Voices of the Flight-Free Visionary

An Overview of the 'Staying on the Ground' Narratives and their Position in Relation to (Neoliberal) Mobility Hegemony

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Abstract

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is encouraging profound and rapid transformation in every economic sector to mitigate escalating climate change. In this context, a public and political debate about aviation as a high-carbon source has emerged in Sweden with growing numbers of people declaring that they are "staying on the ground". Despite increased research that explores the motivations behind individual choices to reduce their flight consumption, there is still a need to find out how 'change agents' are articulating the 'flight-free' vision in the process of convincing others. Using a combination of focus groups and semi-structured interviews, I explored the arguments of Swedish flight-free change agents. The analysis uncovered twelve 'flight-free narratives' that criticised (neoliberal) Mobility Hegemony from three angles. The first group encompassed narratives similar to: "the train is more time-efficient than the aeroplane (on short distance travel)" which accepts the fundamental assumption from Mobility Hegemony such as efficiency maximisation. The second level critique consisted of counter-hegemonic claims functioning as: "tourism is not happening out of solidarity" which dispute the basic assumptions of Mobility Hegemony, in this case, the claim that (more) mobility increases social sustainability. The third and final category renounced the ideological components of Mobility Hegemony by neither agreeing or disagreeing to them as in: "it is more meaningful to engage locally than to travel". The literature review on transformation theories suggested that although all three bodies of arguments had strategic advantages, the third-level narratives had a transformative advantage. The study provides an innovative method to categorise (and theorise about) transformative language and gives an overview of the arguments used by the Swedish flight-free movement as well as a model to develop new transformative narratives which may eventually bring about transformative system change in favour of (more) sustainability.

Keywords: Climate Change, Sweden, Transformation, Aviation, Frames.

Sammanfattning

Förenta nationernas klimatpanel (IPCC) uppmuntrar till djup och snabb omvandling inom varje ekonomisk sektor för att förebygga eskalerande klimatförändringar. I detta sammanhang har en offentlig och politisk debatt om luftfart som en stor källa till koldioxidutsläpp uppstått i Sverige med ökande antal människor som förklarar att de "håller sig på jorden". Trots att forskning har undersökt motivationerna bakom enskilda val för att minska individuell flygkonsumtion återstår ett behov av att ta reda på hur 'förändringsagenter' formulerar den 'flygfria' visionen i processen att övertyga andra. Med hjälp av en kombination av fokusgrupper och semistrukturerade intervjuer undersökte jag argumenten från svenska flygfria förändringsagenter. Analysen avslöjade tolv "flygfria berättelser" som kritiserade (neoliberal) Mobilitets Hegemoni från tre vinklar. Den första gruppen omfattade berättelser likt: "tåget är mer tidseffektivt än flygplanet (på kortdistansresor)" som accepterar det grundläggande antagandet från Mobilitets Hegemoni så som effektivitets maximering. Den andra nivån består av mot-hegemoniska påståenden så som: "turism sker inte av solidaritet" som bestrider de grundläggande antagandena inom Mobilitets Hegemonin, i detta fall påståendet att (mer) rörlighet ökar social hållbarhet. Den tredje och sista kategorin ignorerar de ideologiska komponenterna i Mobilitets Hegemonin genom att varken hålla med eller debattera dem som i: "det är mer meningsfullt att engagera sig lokalt än att resa". Som ett komplement gjordes en litteraturstudie vilken föreslår att även om alla tre nivåerna har strategiska fördelar, är det berättelserna på tredje nivå som har den transformativa fördelen. Studien tillhandahåller en innovativ metod för att kategorisera (och teorisera om) transformativt språk och ger en översikt över de argument som används av den svenska flygfria rörelsen samt en modell för att utveckla nya transformativa berättelser som så småningom kan leda till transformativa systemförändringar till förmån av (mer) hållbarhet.

Nyckelord: Klimatförändring, Sverige, Transformation, Flyg, Ramar.

Resumen

El Grupo Intergubernamental de Expertos sobre el Cambio Climático (IPCC) está alentando una transformación profunda y rápida en todos los sectores económicos para mitigar la escalada del cambio climático. En este contexto, un debate público y político sobre la aviación como fuente de alto contenido de carbono ha surgido en Suecia con un número creciente de personas que declaran que se "quedan en la tierra". A pesar de una mayor investigación que explora las motivaciones detrás de las elecciones individuales para reducir su consumo de vuelo, todavía es necesario descubrir cómo los "agentes de cambio" están articulando la visión de "libre de vuelo" en el proceso de convencer al pueblo. Utilizando una combinación de grupos focales y entrevistas semiestructuradas, exploré los argumentos de los agentes de cambio libre-de-vuelo suecos. El análisis descubrió doce "narrativas libres de vuelo" que criticaron la hegemonía (neoliberal) de la movilidad desde tres ángulos. El primer grupo abarcó narrativas similares a: "el tren es más eficiente en tiempo que el avión (en viajes de corta distancia)", que aceptan la suposición fundamental de la Hegemonía de la Movilidad, como la maximización de la eficiencia. La crítica de segundo nivel consistió en afirmaciones contra hegemónicas que funcionan como: "el turismo no está sucediendo por solidaridad", lo que dispute los supuestos básicos de la Hegemonía de la Movilidad, en este caso, la afirmación de que (más) movilidad aumenta la sostenibilidad social. La tercera y última categoría renuncia a los componentes ideológicos de la Hegemonía de la movilidad al no estar de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con ellos como en: "es más significativo participar localmente que viajar". La revisión de la literatura sobre teorías de transformación sugirió que, aunque los tres cuerpos de argumentos tenían ventajas estratégicas, las narraciones de tercer nivel tenían una ventaja transformadora. El estudio proporciona un método innovador para clasificar (y teorizar) sobre el lenguaje transformador y ofrece una visión general de los argumentos utilizados por el movimiento libre de vuelo de Suecia, así como un modelo para desarrollar nuevas narrativas transformadoras que eventualmente pueden provocar un cambio transformador del sistema a favor de (más) sostenibilidad.

Palabras clave: Cambio climático, Suecia, Transformación, Aviación, Marcos.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made clear in 2018 that every tenth of a degree of temperature rise will further increase the impacts of climate change, jeopardising the future of the human civilisation (IPCC, 2018). Still, the special report on climate change of 1.5°C highlighted that it is technically possible to stay within the Paris climate target with no, or little, overshoot. However, to do so, without relying on potentially catastrophic Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage techniques (Burch & Harris, 2014), profound and rapid transformation is required (IPCC, 2018). Addressing climate change will require drastic improvements in environmental performance in every economic sector within a few decades, and realistically, this demands large-scale social transformation (IPCC, 2018; Pedde et al., 2019). In the words of de Coninick et al., (2018; 315) from the IPCC special report:

> *Limiting warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would require transformative* systemic change, integrated with sustainable development.

During the last 50 years, there has been an enormous increase in mobility through the use of private vehicles and aeroplanes (Sims et al., 2014). While 200 years ago people in the US travelled 50 meters per day, in the 2000s they travel 50 kilometres per day, and in 2050 mobility is expected to increase fourfold more (Urry, 2009). Already in 2010, the transport sector accounted for 23 % of total energy-related carbon dioxide emissions (6.7 GtCO2), which is more than double the sector's emissions in 1970. Among modes of transport, the most intensive in terms of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions per travelled kilometre are short aircraft journeys (Sims et al., 2014). The international council on clean transportation states that in 2018, commercial aviation accounted for 2.8% of global CO2 emissions, an increase of 32% over the past five years (Graver, Zhang & Rutherford, 2019). By 2050, aviation emissions have been predicted to increase additionally with up to 700% (World Economic Forum, 2019). For someone who flies two or more times per year, aviation generally accounts for the majority of that person's climate footprint (Wynes & Nicholas, 2017).

Aviation in Sweden

In Sweden, a public and political debate about aviation have been playing out because aviation fuel is not charged with VAT, energy tax or carbon dioxide tax. Movements and initiatives such as 'Vi Håller oss på Jorden' (We are Staying on the Ground) and 'Flyglarm Arlanda' (Flight Alarm Arlanda) have rallied people into a collective aviation boycott in favour of reduced emissions. Along with these

debates, in 2018, a flight tax was introduced in Sweden. Since then, it has increasingly been recalled that the number of flights has to shrink to reach climate goals. For example, in 2019, the Swedish prime minister and minister of infrastructure stated that "Swedes need to fly less" (Zachrisson, 2019).

