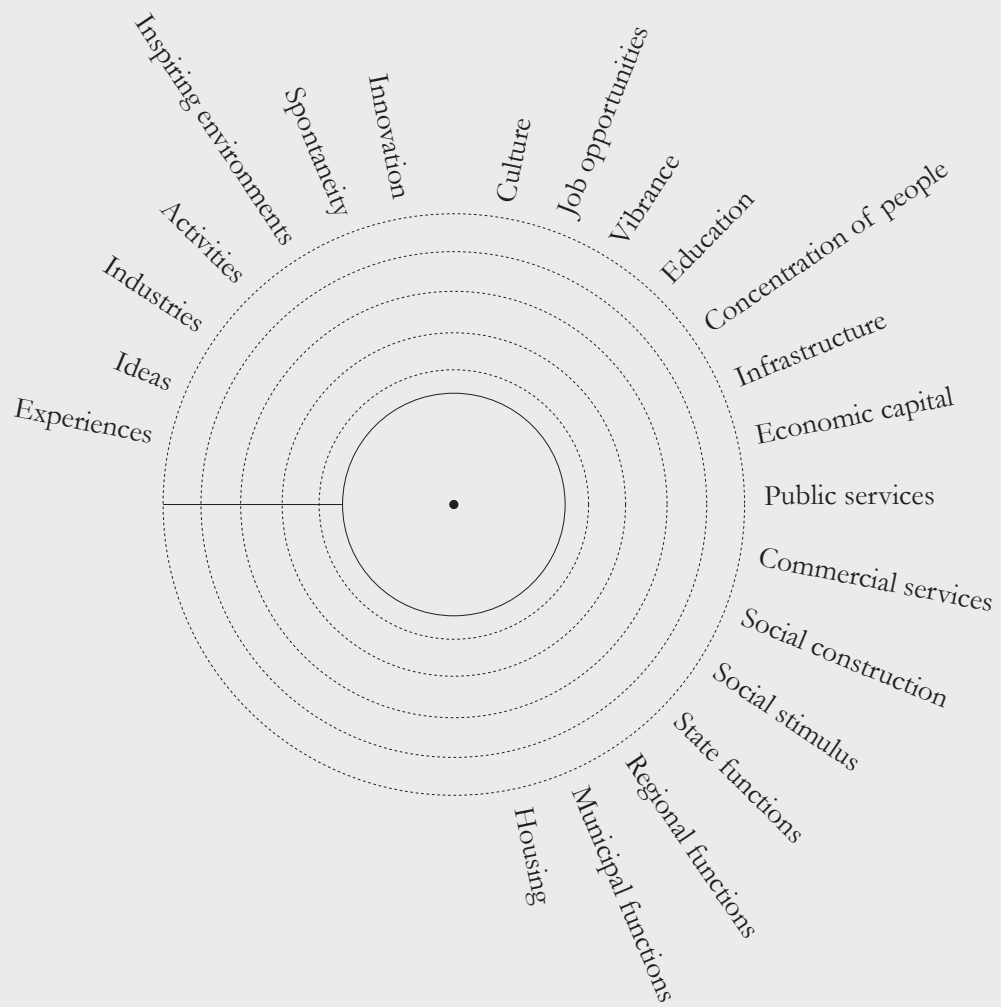flow
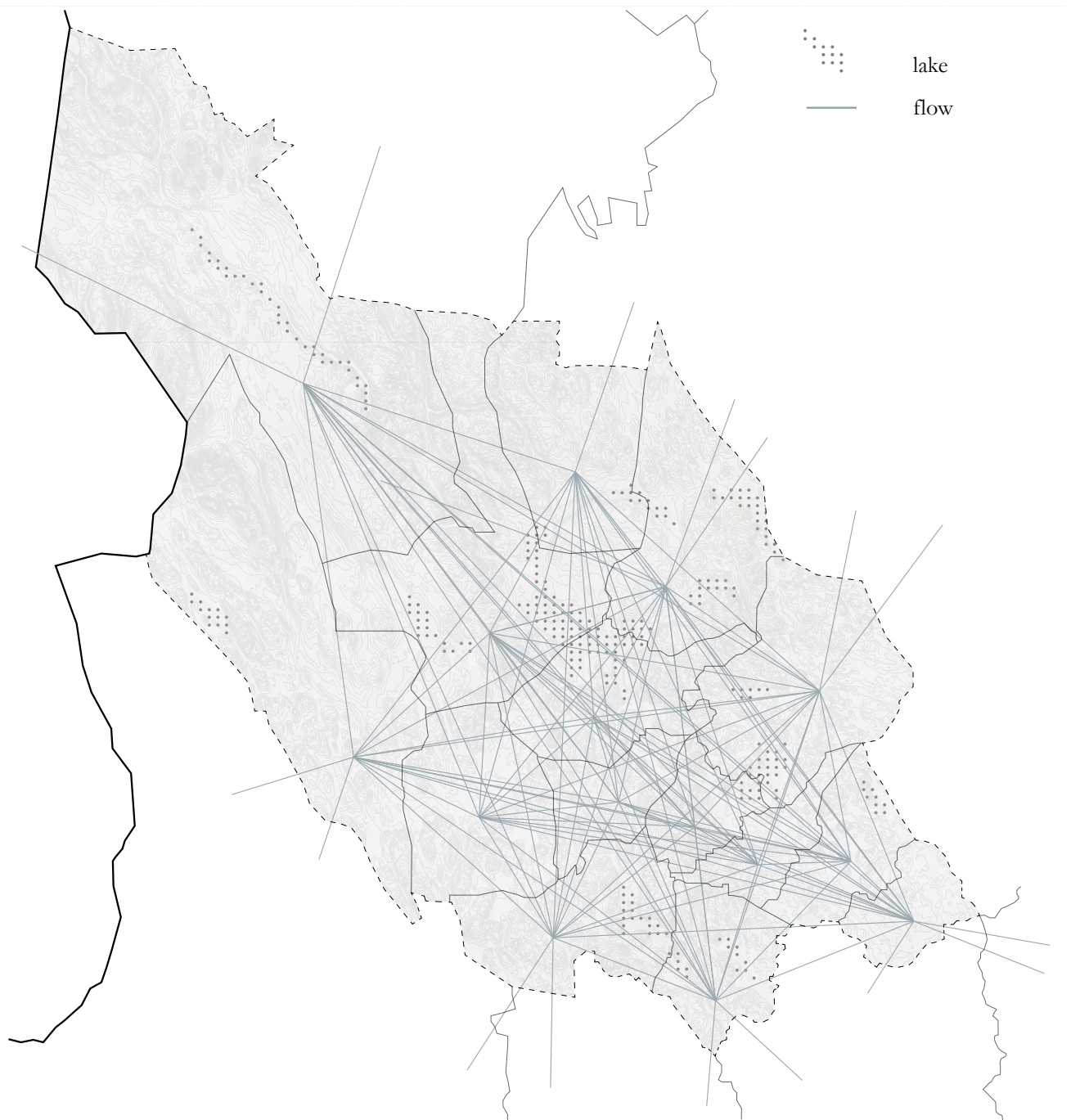
services, but this is also a matter of what is referred to regarding rural and urban. It might be the relationship between a larger urban region and the more rural region of Dalarna or the urban and rural areas within Dalarna.