Contrary, aviation is predicted to increase by 11.5% by 2025, compared to 2019 levels (Swedish Transport Agency, 2019). The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2020) estimates that average Swedes are flying almost 1,5 times per person and year (see figure 1) creating GHG emissions of approximately 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year in 2017. The emissions have hence increased by 43 per cent since 1990 and are equivalent to the entire Swedish car fleet and five times above the global average per capita (Swedish EPA, 2020).
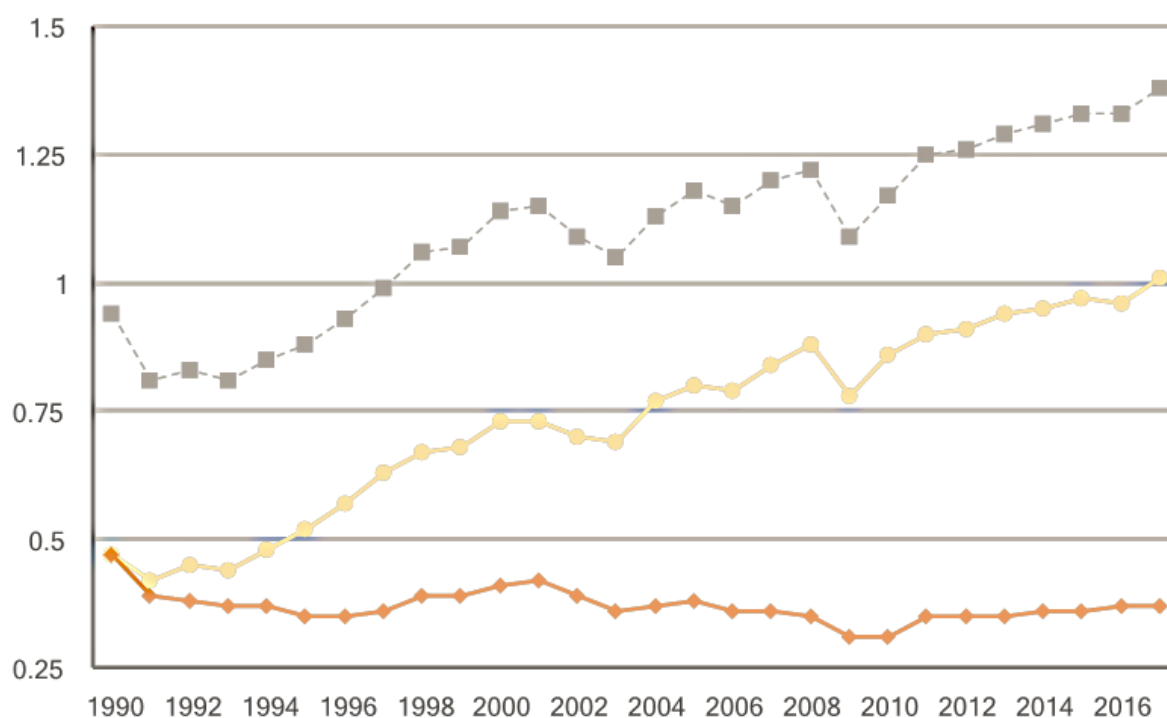
Figure 1. The number of flights taken per person and year 1990-2017. The orange line equals domestic flights per person, the yellow equals international flights per person, and the grey equals total flights per person. The X-axis shows the year, and Y-axis shows the number of flights. While domestic flights are relatively stable, the total number of flights has increased by 120 per cent since 1990. Source Swedish EPA (2020b)

The global aviation industry has argued that aviation is too socially and economically significant to be restricted. According to the industry, technological improvement will solve the climate externalities of aircraft, and hence, there is no necessity of behavioural change (Gössling and Peeters, 2009). The IPCC agrees that aviation fuel use per flight could be substantially reduced in the near future. However, the IPCC suggests that significant emissions reduction also requires a reduced

amount of flights (Sims et al., 2014). In economic terms, the 'Jevons paradox' states that when fuel efficiency increases, the price (of air travel) will decrease, resulting in increased demand if the sector is not regulated. Calculating the effect of current international climate policies on aviation emissions Larsson et al. (2019) have concluded that they will not succeed in sufficiently reducing emissions. Transport scholars have even argued that focusing on technological improvement when mitigating emissions from aviation is not only insufficient but may be counter-productive as it provides a false sense of security (Nikolaeva et al., 2019).

Contribution and previous research

One of sustainability science's core questions, as defined by Kates et al. (2001), is the matter of how to guide markets, rules, norms and scientific information towards a more sustainable trajectory. The 'flight-free change agents'[1] in Sweden are exploring how to change the collective and taken-for-granted behaviour, flying. My contribution to the field of sustainability lies in examining and discussing their arguments against a combination of existing theories of transformation.

The debate about aviation in Sweden encompasses aspects of "lifestyle, cultural capital, belonging, consumption, tourism, freedom and even progress" (Söderberg and Wormbs, 2019; 4). I would argue that the debate also touches upon questions such as: to what extent individuals can or should challenge 'business as usual'; whether or not an environmental-social win-win solution exists; and, what people value and to what extent it is possible to shift those values. Hence, to study the 'Staying on the Ground Narratives' (SoGNs) may prove useful in a broader transformative context of renegotiating political, social and personal practices in favour of the environment.

To place the struggle of the flight-free movements in a theoretical context is to facilitate the creation of one or various 'theories of change' within the movement. I argue that by unpacking and examining the SoGNs, I create knowledge which will make it easier for change agents to be theoretically informed and practically coherent in their struggle. My contribution to the movement is hence reflective knowledge which I hope will empower the members individually and collectively to have an increased impact on the aviation regime.

Several studies researching shifting aviation practices already exist, but they have all focused on what makes a single actor shift behaviour. For example, Jacobson et al. (2020; 12) found that: "[flight] quitters/reducers have connected knowledge of [climate change] to emotions and personal life — contrasting to the more common perception of [climate change] as something abstract and

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1 I define a 'flight-free change agent' as a person who have chosen to stop flying in favour of the climate and is actively encouraging others to make the same choice.

distant …". Söderberg and Wormbs (2019) conclude that knowledge was the most important factor, followed by morals, social factors and existing alternatives, that lead Swedes to stop flying. Morten et al. (2018; 302) conducted a similar survey study in the UK and suggested that positive attitudes towards one's ability to mitigate climate change affected the number of flights taken. The focus of this study is different in that I focus on the role of the language used by change agents in their quest to motivate others to stop flying.

Research aim and questions

The overarching aim of this research was to contribute to the movement that is trying to reduce the number of flights taken per person. I did so by voicing the flight-free change agents and thereby uplifting missing arguments in the debate about aviation and sustainability. By conduction this study, I contributed to a discussion about how to best frame aviation to facilitate decreased demand and, in the long run, a transformation of the sector into something more sustainable. I theorised transformation using the term 'Mobility Hegemony'[2] which I claim shapes 'aviation practices'. I understood the flight-free change agents as subjects trying to challenge aviation practices and potentially also the Mobility Hegemony. Furthermore, I theorised the articulations of the change agents by applying counter-hegemonic resistance theory in which critique can be framed on three different levels. I combined hegemony theory with language-oriented theory that highlights the importance of frames and narratives in transformation. Together these two theoretical bodies made up my theoretical framework, through which I investigated the narratives used by flight-free change agents to find *how* they were questioning aviation. The research was operationalised through the following questions:

1. *Which narratives are the Swedish flight-free change agents using when criticising aviation?*
2. *How are these narratives framed in relation to the (neoliberal) Mobility Hegemony?*

The first research question is answered by the identification and naming of flight-free narratives. The second RQ is answered by the categorisation of the narratives as 'inside', 'opposing' and 'outside' Mobility Hegemony. Although I discuss the transformative potential of the levels critique,

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[2] Defined in the theory chapter

this was not included as a research question as this thesis mainly explored *if* the flight-free critique could be categorised and analysed from these perspectives.

Conceptual and theoretical background

In the previous chapter, I argued that technological improvement is not sufficient to mitigate GHG emissions from the aviation sector and that the sector needs to be transformed. In the course of this chapter, I place aviation within the context of ever-increasing mobility which I argue is shaping people into having travel habits incompatible with climate goals. I carry out a literature review to define 'Mobility Hegemony' and thereby better understand why it is not seen as 'common sense' to stop flying in the face of the coming climate catastrophe. The review is not meant to cover all that has been written about Mobility and Hegemony. Instead, it provides the study with a definition of Mobility Hegemony useful to construct and contrast the SoGNs. Furthermore, I present my theoretical entry points together with my understanding of counter-hegemonic critique and the role of language in transforming hegemony.

Theoretical entry points

Since the 17th century period of enlightenment, the West has been dominated by the neoclassical economic worldview which claims that humans are by nature economic, egoistic, calculating and utility-maximising beings who, given the right information, navigates the world through rational choices (Wilk & Cliggett, 2007). Over the past decades; however, this view has been challenged by cognitive and brain science. This new science proves that the vast majority of human reasoning is unconscious and emotion-based (Lakoff, 2010). As a consequence, many sociologists have concluded that humans are steered by a combination of morals, social belonging and calculative rationality (Wilk and Cliggett, 2007).

In sociology, 'transformation' has long been about power and resistance (Börjesson & Rehn, 2009). Scholars have often understood power as predominantly actor-oriented, structure-oriented or language-oriented, and placed these bodies of power-theory in competition with each other (Svarstad et al., 2018). However, Svarstad et al., (2018; 359) pointed out that power is better understood with "the combination of multiple social theories". Following this line of thought, I theorise about transformation using a combination of structure-oriented 'Thin Hegemony Theory' in which 'bottom-up change' is possible with a language-oriented 'Framing Theory' that I claim can be used to challenge hegemony. I will soon define and elaborate on how I apply the theories.

Cultural Hegemony Theory

According to the Marxist school of thought, it is in the 'true interest' of the subordinate to transform society (Cole, 2020). For example, in the case of aviation, it would benefit the great majority

to prevent a climate catastrophe. Contradictory, aviation travel is increasing. For Gramsci, who build up on Marx, the core of the problem would not be the absence of conditions, but the absence of: "subjective realisation of the objective conditions for social transformation" (de Nardis & Caruso, 2011; 14). Gramsci coined the term Cultural Hegemony to explain the process of upholding power through the construction of subjectivity. According to this theory, it is via embedding ideology in the mind of the subject and the apparatus of society that the dominant group prevents transformation (de Nardis & Caruso, 2011; Cole, 2020b). From this perspective, hegemony both hinders and facilitates transformation and to seek transformation is to engage in an ideological struggle for example, through the works of art, literature, education, mass media, everyday language and popular culture (Heywood, 2017; Cole, 2020).

Sociologists debate about to what extent the subordinated, for example, slaves, 'untouchables' and workers, have resisted against their oppressions (Scott, 1990). In this debate, it is possible to distinguish between a 'thick' and a 'thin' theory of hegemony. In the first, the population have fully incorporated the beliefs and goals of the dominant group and hence cannot question the system under which they live. Contrastingly in the second, the subordinate may interpret the social order as 'natural' or 'inevitable', but still realise that the system does not work in their interest (Scott, 1990). The problem with the first, thick theory is that it makes a social change from below seem impossible and hence fails to explain the multiple historical rebellions, upraises and revolutions the world has experienced (Scott, 1990). Assuming that it is possible to question hegemony, Scott (1990; 92) distinguishes between three different levels of critique:

> The least radical step is to criticise some of the dominant stratum for having violated the norms by which they claim to rule; the next most radical step is to accuse the entire stratum of failing to observe the principles of its rule, and the most radical step is to repudiate the very principle by which the dominant stratum justifies its dominance.

According to Scott (1990), a more radical narrative is not necessarily more transformative. Historically, it has proven strategic to frame criticism inside of hegemonic values as it threatens the people in power more directly than a critique from the 'outside' would do (Scott, 1990). On the other hand, transformation is different from adaptation in that it should address the underlying causes of a problem rather than dealing with the symptoms (Sharp et al., 2016). It is hence up for discussion if one level of critique is more transformative than another.

Towards a definition of Mobility Hegemony

The aviation lobby is framing itself as a sector that is energy efficient, as well as socially and economically sustainable. The sector relies heavily on technological improvement to address the climate footprint of aviation and denies the need for behavioural- or systematic changes (Gössling and Peeters, 2009). For example, the United Aviation (2018) webpage states that:

> Aviation provides the only rapid worldwide transportation network, which makes it essential for global business. It generates economic growth, creates jobs, and facilitates international trade and tourism. … by facilitating tourism, air transport helps generate economic growth and alleviate poverty.

However, it is not written in stone that aviation (or mobility) is *the only* (or the best) way to generate economic growth or that economic growth automatically alleviates poverty. Still, politicians keep giving priority to aviation due to its assumed (national) economic and social values such as individual freedom and progress (Nikolaeva et al., 2018). In a larger context, the prioritisation of aviation can be related to the idea of ever-increasing prosperity through (more) mobility (Essebo, 2013). Another relevant parable is the neoliberal tendency to commodify everything (Harvey, 2007). In the case of mobility, it has become a trend to collect experiences and places, for example, using so-called scratch maps on which visited places are highlighted and displayed.

Urry (2009), claims that we now live in a mobility complex where some humans have become extremely 'mobilised'. This global elite have had their preference and consumption of pleasure, work, friendship, and family life reinvented to an extent where they no longer need to take time and space into account. Hence, mobility has become equal to personal preferences (Urry, 2009). Geels et al. (2011) highlight that the mobility regime relies on landscape trends such as globalisation and increasing world-trade; increased individualisation and rootlessness; a large and rapidly growing tourist sector; growing wealth; and, the creation of a network society where contacts are becoming increasingly more important.

Summarising these theoretical insights, I conclude that Mobility Hegemony is constructed by: free-market capitalism and the idea that globalisation and increasing world-trade will bring more prosperity; neoliberalism and the commodification of time and experiences; the tendency of individualisation, 'rootlessness', and the importance of having a broad social network; belief in ever-

increasing technological advancements; and, the belief that (increased) mobility enhance social- and economic sustainability.

The role of language

Within the post-structuralist, or language-oriented perspective, reality primarily exists through language or other 'signs' which builds up' discourses' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). In this ontology, the epistemological emphasis lays on how subjects interpret 'reality' and how reality is given meaning through discourse. Scholars, such as Mouffe and Laclau, often used discourse analysis to illustrate ideological elements behind something 'taken for granted'. With discourse analysis, it is possible to deconstruct all forms of communication, for example, 'texts', 'grammar' or 'images' into 'nodes'. A discourse can be understood as a set of nodes (points of intersection) arranged like knots in a fishing-net, where the net represents a set of stories about how the world works (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). However, from the post-structuralist perspective, discourses are not static nor objective, but the products of ideological struggle where interest groups fight over the meaning of each node (Martin, 2013).

As previously stated, cognitive and brain science supports the idea that most reasoning is happening on an unconscious level, and as communication is the tool available to influence the subconsciousness, it becomes a tool of transformation. For example, the synapses in the neural circuits are made more robust, the more they are activated. Hence, the use of coherent (ideological) language creates secure connections between synapses in the listener's brain with the consequence that a storey repeated often enough in slightly different ways will ultimately be understood as 'common sense' (Lakoff, 2010).

Within sociology, a coherent story about how the world works is often called a 'narrative'. Typically, a narrative has a beginning, middle and end and is stated in a causal form such as x does y, and the result is z (Adger et al., 2001). In this process of painting a coherent picture of reality, the narrator generally removes any contradictory elements from the claim, and the narrative thereby reduces ontological complexity (Hajdu & Fischer, 2017). In my research, I use the term narrative to describe a coherent story about why one should not fly.

I use the term frame to refer to ideological components that may be activated through a narrative. Frames are similar to narratives in the sense that they chose a part of reality to highlight. However, a frame can be slightly broader than a narrative and encompass several coherent narratives. Defining frames, Entman (1993:52) states that:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe ...