RURAL FLOWS
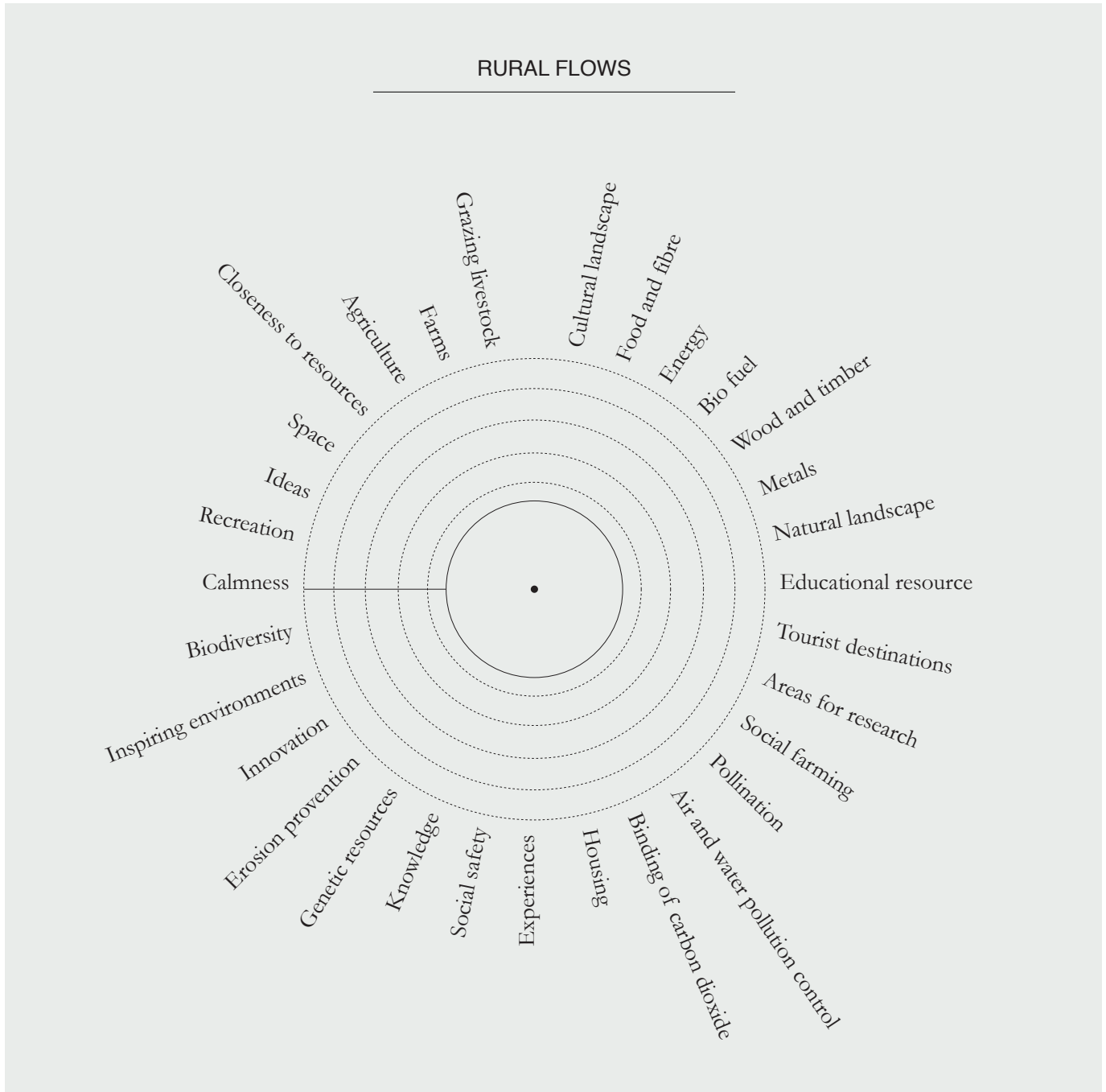
The illustrations shows rural qualities, flows and structures that enable flows that are beneficial for the whole region as well as the own area.

URBAN FLOWS

Inspiring environments
Spontaneity
Innovation
Culture
Job opportunities
Vibrance
Education
Concentration of people
Activities
Industries
Infrastructure
Ideas
Economic capital
Experiences
Public services
Commercial services
Social construction
Social stimulus
State functions
Regional functions
Municipal functions
Housing

3. LET'S GO BIO

The concept of a bio-based society refers to a comprehensive approach to handle some of the largest challenges in society regarding food security for a growing population, a long-term agricultural and forestry productivity as well as greenhouse gas emissions. The strategy responds to the focus on economic growth that is visible in parts of the studied documents and in the interviews, and aims to challenge this idea. One of the most important parts of a sustainable development, where rural areas play an important role, is the transition to a bio-based society. The value of ecosystem services needs to be emphasised since it can highlight the relationship to nature as well as how we depend on nature. Valuing local and place-based resources and seeing them as a resource for the whole society can change the view upon rural areas. Although, the ecosystem services approach is an approach based on humans exploitation of natural resources for their own benefit (Ljung, 2015), and consciousness regarding this is therefore important. Changing the perspective towards a bio-based society can enrich the discussion and create new objectives for spatial planning that today's perspective might inhibit.

In a bio-based society, the green cell is the basis. Growth can exist in a sustainable society, but this is created by the green cell and the benefits are not only economical but also social and ecological. Ecosystem services can strengthen the integration between urban and rural. Urban areas have to take responsibility for the ecosystem services in rural areas since urban areas are dependent on the ecosystem services. According to Ljung (2015), a sustainable society provide for more than it consumes socially, ecologically and economically. Today, some ecosystem services have a price on them, but many do not, even though they are of a great economic value (Ljung, 2013).

It is important to look at the whole chain from energy production based on ecosystem based resources, distribution and consumption. By focusing on circular flows, the resources that come from rural areas can be reinvested in the local society. The strategy is connected to the second strategy, *Identify the flows*. Sub strategies have been developed to show the focus of the strategy, which has the base in the idea of a bio-based society:

- Change the value of bio-based resources
- Ensure synergies rather than conflicts
- Promote and support innovative green solutions and support stakeholders involved with ecosystem services
- Look at the whole chain as well as circular flows
- Spread knowledge about ecosystem services

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
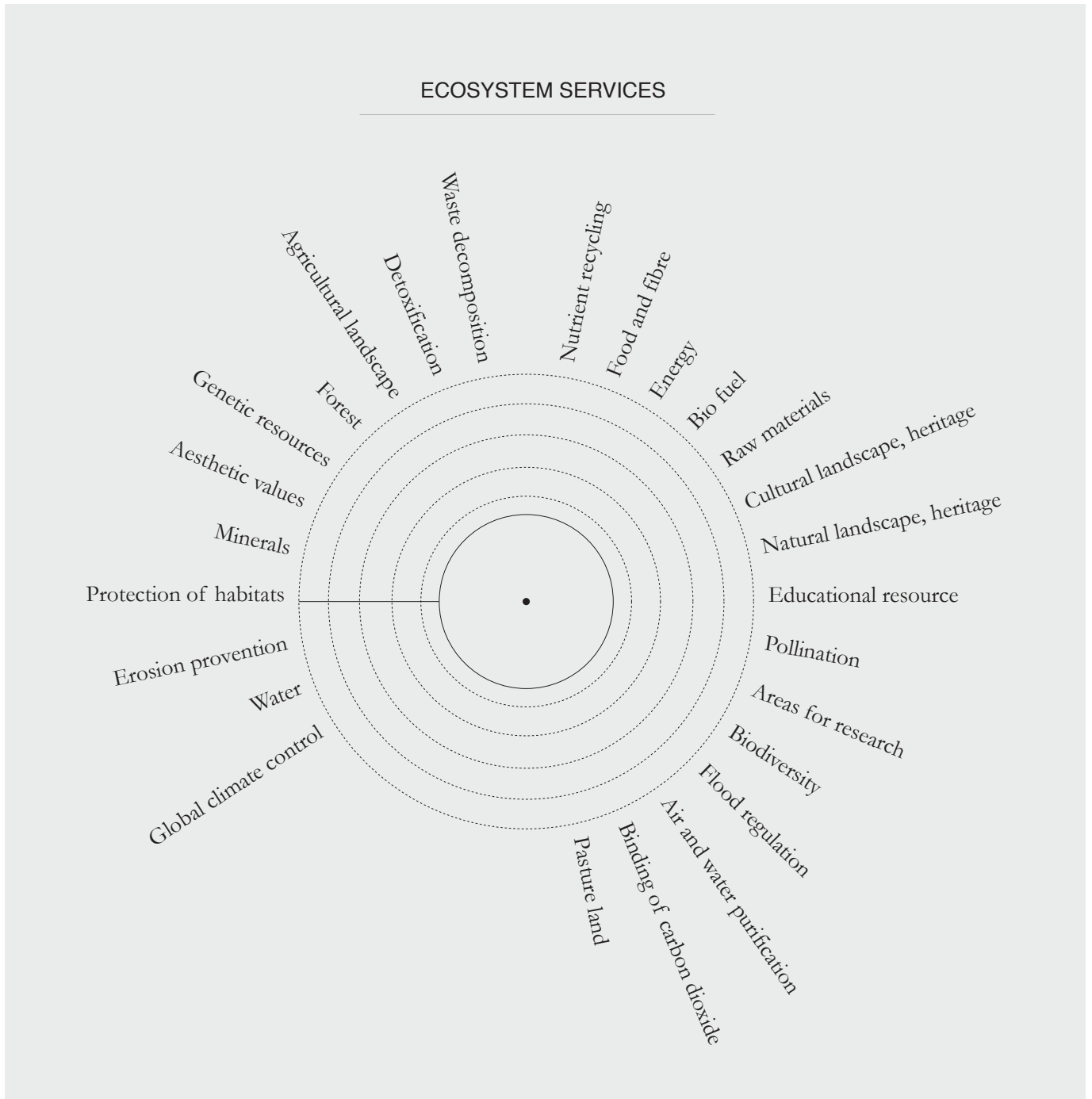
The illustration shows a selection of ecosystem services that are of great value for the whole society. Ecosystem services are usually divided into four groups: supporting services, provisioning services, regulating services and cultural services.

Dalarna has access to a lot of land, water and a high production of biomass, which gives the region great potential to transform into a bio-based society. A transition towards a bio-based society in Dalarna could mean that the fundamental role of rural areas in the region becomes more visible. The region could be in the forefront of this transition.

Green, innovative job opportunities could be created which would reinforce and change the image of rural areas. The power to act among individuals and entrepreneurship are identified as strong assets in Dalarna, and therefore there is great potential in the region for having an important role in this transition. By emphasising synergies rather than conflicts, different companies could collaborate and share resources.Different functions must be able to collaborate such as the tourism industry and the preservation of biodiversity. Regarding land use, synergies are important when planning for new housing for example, which should be done in balance with nature. Today there are conflicts regarding whether to build on agricultural land, which is something that should be avoided. Also by spreading knowledge about the importance of ecosystem services, the view of rural areas could be changed and the connection between urban and rural be more balanced.
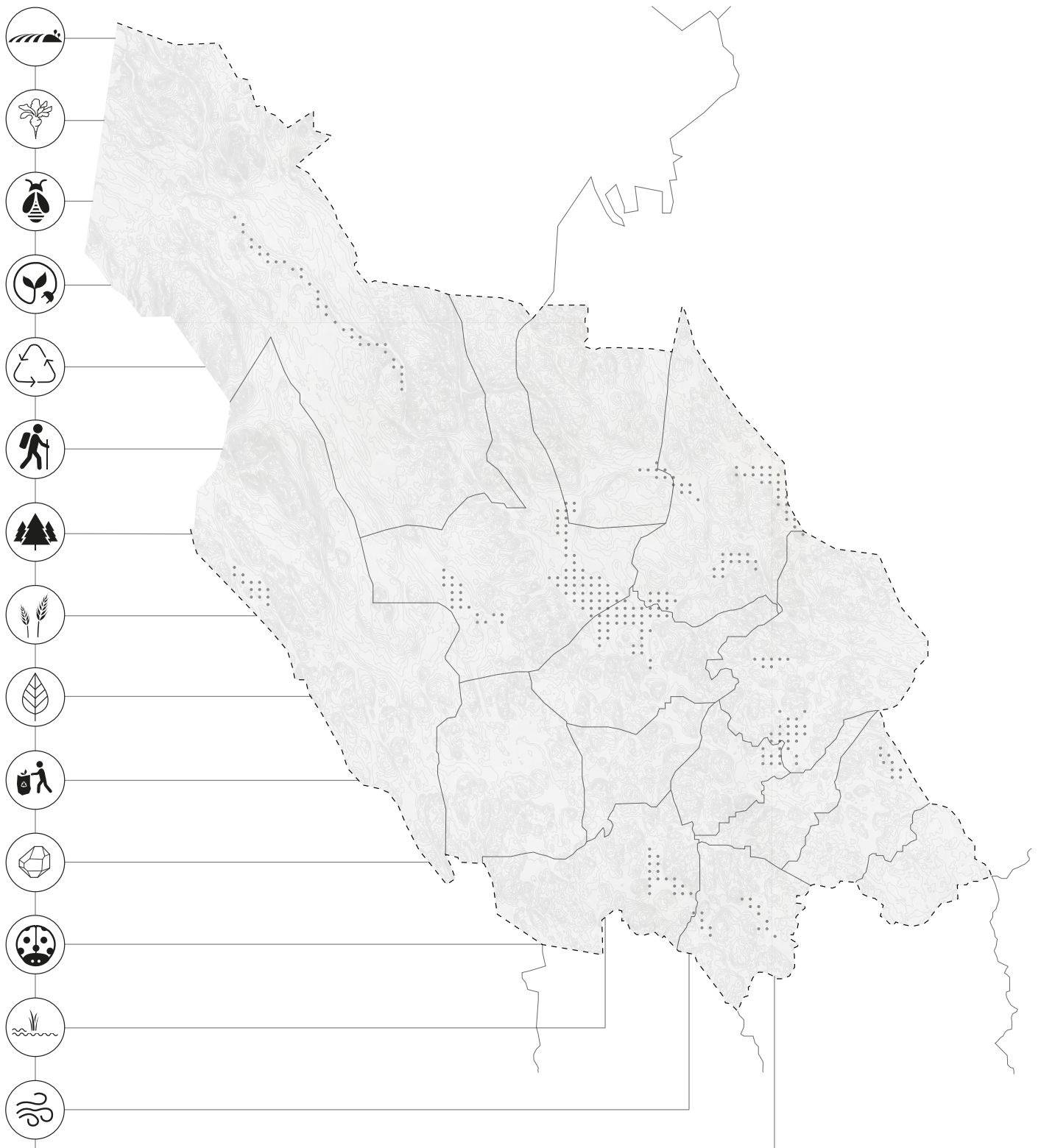
4. CREATE PLATFORMS FOR INTERACTION