From a transformative language-perspective, narratives are important because they have the power to activate ideological frames that can facilitate or hinder change. Lakoff (2010), suggests that the way to create change is through talking on the level of values and morals. It is through going on the offensive and creating new frames that the understanding of an issue can be changed (Lakoff, 2010). In the case of aviation, change agents would have to construct background frames which, when activated, makes people associate, for example, their free time with social engagement rather than tourism. Negating a frame is unwise as the response will activate the original frame and hence also the discourse behind it (Lakoff, 2010). For example, stating that: "aviation does not create cultural understanding" still activates the linkage between aviation and cultural understanding.

In summary, to narrate is to create a story. This story may activate an ideological component which I call a 'frame'. A set of ideologically coherent frames working together are a 'discourse'. Discourses are always ideological, and they are constantly at war with each other over hegemony and the ability to define 'common sense'.

Applying Scott's theory of resistance on the SoGNs, I argue that flight-free narratives can operate on three levels. The first level operates 'inside hegemony' and encompasses narratives that agree with the statements I defined as Mobility Hegemony, but claim that that aviation is not necessarily the best way to cater to these values. This set of narratives has a strategic advantage when criticising aviation in that they rely on the same principles that are used to uphold the practice (Scott, 1990). The second level opposes (at least) some of the frames constituting 'Mobility Hegemony' by stating that increased mobility is not the best way to achieve these social goods. Such critique has the advantage of formulating a counter-vision that may grow in the long term (Sharp et al., 2016). The third level narrates aviation without accounting for the ideological components of 'Mobility Hegemony'. These narratives neither agree or disagree with the claims defined as Mobility hegemony and hence has the advantage of not activating its frames (Lakoff, 2010).

Research design and methods

In the previous chapter, I defined my theoretical standpoint stating that transformation is about shifting hegemony and that change agents can do this through their use of language. Likewise, I defined what I understand to be the hegemonic mobility discourse and stated that it could be criticised on three levels. This chapter elaborates on how I went by the process of analysing the narratives used by change agents collected through focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Finally, in this chapter, I elaborate on ethical considerations, research philosophy and positionality and how they affected my work.

Data collection

Before starting the study, I conducted a pilot study with four sustainability science master students whom I asked to discuss aviation in a focus group set-up. The result was fully transcribed and used to develop the final interview-questions, but not included in this study.

For the actual study, I gathered qualitative data in the form of focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews with flight-free change agents in Sweden. Out of the 17 participants, 14 identified with the initiative "Vi Håller oss på Jorden". Within this group, I interviewed nine participants using focus groups with three participants in each group and five participants individually. I made the distinction based on participant availability and in one particular case on the social status of the participant. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), focus groups should be configured so that participants have the same social status. Besides, I carried out a focus group with three participants identifying with "Flyglarm Arlanda".

During the interviews, I asked the participants a set of questions which they then discussed collectively in the focus groups or the case of the semi-structured interviews; the participants gave their personal opinion. I developed the questions around what I had identified as hegemonic mobility discourse, including: 'aviation problems and solutions', 'time and space', 'cultural understanding and development' and 'globalisation' (see Appendix A for the list of questions and interview guide). During the interview process, I consciously used arguments brought forward by the flight lobby to provoke alternative narratives; hence, I see myself as a co-constructor of the narratives that I have found, and the reader ought to understand them in the light of my positionality.

For the sample, I recruited two of the participants strategically based on their experience. They then recommended an additional four participants (snowball sample) and the additional eleven participants volunteered after I called-out in the flight-free movements various Facebook groups. The majority of the participants were urban living women and age ranged from the late 20s to early 70s.

I preferred focus groups over individual interviews as Krueger and Casey (2001; 5) suggest that focus groups are the most useful method to "[understand] how people think or feel about an issue, idea, behavior, product, or service" as it allows for discussion and interaction. Furthermore, I intended for the focus groups to work as a platform for collective knowledge construction which was why I left room for free discussion. Focus group research: "exists at the intersection of pedagogy, activism and interpretative inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; 545) and were hence useful for the immediate purpose of empowering change agents by having them meeting each other and thereby increase their network and knowledge.

The focus groups each lasted approximately two hours, while the duration of the individual interviews ranged between 30 to 45 minutes. I conducted all interviews in Swedish and between February 19th and 27th 2020. The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed using NVivo 12, (except for in one case where full transcription was not possible due to technical difficulties) and personally translated into English where necessary. See Figure 2 for an overview of the data gathering process.
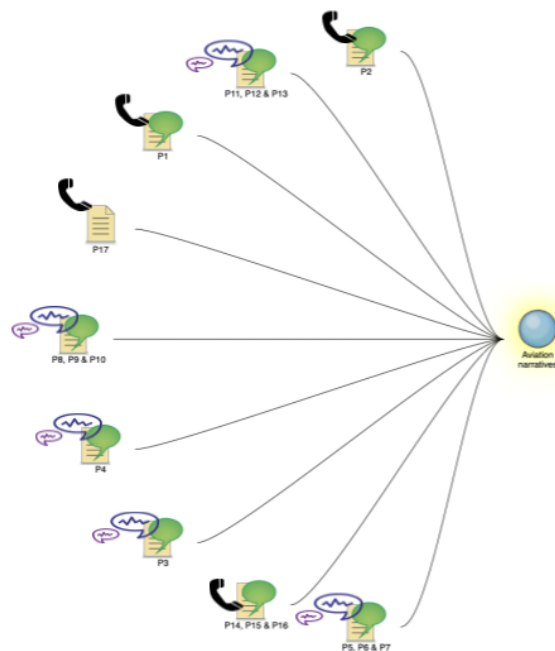
Figure 2. The figure shows the process from interview to narrative. The 'pages' represent interviews and focus groups with the corresponding participant(s) (P). Green' balloons' along the 'pages' represent that the interview had been fully transcribed in NVivo 12. Black 'phones' represent that the interview was conducted over phone or Skype and purple 'balloons' represent that the interview was conducted face to face. The blue circle represent the first level node that I used in the coding process. (Image made using NVivio 12).

Data processing

I coded the transcribed interviews in NVivo 12. Every time a participant talked about something related to aviation or mobility in general that articulation was coded into the node 'aviation'. I then compared each *piece of text* within the 'aviation' node to what I have previously identified as Mobility Hegemony using the following deductive procedure:

1. 'Flight-free narratives within the Mobility Hegemony'. An articulation was coded here if it: concerned aviation or mobility; 'activated' any of the identified components of Mobility Hegemony; did not object to any of the same frames.
2. 'Flight-free narratives objecting the Mobility Hegemony'. An articulation was coded into this category if it: concerned aviation or mobility; 'activated' any of the identified Mobility Hegemony components; objected to any of the same components.
3. 'Flight-free narratives outside the Mobility Hegemony'. Articulations were coded into this category if they: concerned aviation or mobility; did not contradict nor activated any of the Mobility Hegemony components.
4. Articulations that did not qualify under any of the above-given rules were excluded.

Judging if an articulation concerned aviation or mobility was reasonably unproblematic. However, to decide if the same piece 'activated' and 'objected' the 'frames constituting the Mobility Hegemony' was an analytical task where I relied on comparing that articulation to the definitions of frames constituting the Mobility Hegemony' provided in the theory chapter. For example, I assumed the part of the content in the narrative 'go online' would activate emphasises on the importance of 'having a broad social network' and 'belief in ever-increasing technological development' as the participants used the words: "business", "communicate", "globalisation", "meetings" and "consume" in a positive context (see figure 3 for a full list of relationships between narratives and frames).

This process was inspired by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 29-30) who have suggested asking what discourse(s) an articulation draws on or reproduces. Alternatively, if the articulation challenges or transforms a discourse by redefining parts of it.

Next, I identified four narratives within each of the three child nodes depending on *how* aviation or mobility was narrated in the articulations. In this second round of coding, I followed an abductive procedure (Lipscomb, 2012). I.e., I relied both on my pre-assumptions of what I would find based on the theory chapter and an open mind for themes that were identified in the process.