A very important prerequisite for rural transformation and a holistic approach in the transformation of urban and rural areas is finding common ground. This is important on different scales, from a regional scale to a municipal scale, in order to create social growth. On the regional scale, the strategy aim to create conditions for organisation of stakeholders to come together and discuss common interests and shared resources. In order to have a holistic approach (which is needed in the transformation of urban and rural areas) it is important to see beyond the administrative borders and to focus on a common vision for the spatial planning. Stakeholders from urban and rural areas should come together and work across the borders in order to avoid narrowness.

Interactions between people and organisations give opportunities to exchange knowledge and ideas and develop the potential of the different areas. A variety of meeting places are important in order to meet different needs. In the region it can be valuable to develop nodes, and to meet outside the urban centers. The strategy is also about enhancing existing meeting places and developing them to their full potential. Local meeting places could also become regional meeting places. Sub strategies are created in order to clarify the strategy, and the focus is on a variety of spread out platforms for interaction:

- Develop nodes in strategic places
- Spread out platforms for meeting also in the smaller villages
- Accessible and open meeting places
- A diversity of meeting places for a variety of stakeholders
- Strengthen existing platforms

Creating platforms for meetings is something that the County Administrative Board of Dalarna is working on together with different stakeholders. This strategy aims to further emphasise the importance of these common platforms for meeting. The municipality of Gagnef is for example considered to be lacking meeting places. By creating more meeting places Gagnef, as well as other smaller municipalities, would have larger opportunities to arrange meetings and invite other municipalities and organisations. As for organisations it is of great importance to have a variety of meeting places also on a local level. There are many associations in Dalarna, which are dependent on places to meet and in order to support these; creating platforms is of a great value. The strategy aims to facilitate cross-border collaboration. The nodes should be accessible for all municipalities.
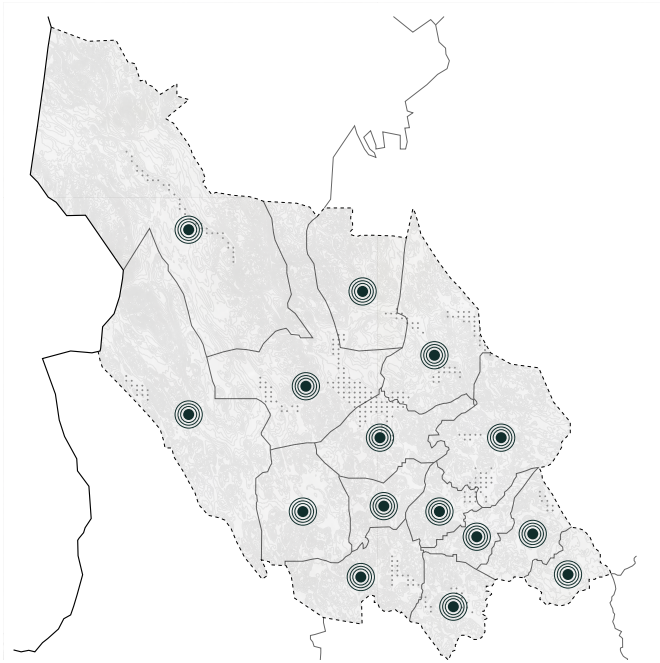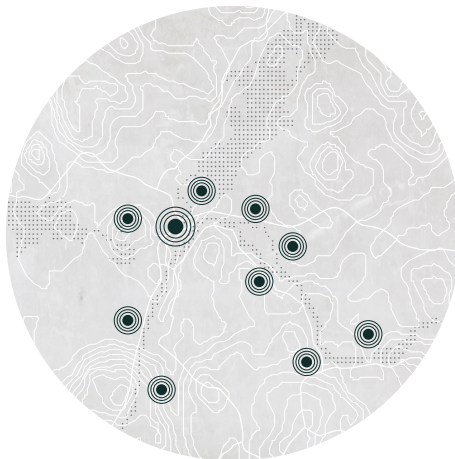
The region of Dalarna
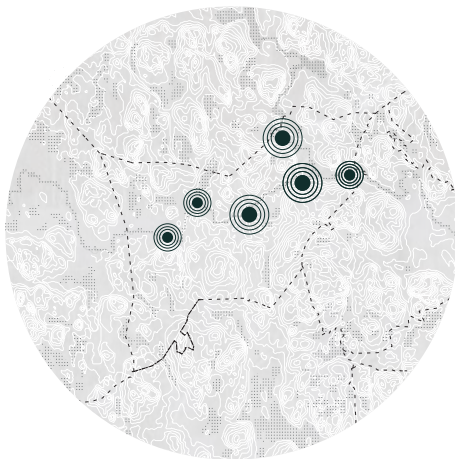
The municipality of Gagnef

The village Dala-Floda

lake

new and existing
platforms / meeting places

5. ESTABLISH A DIVERSITY OF CENTERS

This strategy highlights the importance of a decentralised focus, meaning that it is important to work with more than one of the larger villages, depending on the structure of the municipality. The strategy aims to highlight the importance of larger urban areas, towns as well as urban villages. The strategy responds to the discussion in the analysis regarding focus areas in the municipality. It is about identifying nodes and layers and to see to the identity of a place, and how different places complemet each other.

If all the larger villages are functioning, greater opportunities for meeting places and exchanges in different environments are created closer to more people. There is a need for meeting places today and this is an important part of supporting an active civil society. The strategy aims to create physical environments that promote interaction between people and bridge barriers over geographical borders and between different stakeholders. The strategy can be connected to the strategies *Identify the flows* and *Platforms for integration*. Sub strategies have been developed in order to clarify the strategy and enhance important fstakeholders:

• Identify and develop important nodes
• Identify and develop different functions
• Enhance the identity of the different villages
• Create opportunities for exchanges, meetings and shared services

In the municipality of Gangef, 74 % of the inhabitants live in one of the larger villages. Since they are located within a fairly short range, there is a greater chance that all inhabitants in Gagnef can live a well functioning everyday life if all the larger villages are active and alive. Focusing on all these villages in the municipality, as the tradition indicates in Gagnef, could contribute to stronger communities. At the same time it is important to build bridges between the different parts of the municipality in order to avoid isolated islands.

From the interviews it is stated that services are closing down in some of the larger villages in the municipality of Gagnef. In order to prevent this, active political decision-making is needed that considers what is beneficial for the whole municipality. A holistic approach is also important in order to develop the municipality in a sustainable way, saving resources and optimising the efficiency of land use. This is also vital in order to coordinate different functions such as housing, infrastructure, services and different industries.
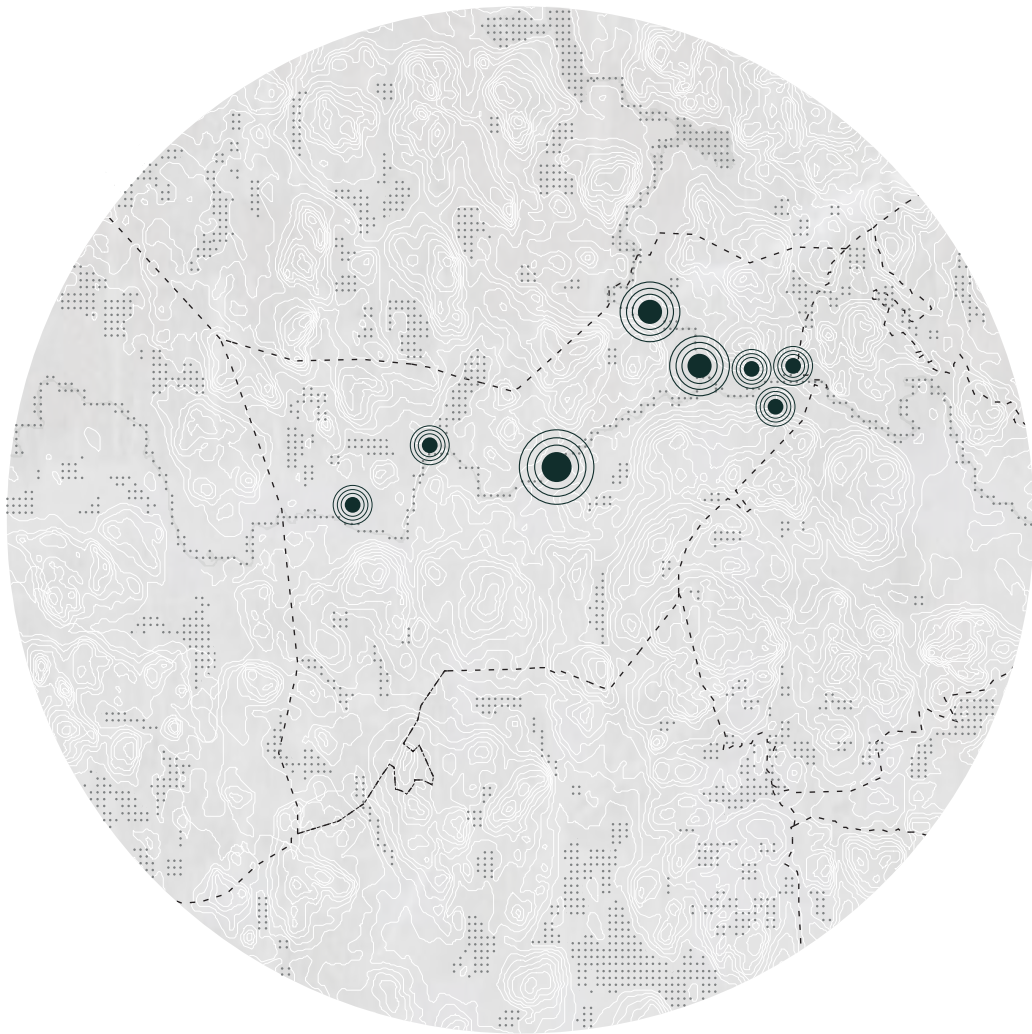
lake

important node

6. CREATE A SHARING SOCIETY

The concept of sharing is becoming more and more important in society. The services and tools that are shared are also becoming more varied and creative. Collaborative consumption is a relatively new concept, and researcher and writer Rachel Botsman was among the first to use the term. In the concept, sharing, renting, swopping, mending and borrowing is included (Ekelund & Bradley, 2015). The strategy has its starting point in the concept of collaborative consumption.

To a large extent, people who live in rural areas are more dependent on their own ability to make everyday life function. A part of the strength of rural lifestyles is to be responsible for the own surrounding. This is also something that has been discussed in the analysis. Creative solutions can contribute to a functioning everyday life for the inhabitants in rural areas. According to the empirical material, rural dwellers are more likely to take responsibility for the surroundings than an urban dweller and more accountability lies with people living in rural areas. It is important to be aware of this issue and not strengthen the view saying that living in rural areas is a choice, which the inhabitants are responsible for. The sub strategies focuses on different ways of making the everyday-life function for the inhabitants as well as saving resources:

• Make local networks visible
• Support the sharing of knowledge, functions and tools
• Develop innovative solutions for services

Connecting the different networks in the villages and sharing knowledge can contribute to stronger communities and organisations as well as a stronger connection among neighbours.