The result was composed by twelve flight-free narratives, four within each 'level of critique', see figure 3 for an overview of the data analysis and figure 4 for the full flowchart illustrating the methods. The prevalence of each narrative is shown under results.
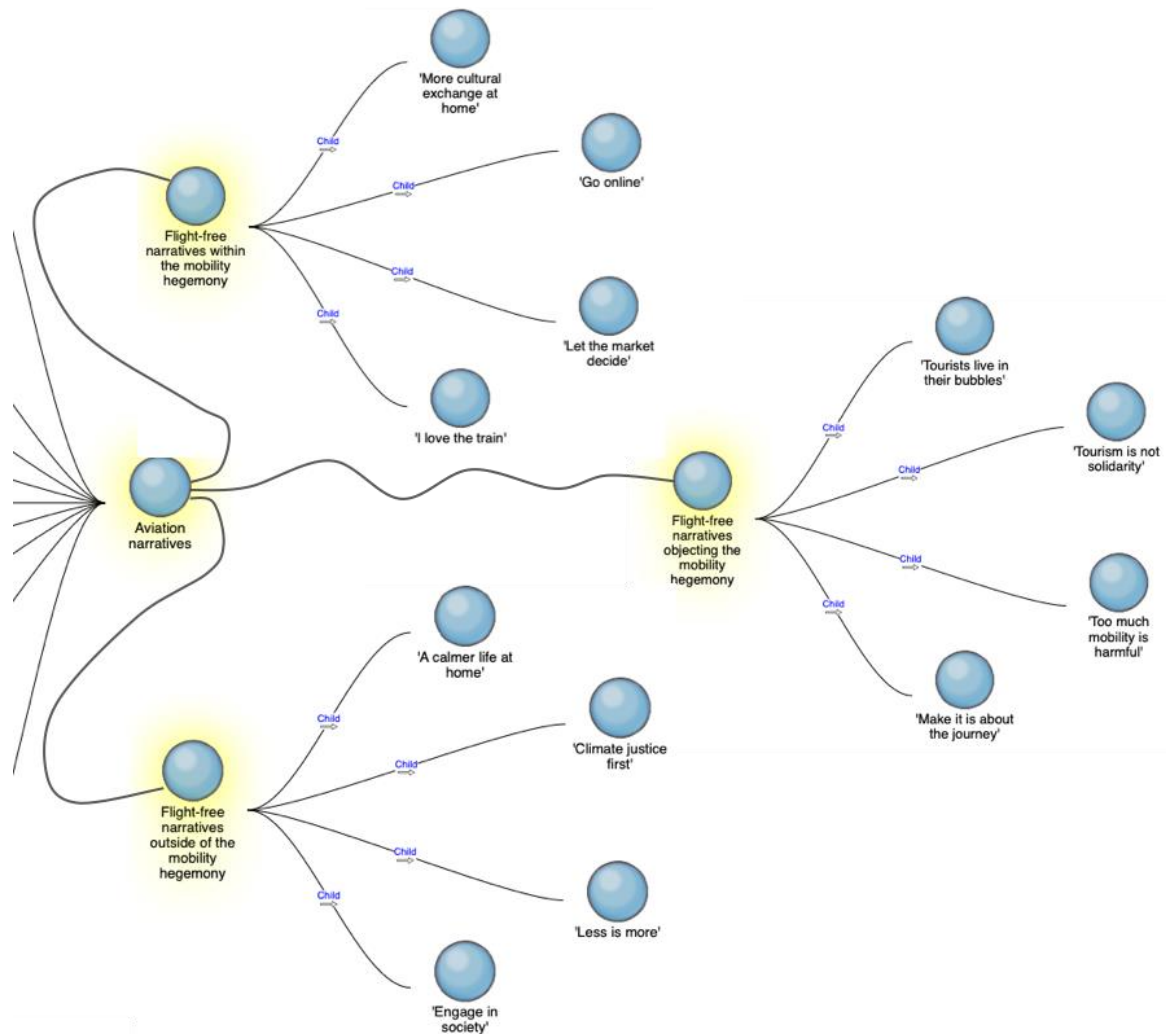
Figure 3. The figure shows the coding process. Starting by filtering out noise I was left with articulations concerned with aviation or mobility. These were then sorted under the three levels critique using a deductive process. The second round of coding developed four flight-free narratives under each level applying an abductive process. (Image made using NVivio 12)

Ethical considerations

Before starting any form of an interview, the participants gave their consent to being recorded and having their answers analysed. I promised them that I would not mention their name and that I would take measures to decrease their recognizability. I informed all contributors about their right to refrain from answering any question and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. In the focus groups, I pointed out that it was not necessary to agree with one another and encouraged the sharing of opinions even if they were different from what the rest of the group opined (Krueger and Casey, 2001).

I estimated that the nature of my study was such that it would not jeopardise the well-being of contributors, despite if other participants in the focus group shared what was said beyond the group.

The greatest risk I identified was that I might unintentionally bring climate anxiety upon the contributors. However, as they were already engaged in the topic, I concluded that to be unlikely. When feelings of anxiety were brought up in the conversation, I informed participants about Ojala's research (2016) that suggests that the best way to handle climate anxiety is to act. Several participants mentioned that it felt good to meet others and talk about the topic.

Research philosophy and positionality

I found the inspiration to start this research from a discussion with an aviation lobbyist from Swedavia who used arguments such as: "aviation facilitated world peace". I soon realised that the arguments brought forward by the lobbyist were by nature, impossible to either verify or falsify (Gilje & Grimen, 2007).

As Geels et al. (2011) recall, scholars still debate the origin of significant historical events such as the Industrial Revolution and the World Wars. I judged that it would hence be impossible to settle a debate about whether aviation does or does not increase world peace. As a consequence, to me, the issue was a 'cultural war', not a matter of finding the right facts (Martin, 2013), and my contribution was to bring up, and theorise about, the narratives used by the change agents.

Faced with a complex and multi-faceted research topic, a qualitative approach was my most practical choice. Moreover, my focus had to be on a specific case in its 'natural context' (Gilje & Grimen, 2007). Furthermore, through my education, job and previous experiences, I had insider access to the change agents of the flight-free movement. I thereby selected a hermeneutic interpretive approach as my philosophical approach (Danermark et al. 2003), and since I was interested in language and the construction of reality, focus groups and interviews were a natural choice.

Though, I considered an experimental approach; what if I asked respondents about their immediate association to pictures of aeroplanes and tourists? Still, after thinking this through further, I realised that knowing more about the associations going on inside the change agents' brains would not be particularly helpful in my quest for transformation.

McCracken (1988) has shown that interview response depends largely on the facilitator, so I tried to be aware of this and used my positionality strategically to build trust between myself and the respondents by stating that I was "on their side". In the ontological debate, I side with standpoint theory (as defined by Sprague, 2005) which states that objective reality exists, but humans always interpret it through 'filters'. Furthermore, the way an individual sees reality is related to that person's privilege, and position in society and the best we can do in research is to be transparent about our positionality.

Results

This chapter presents the answers to my two research questions (RQ): *which narratives are the Swedish flight-free change agents using when criticising aviation* and *how are these narratives framed in relation to the Mobility Hegemony that upholds aviation practices?*

The overarching results showed that all the participants (P) shared the idea that aviation had to decrease drastically to sustain the environment, as technological development and carbon offsetting was not sufficient to solve the problem: "I have realised that carbon offsetting is not working" (P4). However, when faced with the arguments used to defend aviation, the participants responded with different arguments and hence created different narratives about aviation. Figure 4 provides an overview of the narratives and how I linked them to 'hegemonic mobility frames'. Figure 5 shows how many articulations were coded into each narrative and hence where the conversation mainly took place.
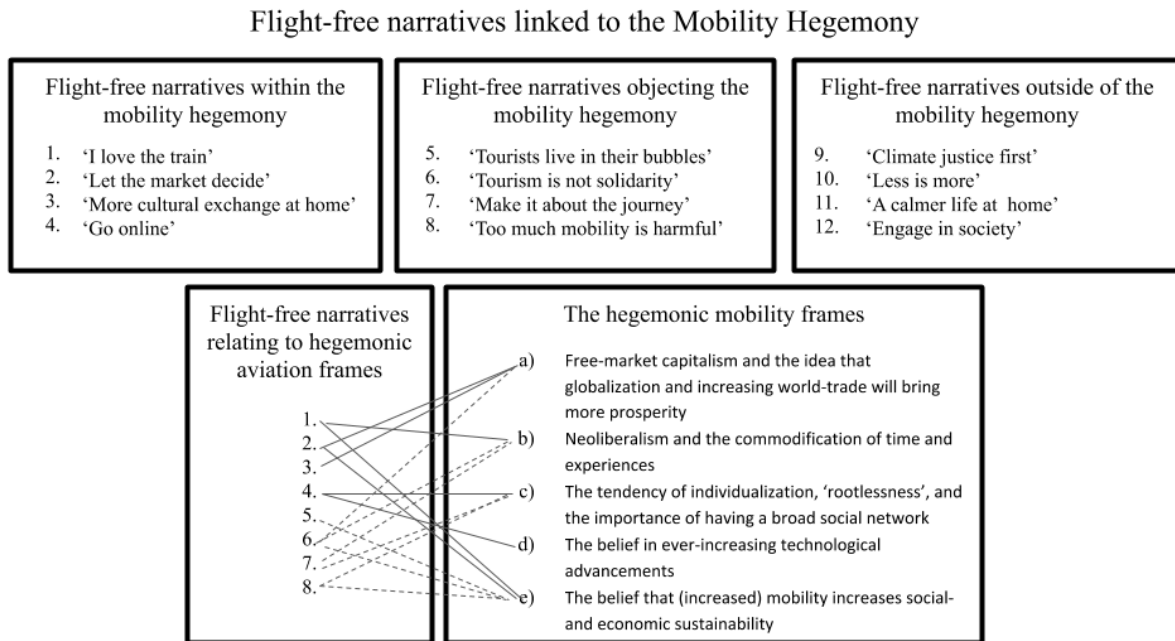
Figure 4. An overview of the flight-free narratives I identified through my interviews and focus groups and how I see them linked to the 'hegemonic aviation frames'. The lines are filled in the case of the narratives within the mobility frames and dashed for the narratives that object the frames.

Flight-free narratives and how often they were used
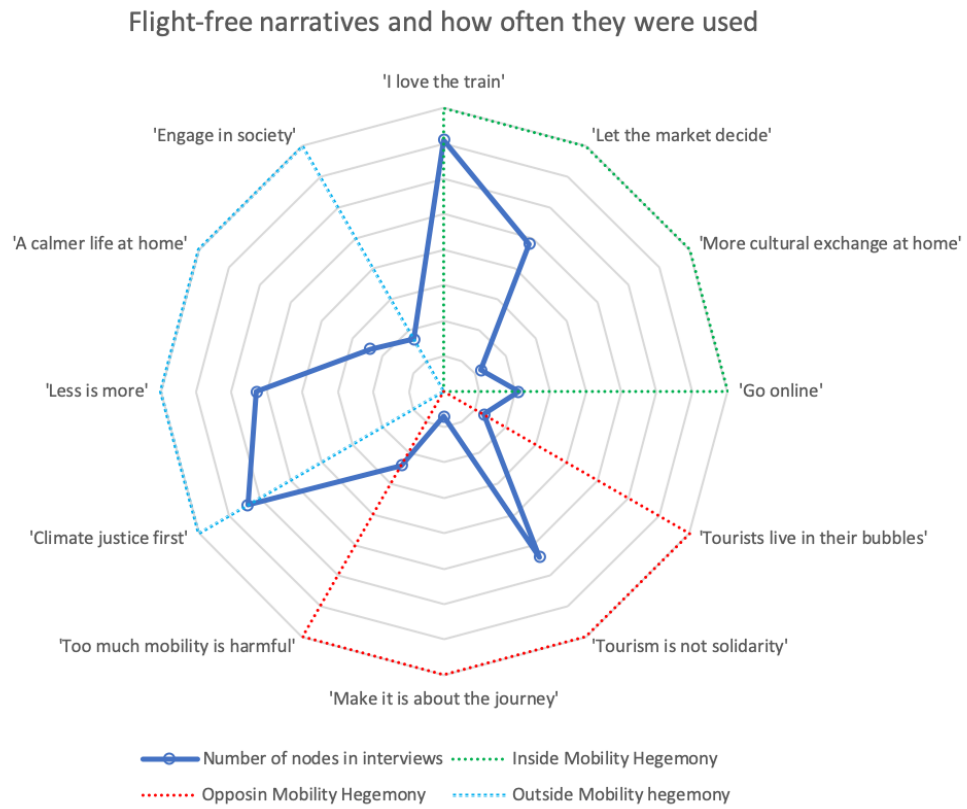
Figure 5. The number of articulations identified in each narrative. The graph places the flight-free narratives in three levels of critique and shows that a majority of the conversation took place in the 'I love the train', 'let the market decide' 'tourism is not solidarity', 'climate justice first' and 'less is more' narratives. Made in Excel with data from NVivo (see Appendix C)

Flight-free narratives within the Mobility Hegemony

An articulation was coded here if it: concerned aviation or mobility; 'activated' any of the identified components of Mobility Hegemony; did not object to any of the same frames.

'I love the train'

The 'I love the train' narrative was the most common. Several participants highlighted that they: "love to travel" (P10) and have travelled: "a lot" (P4) in the past. However, at some point, they had come to the moral conclusion that they had to give up flights to mitigate climate change: "… a minimum is halved emissions before 2030, and with a growing population, flights for pleasure need to disappear. Otherwise, we will not make it." (P13). It was essential to focus on aviation as: "…[aviation] in Sweden accounts for almost 10 % [of GHG emissions]…" (P14). On a personal level, aviation account for: "30-40% [of personal emissions] per year" (P8). The impacts were exemplified as: "[o]ne trip from Sweden to Thailand … melts 7 square meters [of ice] in the Arctic, per person." (P12). Furthermore, the expected: "… the huge problem is growth in aviation." (P13).

However, within this narrative, it was aviation and not increased mobility that was problematic. For example, P4 explained that they had enriched themselves through travelling and: "seeing different cultures". Travelling had made P4 into a better person and even given them a: "better understanding of other people…". P3 made a similar point about the connection between travelling and cultural understanding: "… it is a little harder to hate people who look different if you yourself have been somewhere where you look different." Cultural exchange was: "the best argument for continuing flying … [as] it is good for peace and humanity …" (P4). Meeting people from other cultures made one understand them better and thereby reduced the risk of conflict; it even: "leads to some kind of world peace" (P8). Alternatively: "… of course, it is good if we can maintain as good communication as possible…" (P13).

Some participants recalled the risk of alienating the general public if one used a too radical narrative:

"I alienated more than what I was offering hope. It became very problematic with some of my close friends… Nevertheless, I think we found the way back to each other when I started talking about it in another way… 'I love the train; here I am travelling on the train'…" (P12).

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P9 stated that: "… trains are much more social because people are more open. … so many people I met on train trips, much more than on flights…"

When asked about the advantages of travelling, it was pointed out that: "… you might not get the same insights if you have not been there …" (P14) and: "… meeting people far away, for example, for international collaboration on a political level …" (P15).

Interestingly, P7 showed how it was possible to agree with the claim that mobility increases cultural understanding, but still criticise aviation:

> … now, we have to use that understanding [that we have gained from travelling] [and] make the decision not to fly. That is the ultimate consequence of some kind of globalism, that we take responsibility for each other and that we do not continue to fly …

'Let the market decide.'

Some participants narrated aviation as a wasteful way to manage resources: "… it is about the Earth's resources and that they should not be wasted away …" (P13). For example, when comparing how far a person would get with the same input of energy per person: "… aviation is the most wasteful way of travelling." (P13). Aviation would still be wasteful even if aeroplane fuel would be replaced by electricity as: "… the batteries use lots of minerals …" and "… you still have to produce the electricity." (P16). "Before I used to think that when electric cars become cheaper, I will have a car again, but now I see it as a matter of resources." (P13). Besides, biofuel was narrated as problematic by many participants: "… if we fly less, there will be biofuel left for other important things. Alternatively, in the words of P15: "… even if we get green electricity, there are lots of other industries that are going to need it. … one wants to electrify the cars and the industry. It is easier to just travel by train." For P4 biofuel and aviation was: "… an equation that could not be solved."