In a car depedent area such as Gagnef, the strategy could mean that people share their cars to a larger extent. Since you do not have to own a car to be able to use one, renting out cars and tools could also contribute to a larger diversity of people in rural areas. A network for helping each other to move around in and from the municipality could be beneficial for many reasons. A different way of sharing could also be the sharing of office space, where different entrepreneurs come together, or people not wanting to commute to another municipality every day for work. Rather than looking at it as a problem it could be seen as an opportunity. Having a responsibility for your surroundings together with the neighborhood can bring a sense of community to a place.

space   knowledge   functions   nodes for sharing   information   tools
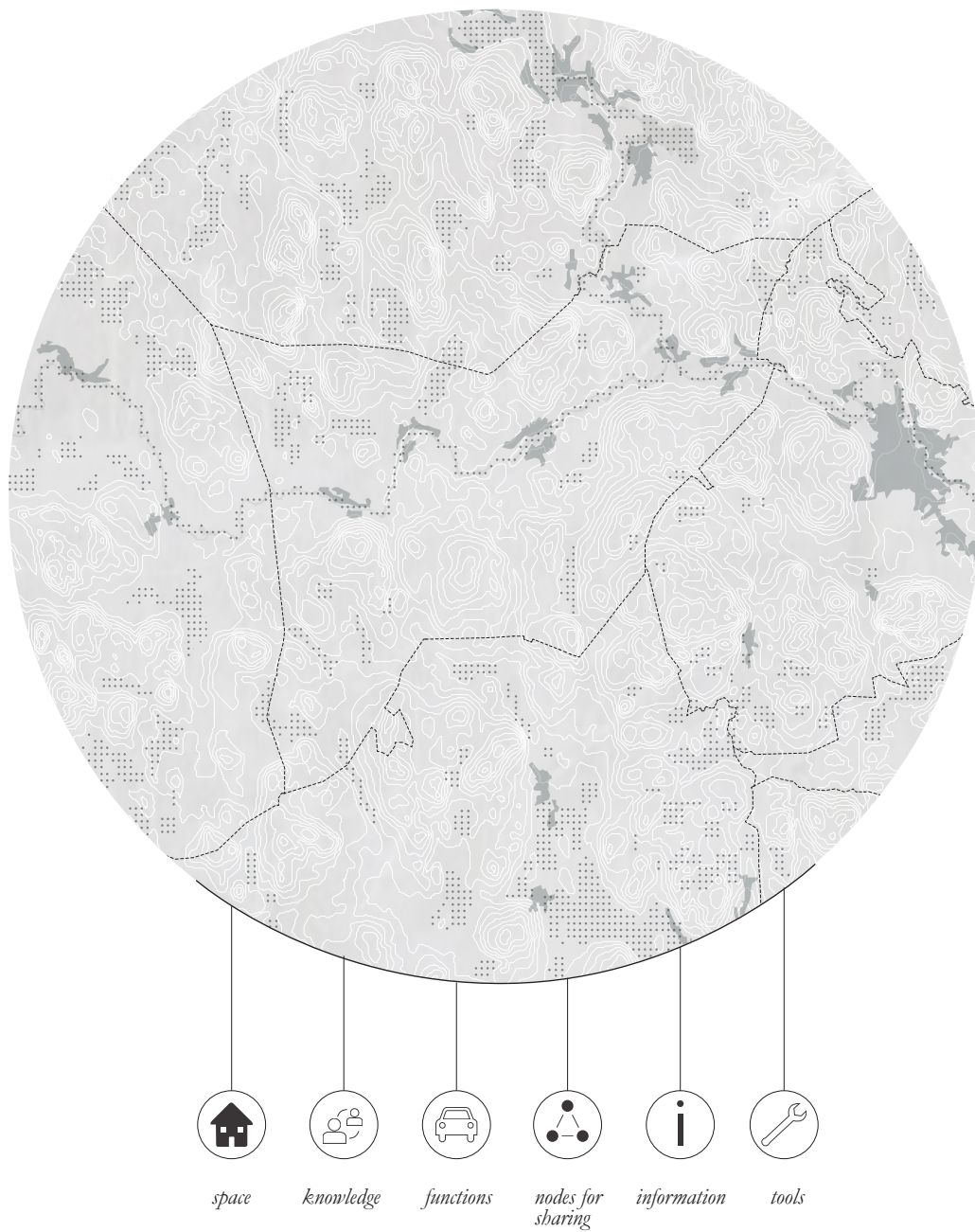
7. BUILD FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS

All municipalities should take the national and regional housing provision documents and other relevant plans and programs into account. Guidelines for housing development are a requirement and the regional perspective should also be included in these guidelines (Boverket, 2015). The importance of having a coordinated long-term holistic plan for housing development can facilitate the planning and decision-making. The municipality should make a decision regarding where and what to build. This is also a dialog for the regional level and coordination of housing development can preserve valuable land.

- Develop solutions across the administrative borders, and coordinate planning for housing with infrastructure, public transport and technical systems
- Develop a long-term housing program and coordinate at a regional level
- Develop alternatives in addition to single-family homes

Having the largest percentage of single-family houses in Sweden and a demand for alternative housing, it is important for Gagnef to developing its housing stock. There is also a demand for housing for seniors. New housing should be in connection to existing clusters and infrastructure. This might be viewed as an urban planning principle but considering the local situation in Gagnef, saving resources by developing housing in connection to infrastructure and services, should be considered a principle for sustainable development rather than urban development. There is need for a balance between on the one hand development and preservation and on the other hand exploitation of land (which needs to be done with care).

According to the municipality the need for housing is more visible in Bäsna, Sifferbo, Djurås and the village Gagnef, and so here is where the focus should be.

lake

urban area / larger village

apartment building

semi-detached house

single family house

chapter 7

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

*In this chapter the research questions are answered and the
result of the thesis is discussed.*

In this chapter, the result from the study will be presented focusing on both the result from the analysis of the empirical material and the developed planning strategies. The main findings will be discussed further with support of the theoretical framework.

The urban norm, the power and the engine

The study shows that the urban norm is visible in policy plans and planning documents in the region of Dalarna as well as in the municipality of Gagnef. The urban norm is shown by the appointment of the largest urban areas, Falun and Borlänge, as the engines of the region. This indicates that the urban perspective is the starting point and the norm for the development in the region. It is also revealed in the way rural areas are portrayed and in the relationship between urban and rural, where rural areas are said to be an important resource for urban areas (this is of course is true, but it is not only for urban areas that rural areas exist). In one of the strategies it has been emphasised that a transition towards a bio-based society could result in a strengthened value of rural areas. To challenge the traditional views of growth by broaden the discussion to also include ecological and social values could be a way to change this mind-set.

The relationship between urban and rural differs in the empirical material depending on the purpose of different documents. In the interviews, the perspective on the relationship between urban and rural depends on the organisation that the interviewees are working for. In the municipality of Gagnef the relationship is based a lot on Gagnef's location in relation to Borlänge and Falun. It is stated that Gagnef depends on the larger urban areas and that it also benefit from Falun and Borlänge being referred to as the engine of the region. It can be interpreted that the municipality of Gagnef is placing itself in a subordinated position toward the larger urban areas. The municipality of Gagnef is aware of its role as a small municipality. At the same time, it can be interpreted that Gagnef knows that it has to assert itself in order to be seen.