It was also possible to question aviation based on time-maximising rationality. For example, P4 said that for short-distance trips (Stockholm-Malmö) the 'door to door' time could be equal or less if travelling by train. According to several participants, trains generally provided better facilitates to work while travelling and was thereby a better use of time:

… I also often use the travel time to do things on the computer or read a book or do things that I would otherwise do at home in my room. So, I do not see it as losing so much time in the end. (P9)

P1 said that they could work on the train and that:

… people are fooling themselves thinking that it is faster to fly … you have to get to the airport, and you have to get through the security check, and then you have to fly and then you have to get out of the airport.

The point here was that one could work during the whole train trip; whereas a flight does not offer the same possibility to work, due to its multiple stages.

Another angle of this narrative was that aviation is not: "carrying its own costs" (P2). "There is no carbon tax on aviation… [and] the fuel is subsidised" (P2). P9 said that: "there should be some kind of carbon tax … then you would pay the actual price." The same was true for the infrastructure behind aviation: "[n]ow they are expanding Arlanda airport… it is very subsidised." (P5). If aviation were to carry its costs, the sector would compete with other transport sectors such as trains in a fair way, and the results would be that: "… other forms could outcompete aviation." (P2).

Within a business context, P4 explained: "… one flies far too much on business trips for it to be necessary … if you look at it plainly in economic terms." For example, it was possible for the company at which P4 worked to send several workers to a fair abroad as they could fly home the same night. As a consequence, the company ended up sending more people than was necessary: "… if the fair would have been interesting enough, then we would have had the time to send people by train." (P4).

'More cultural exchange at home'

One narrative that emerged in response to the claim that: 'aviation facilitates cultural understanding' was that Sweden and Europe are multicultural societies and that exchange is possible without travelling far (P8). Within this narrative, participants agreed that it was good to meet people from other cultures and that globalisation was desirable: "I am very much in favour of globalisation, I think it gives a more efficient society, and it enriches different cultures…" (P4). However, participants

argued that cultural exchanges did not demand long trips: "I think you meet quite a lot [of people from other cultures] at home" (P4) or: "I do not know if you have to go to China to get it." (P8).

P13 explained: "… there are many ways to meet and get to know people without flying. There are many people around you in your city …". P14 agreed that long-distance exchange would diminish if one removed aviation, but argued that: "… Stockholm Copenhagen is not difficult …". P15 said that if one is motivated to have a cultural exchange, there are good possibilities on home ground. However, P15 recalled that the cultural exchange argument was often a pretext to enjoy oneself: "…what people are interested in is to travel somewhere far away, with the excuse that they should devote themselves to social exchange." (P15).

'Go online'

Many participants talked about how the Internet was far more critical than aviation to maintain a globalised world: "I think the Internet is more important than aviation. … it certainly provides opportunities for people to communicate." (P3). Alternatively, as P7 framed it:

> We have so many other ways to do business with each other and communicate …
> just because we would stop flying; it is not like we would be isolated from each
> other. … there will be even more forums [for interaction] in the future.

P4 pointed out that the Internet and Youtube videos were: "a sort of globalisation that is not depending on aeroplanes." Moreover, it was possible to use technology to have remote meetings: "[t]hat works fine, you can meet over Skype" (P14). P15 also explained that since people who had to meet were motivated to make it work, they would find a way: "[t]he people who are doing this, they are highly motivated and will find ways to solve this with some sort of technology and that technology will probably develop [even more]."

When I pointed out that the Internet: "… also consumes much energy", P4 replied that: "…it is about transforming energy production…" For P4 consuming electricity was not a problem as long as it came from green sources: "[w]e should consume lots of electricity when it provides utility, but we need to produce it with sun and wind power."

P5 added that a free Internet was probably more impactful than tourism to challenge oppressive regimes and work for increased democracy: "… having a free internet has a greater

significance than us travelling there, because the trip probably does not affect the leaders in those countries."

Flight-free narratives objecting the Mobility Hegemony

'Flight-free narratives objecting the Mobility Hegemony'. An articulation was coded into this category if it: concerned aviation or mobility; 'activated' any of the identified Mobility Hegemony components; objected to any of the same components.

'Tourists live in their bubbles'

Several participants questioned the claim that travelling per se would result in a more socially sustainable world since travelling did not necessarily provide cultural encounters as: "… tourists live in their bubbles …" (P9). P13 said that: "… one should not exaggerate the idea that people become good from travelling." For P13, making the world a better place was about: "… actions in everyday life. You can invite the world to yourself …". P10 asked: "… how many people are actually travelling to see other cultures, when they are going on charter trips and stay at resorts?" Similar to the 'cultural exchange at home narrative, P15 argued that if one wanted to get to know people from other cultures, one could meet them in Stockholm, but: "rarely, people do that".

Besides, even though people in the West have been travelling for many decades: "… [we] still experience strong right-wing winds and people are [still] racists." (P1). Alternatively, as P6 put it, the feeling of: "us and them" does not diminish even if you have been on vacations abroad. Perhaps one reason why travelling did not live up to the promise of increased understanding was that: "… Swedes who travel to Thailand are just hanging out with other Westerners" (P1).

In the long run, aviation could even end up creating social unrest due to its contribution to global warming: "I am afraid it is going to be war. …people will not sit at home and simply die." (P3).

'Tourism is not solidarity'

In two of the focus groups, a debate emerged about whether the end of aviation would harm the tourist sector and if so, also harm people in the Global South. P12 agreed with P13 who stated that: "[t]ourism does not happen because of solidarity or charity with the countries of the south …", but P12 argued that development could still be a bi-product of tourism: "… people get a job and see other ways of doing things …". When asked if tourism created social sustainability, P11 stated that it could be correct in theory, but that the vast majority of tourism instead reinforced barriers. P13 filled

in stating that the problem with tourism was that it happened on unequal terms: "… when you pay for service, you pay downwards you buy, even those who backpack and are living [alternatively] end up [doing this] …". This inequality creates a divide between the tourist and the local. In some cases, the result was deeply unethical markets such as the paedophile sex-market in Thailand (P13). P6 recalled: "[w]e have not asked that many times, 'do you think it is great that we are coming'?"

On a more structural level, P13 pointed out that the money spent on tourism mostly ends up among a few people, in particular people who own the large companies providing the 'tourist experience' as a commodity. Furthermore, jobs in the tourist economy are seasonable and vulnerable to global trends, but because they pay relatively well, the result is that other workplaces end up being dismantled (P16).

P14, P15 and P16 discussed that: "[p]eople consume places in a rather unhealthy way …you just go there and are like an outsider looking at and oppressing the locals …" (P14). When being a tourist: "… you do not behave like an equal to those who live there." (P14). For P16, the issue of aviation touched upon the commodification of experiences, and if people were to continue travelling, the solution would be to: "… travel slower and have a different attitude … not just checking off as many experiences as possible …". (This statement links the 'tourism is not solidarity' narrative to the 'make it about the journey narrative'.)

P15 made a statement about how the tourist industry was decreasing diversity and pointed out the contradiction in people wanting to experience places and simultaneously destroying the same places:

> I think it is so ironic that people who like to fly are saying that they like to learn more about other cultures and have cultural exchanges and things like that, but I think it is the opposite, that it [aviation] makes everything more similar in that all airports look the same, and the surrounding environment looks the same, and all the tourist resorts look the same.

The same logic could have been used for environmental destruction. When people travel to see, for example, the coral reefs, they simultaneously destroy the same reefs. P4 recalled that this tendency was part of: "… the whole consumer society …", where: "… you buy your identity, and you buy your time, and you buy everything …".

When asked about: "how a trip can be sustainable", P3 argued that: "… you need to go on an exceptional trip if your money is to help. You might even go and work or start an environmental project

and be there for at least three months." It was important for P3 to: "learn something" and: "get some contacts", if you were just interested in rest you could go to an artificial resort in Germany by train.

P4 argued that among their friends travelling had become a hobby: "… they have it as part of their personality, their image, that they love to fly…". However, they would be just as happy with another hobby: "… I know them well, and I am quite convinced that it is a coincidence that they chose that [travelling], they could do something else and be equally happy." (P4).

'Make it about the journey'

For P12, travelling could be redefined so that it was about the journey, not the destination: "… we often think that the end is the goal, we have to arrive somewhere, but you could also see it as the travel in itself is the goal. Travel slower and see things along the way."