According to the theoretical framework and the theory of power and space, the development of an urban area is not a natural process, but a creation through actions in policy and planning (Fredriksson, 2014). The two-cored center of Falun and Borlänge cannot uphold this position without the periphery, which are the larger parts of Dalarna. A norm could never exist by itself and is dependent on an antithesis (Svensson, 2006). Falun and Borlänge do not uphold power by themselves, but they receive power by decision-making that supports their position. Falun and Borlänge also receive power because of their relationship to other areas, areas that do not have qualities that are valued in society.

The relationship between space and power has been a recurrent discussion in the thesis. The region of Dalarna is a large region, and the area that has been identified as an engine for regional development by Region Dalarna, is in the southern Dalarna. The inequality between power and space has been visible between the two-cored center Falun and Borlänge and other municipalities further north as well as between Falun and Borlänge and rural areas within close range. When Falun and Borlänge were identified as the engine of the region, reactions came from the area around lake Siljan. This indicates a fear of being forgotten in the competitive regional development. The power relation is also visible in the analysis when the urban interpretative prerogative is discussed, where it is stated that rural inhabitants constantly must reinterpret information directed towards urban dwellers.

The relationship between Dalarna and other parts of Sweden has also been emphasised in the empirical material, and the discussion has in this case mostly revolved around the relationship to the region of Stockholm, and here the power is shifted. According to a part of the analysis, Dalarna is in a subordinated position in relation to the larger urban regions in Sweden. Investments directed towards Stockholm at the expense of the rest of the country are being questioned during the conducted interviews.

Why is it so important for a region such as Dalarna, a pronounced tourist destination with a strong social and industrial cultural heritage, to highlight an urban center as the engine? An example is the train connection to Stockholm, which is mentioned in the analysis of the empirical material. It could be interpreted that in order to maintain the tracks, the region must be able to compete with other urban regions. But Region Dalarna (2014a) is also placing themselves in a larger context, together with other regions in Sweden and they are emphasising an exchange on a national and global level. The reason for highlighting Falun and Borlänge could also be grounded in the trends within contemporary Swedish spatial planning, which have a strong urban focus. Without a larger urban region to compete with, what happens to the identity of the region? Seemingly, Dalarna partly wants to change the image from a rural region with a somewhat conservative culture, to an innovative and modern region. Since the urban is what we tend to identify with these attributes, and in order to compete for growth, highlighting the city is the approach to be part of the competition (and play according to current rules).

In parts of the empirical material it is considered to be a problem not having a natural center in the municipality of Gagnef. But is this a problem because we are so used to having the starting point in an urban center, or is it simply a good universal solution? The importance of the emergence of towns and cities, creating opportunities for trading and services, is of course not to be neglected. And for such events the structure of the city is probably a prerequisite in today's society. By developing planning strategies, the thesis shows that it is important not applying urban planning principles in a rural context without questioning them. It could be a well functioning principle to concentrate services and public functions but it should be discussed whether it is a suitable solution for different areas with different conditions. It is a matter of democracy as well as accessibility and the more decentralised services are, the closer they are to a larger number of people, but at what cost? In one of the strategies this is a central question. The strategy is focusing on decentralising functions and services partly because it is a part of the tradition in the municipality of Gagnef and therefore something to build the strategy on. But the strategy is also meant to challenge the way we traditionally plan and think of a municipality, with one urban center.

The municipality of Gagnef is developing a relationship to a center outside the municipality's borders and the geographical location is here more important than municipal boundaries. The reason for not having a clear center in Gagnef might have to do with the short distances between urban areas in this part of the region. In order to maintain the relationship to the larger urban areas, the municipality of Gagnef stresses a need to provide for housing close to the municipal border of Borlänge, and the housing development is adapted to

the larger city. The power position of the appointed engine is reinforced by this action. But it is also understandable that Gagnef is adapting its planning to Borlänge and it is important to have a holistic approach while planning for housing, since no municipality exists in a vacuum. Nevertheless, it is the urban center that is the driving force for this development, which indicates the power of the urban norm. A cooperation such as the region of Falun and Borlänge can play an important part, although in this case, the municipalities does not seem to have the same preconditions.

In a document by Region Dalarna (2014c) it is stated that the development of an urban center favours smaller municipalities as well, even though they might be 100-200 kilometres away. In the theoretical framework it is argued by Gustafsson (2013) that investments made in an urban center is unlikely to benefit rural areas (Gustafsson, 2013, January 7). But if even the smaller municipalities argue that they want to have a strong larger urban center in the region, even if the location is far away, what benefits have these municipalities identified?

It is in a way problematic to use the term engine since vital parts of society can be lost. An engine can be associated with movement and economic growth while vital parts of society might not change over time or provide an economic return in that sense. It is similar to the criticism that is directed towards ecosystem services, since only the services that have a value for humans are strengthened. This demands new perspectives of what an engine is.

Responsibility for places and people

In the theoretical framework it has been highlighted through Massey (2004) that we should take responsibility for people and places outside our own sphere. Massey (2004) describes how we should respond to distant and unknown places in the same way as we relate to the past, due to the fact that we have a responsibility for our past. This could be connected to how a center, in its power position, should have a responsibility towards the periphery. In the analysis of the empirical material it is said that the whole region of Dalarna is dependent on the rural areas. It should therefore be the responsibility of the whole region to handle some of the issues that are raised as rural issues. It is also about not assigning rural areas problems based on that they are different from urban areas.

According to the analysis, the individual has a larger responsibility for rural areas compared to inhabitants in urban areas. If initiatives in rural areas come from the individual, and if the municipalities, County Administrative Board and other stakeholders facilitate this process, there should not be a problem with the individual taking responsibility. But the responsibility of the individual should not be exaggerated in strategic planning documents for rural areas, since this

creates an imbalance in what responsibility the individual should have, based on the geographical location of the individual. To share the responsibility and change the perspective of borders could be more relevant. One of the strategies are responding to the issue of individuals having a large responsibility in the municipality of Gagnef, and the aim is to facilitate everyday life by highlighting the possibilities for collaboration.

A part of the discussion of the urban norm could be whether we should be able to choose where to live, since the norm tells us otherwise. Services are closing down and accessibility becomes degraded which is an indirect way of insinuating that all places are not suitable for living. All rural areas might not be able to survive, and it might be that we have to plan for decommissioning of some areas, as the National Board of Housing argues (Boverket, 2012). But how do we decide what areas to decommission and what would the expense be? In order for rural areas to be alive, people must be able to live there. The spatial planning can play an important role if the understanding of the relationship between urban and rural areas becomes visible.

The paradox

There is a paradox whether we should term rural areas in policy making or if this will further strengthen the urban norm. A conclusion is that it is fruitful to discuss rural areas and the subordinated position that rural areas hold, since a change will not happen without a discussion. It is equally important to reflect on what the consequences might be (Rönnblom, 2014). In the analysis of the empirical material it is discussed that some documents terms both urban and rural areas but also that the discussion of the city is absent in some rural strategy documents. Rönnblom (2014) stresses that it might be right to focus on rural areas in a document for rural transformation, but if the challenges in rural areas partly exist because of an urban focus, what is referred to as a strategy for rural transformation might rather be a strategy for territorial challenges. If the consequence is that a marginalised position is reinforced by a neutralisation, it might be important to term both urban and rural (Rönnblom, 2014). The point is that we cannot talk about urban areas without talking about rural areas and vice versa, and the conclusion is that it is relevant to reflectively separate the different parts in order to change the imbalance in a long-term perspective.

It can be interpreted from the empirical material that in the municipality of Gagnef, the rural is a natural part of the municipality and therefore there is no need to divide urban and rural. It is a rural municipality with some urban characteristics. When now discussing creating a stronger core in the municipality, this question might become more important and relevant to reflect upon. Something that is criticised by Rönnblom (2014) is the normative view that rural

areas cannot be allowed to exist only for their own sake but always have to exist for someone else, which is visible also in the studied empirical material. At the same time, exchanges and flows should be highlighted as important, which is stressed in one of the planning strategies. It should of course be about how the exchanges and flows operate and if it is at someone's expense, and if urban and rural areas are valued equally. By developing planning strategies, the thesis shows how important it is to emphasise and put into words why rural areas are important, and why they are important for urban areas. Gustafsson (2015) highlights that by giving rural areas special solutions we are saying that rural areas are the problem. But we have to be able to talk about rural areas in need of local solutions, which also Gustafsson (2015) emphasises, without being the ones to maintain the urban norm. In one of the strategies, highlighting a variety of land uses and functions as the engine is emphasised. This is to stress how different areas are dependent on each other. In a power perspective it can be problematic to only highlight parts of society, such as urban areas, since it consolidates an identity of an area, and hinder certain actions.

Closing remarks

The thesis has been developed in a wish to learn more about what is needed for creating a sustainable society by having a holistic approach and an understanding of the mutual dependence between urban and rural. In a globalised world where urbanisation is increasing, it is crucial to discuss the relationship between urban and rural since rural areas will only prove to be more important with growing cities. While this is a large concern, the focus has been on examining whether the urban norm and power relations are visible within the spatial planning in the region of Dalarna and the municipality of Gagnef. The strategies aim to respond to the discovered problems in the region and municipality. A continuing work would be to further develop these strategies by applying them in the regional and municipal planning. The strategies have been anchored geographically but it would be interesting to analyse the region on a deeper level and see to the different driving forces that could be identified.

It has been stated that new concepts are needed in the discussion of urban and rural areas. This is a part of the thesis that could be further explored, since how we term different parts of society is of great importance. As Forsberg (1996) states: 'it it through the language myths are tackled and new knowledge generated' (Forsberg, 1996, p. 35, author's translation).

SAMMANFATTNING

Den urbana normen påverkar hur olika platser värderas utifrån dess attribut och geografiska läge och ställer staden över landsbygden. Städer förknippas ofta med modernitet, innovation och utveckling samtidigt som bilden av landsbygden är präglad av bakåtsträvande och gammalmodighet. Syftet med detta examensarbete är att undersöka hur den urbana normen influerar den fysiska planeringen i Sverige, med ett fokus på landsbygdsområden. Syftet är också att identifiera planeringsstrategier som svarar på de problem som är ett resultat av att separera staden och landsbygden i planeringen.

Dalarna och kommunen Gagnef har studerats och genom kvalitativa intervjuer och en innehållsanalys av dessa intevjuer samt relevanta planerings- och strategidokument har en förståelse för hur den urbana normen kan yttra sig skapats. Teorin om maktrelationer har studerats tillsammans med teorin om relationen mellan centrum och periferi, för att skapa förståelse för den obalans som existerar mellan områden med olika förutsättningar. Utifrån det teoretiska ramverket och den empiriska studien har planeringsstrategier tagits fram med ett fokus på relationen och balansen mellan stad och landsbygd, både på en kommunal och regional nivå.

En av arbetets slutsatser är att den urbana normen uttrycks på olika vis i den studerade regionen och kommunen. Ett exempel är att de största städerna, Falun och Borlänge, benämns som regionens motor. Bland de intervjuade tjänstemännen inom kommunala och regionala organ finns också en medvetenhet kring problematiken i att lägga störst fokus på dessa urbana områden. För att skapa en hållbar landsbygdsomvandling och utveckla staden och landsbygden i balans är det viktig att ta ett helhetsgrepp på en regional nivå samt ifrågasätta den urbana normen. För en landsbygdskommun är det viktigt att omvärdera den egna rollen samt hitta lokalt anpassade lösningar. Samarbete över kommungränserna är en förutsättning och planeringsstrategierna visar på att den fysiska planeringen har en viktig roll för att stärka landsbygden i relation till staden.

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APPENDIX A

The documents that are a part of the empirical material comes from the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, Region Dalarna, the Region of Falun and Borlänge, Dalälvarnas development area and the municipality of Gagnef. The studied documents are:

- The County Administrative Board of Dalarna, Regional handlingsplan för landsbygdsprogrammet och havs- och fiskeriprogrammet 2014–2020, 2015.

- Region Dalarna, Regional utvecklingsstrategi för Dalarna, Dalastrategi, 2014.

- Region Dalarna, Landsbygdspolitiskt program, 2014.

- Region Dalarna, Trafikförsörjningsprogram, 2014.

- The municipality of Gagnef, the comprehensive plan for the municipality of Gagnef, 1998.

- Dalälvarnas utvecklingsstrategi, Dalälvarnas utvecklingsområde (year unknown).

- Webpage www.dalarna.se (information by the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, Landstinget Dalarna and Region Dalarna)

- Webpage www.fbregionen.se

APPENDIX B

During the interviews some themes and questions were used to structure the conversation. The questions differed depending on the organisation of which the interviewee worked for. Some of the questions that were the starting point for the interviews are presented below:

- Is there an unbalance in how urban and rural areas are prioritised in the region of Dalarna?

- How is the urban norm visible in the region of Dalarna?

- What does urbanisation mean for the region of Dalarna?

- What does it mean for the region of Dalarna and the different municipalities that Falun and Borlänge are referred to as the engine of the region?

- Are special solutions needed for rural areas?

- What is the reason for not widely discussing the interdependence between urban and rural areas in strategic documents and planning documents?

- Are rural areas taken for granted?

- What are the challenges when it comes to rural transformation and developing urban and rural areas holistically?

- How do the different municipalities and organisations in the region collaborate regarding rural transformation?

- Does Gagnef have an urban center or an engine? How is the relationship between the center and the periphery?

- What is the relationship between Gagnef and larger urban areas?

- What are the exchanges between the municipality of Gagnef and other municipalities and larger urban areas?