Some participants questioned aviation by rethinking time and space and questioning the idea that it would necessarily be better to travel faster:

> "… when you travel by train, there is plenty of space, and one can move and walk
> over to the bistro car, and it [the trip] becomes more of a thing. I stop in more towns
> along the way. I make more out of the journey." (P10).

P12 explained that the memories they had from long trips on the other side of the globe were: "like bubbles in my memory" and that: "[t]here is something quite sick about going into a tube and … [arriving at the other side of the globe]." (P12). In contrast, if one saw the landscape changing from a train one could: "… understand how things are interconnected" and get "a completely different relationship to the place." (P12).

P2 recalled: "[w]e have become accustomed to the fact that it is possible to travel quickly by air. We save time, but we destroy our planet." Therefore, P2 argued, "… we need to rethink how we value time." P2 also stated that it would be better to have a society that expects less from the individual in terms of performance and expectations.

'Too much mobility is harmful'

Within this narrative, increased mobility did not only impact social relations on a global level as in the 'tourism is not solidarity' narrative, but the focus was on the impacts of mobility on a national-

and personal level. For example, P14 elaborated on how the countryside in Sweden is becoming depopulated due to aviation: "… in the mining industry people fly into work, and they do not live there [in Kiruna] …" According to P14, it would probably have been better for the locals in Kiruna if they did not have the fly in and fly out workers (P15). On the other hand, P15 recalled: "… the same is true from the other perspective as well" as it could be desirable for the rural population to have access to aviation and enjoy more mobility.

Access to mobility could also impact personal relations as it came with the demands to travel. P15 said that: "… if you can travel somewhere within an hour, you are probably expected [by your boss] to do so.". P14 agreed: "… you are expected to commute." P15 then exemplified:

> I know a couple in Piteå, they have children … the dad works in soil engineering, construction engineer, and he flies five days a week, he works on Gotland. (P15)

The point was that as mobility increases: "… you are expected to be more ok and flexible with that [being away from family]" (P15). All participants in the focus group agreed that, generally, the man is the one who commutes by air, and that leaves the women with more responsibility for the home. P14 pointed out that: "… it happens even though you are commuting by train. But it is possible to commute more [with aviation]. Longer distances." P15 then continued with another example:

> … he [a friend of my boyfriend] got a job in the Czech Republic, and it is like, 'that is cool you can work in the Czech Republic and be away from your family because you can fly home' [whenever you want to].

The story ended with the man finding a new girlfriend and abandoning his child. Although P14 and P15 were careful not to moralise about that, they still agreed that it was probably not suitable for families that had a similar situation.

Although this data was collected before COVID-19 became an essential topic in Sweden when asked about potential problems with aviation, P1 mentioned the epidemic as an argument against travelling: "… not aviation in general, but travelling is problematic, you can see it now with the spread of the Coronavirus." If this study would be replicated after the epidemic, public health would probably be a strong argument against excessive mobility.

There was also an environmental concern about mobility within this narrative. For example, P7 remembered seeing a program on the television where two teams had to travel to Spain, one by train and one with aviation and as the destination was an island the emissions ended up being more or less the same: "… those who went by train had to take a ferry …so they emitted as well…" (P7). At the end of the show, it was stated that: "… even a train trip like this cannot be made [within your climate budget] every year." (P7).

Flight-free narratives outside of the Mobility Hegemony

Articulations were coded into this category if they: concerned aviation or mobility; did not contradict nor activated any of the Mobility Hegemony components.

'Climate justice first'

Within this narrative, the impacts of climate change were more important than any potential social benefits of travelling. P1 stated that:

… in the long run, it [economic development] is not helping; the priority has to be to decrease emissions; otherwise, we will not survive. Tourism cannot be prioritised over our survival.

Furthermore: "… climate change will first impact those who are already marginalised…" which made the issue "deeply unjust" (P1). P2 similarly framed the issue: "… if we do not save the planet, it does not matter how much we know about each other's cultures. … the beautiful countries that we love to visit … they will be deserts or burned down forests …".

P13 encouraged a moral framing of aviation and recalled that the question was ultimately about justice: "… it may [or may not] be fun to travel by train, but in my view, it is a moral question, what do we have the right to do and at the expense of whom?". "In Sweden, on average, we consume as if we had four globes …" (P13)

From a global justice perspective aviation was narrated as deeply problematic: "[t]oday, about 5% of the world's population fly abroad once a year. They could not do that if there was justice in the world." (P13). In total: "… only 20% of the world's population flies [has ever been on a flight] …" and "… should all the other 80% fly as much, from where would we get all these resources?" (P10). P2 explained that: "[m]ost people never fly. And, those who cannot afford to fly will often be the first to be affected by climate change." Similarly, P2 stated that:

…if we continue to fly; if we think we are entitled to it, it is as if we say that it is more important that we enjoy Mediterranean warmth in winter, that it is more important that we have pleasure and enjoyment than that the children have a future or that these vulnerable countries have a future.

P13 highlighted that the same injustice existed within Sweden: "… half of the Swedish population is not flying. It is a very resource strong group that is doing it." P5 stated similarly that: "… there are already many people who cannot afford to fly today in Sweden. They are still paying taxes and subsidising aviation which they will never use …".

P2 also pointed out how: "… the rich countries have already made huge emissions for many years …" and thereby added a historical aspect to the discussion. However, for P2, this was not a justification for anyone to continue flying: "I think everyone should stop flying because it is a completely unnecessary phenomenon." Instead, it was in other sectors such as "… running factories or machines with which you build a society." (P2) where it could be justified for the developing world to continue emitting for some more time. P13 also argued that accounting for previous personal emissions was to "individualise morals" which would only make things more complicated.

For P11 and P4, it did matter who flew: "[i]t is hard to argue that a growing middle-class in India should not be allowed to fly…" (P11). "For those who have never travelled, I treat them to make this trip; I think it is important both for them and for society…" (P4). This part of the narrative activated the 'mobility increases sustainability' frame, but P13 replied to P11 that: "[t]here is no room for a growing Indian middle-class to travel to Europe… It may feel deeply unjust, but that is what we are faced with.". P12 added that the true injustice was that the consumption of the rich impacted the poor: "… they cannot cultivate when the droughts are coming …" and P11 and P13 agreed. I, therefore, chose to categorise this narrative as 'outside' Mobility Hegemony.

P13 concluded that climate justice was about the developed countries making "… much larger reductions [of emissions]." While simultaneously, taking responsibility for the individuals that would lose their jobs or otherwise be impacted by the structural transformation: "… it is vital to have good structural support so that new companies can start where people get good prerequisites…" (P13). P11 and P2 highlighted the importance of a just transition: "… we need to address the individuals who will lose their jobs." (P11). Moreover: "… people who work in aviation, they will have to find a new job, and perhaps society should help them to do so." (P2).

Several participants said that Sweden had done an excellent job in transiting from an industrial to a service-based economy:

… when the shipyards and the textile industry disappeared, we made structural changes … there are winners and losers, but if you have a welfare society no one ends up on the streets, and if you have a good labour market policy, then people will find new jobs. (P13).

… I worked as an employment officer, and I saw the steel industry in Dalarna. Back then, there were small steelworks that had to shut down, but many small companies came in and took over their venues and employed people … people got an education and work training [for the new jobs] … (P9).

P2 argued that: "… people have to change their jobs. We just have to accept it." The problem for P12 was that: "… many people do not have this [welfare systems] …". Which led P11 to reply that this is why: "… countries must help each other."

'Less is more'

A potential strategy to decrease aviation was to redefine what 'a good life' is. In one focus group, such discussion started when P11 stated that: "… it is widespread that [people say that you] … cannot relax in a good way if you do not travel far". This statement leads P11, P12 and P13 to discuss whether travelling provides rest. P12 argued that: "… [travelling] breaks the boredom of the regular job. … you just work year after year, day after day. And then you get holidays and do something else that you think is fun." This claim made P11 reply: "… it is not obvious to me that the most restful way to spend [holidays] is to go somewhere else. I think if we really want to rest, then we should stay at home …" P13 agreed that although travelling might be exciting and fun, it is not necessarily relaxing: "I think you probably have to go a little closer to yourself [not just escape to avoid burnout] …".

Within this narrative, a system shift was necessary so people would no longer need to travel somewhere far away and: "panic rest" (P13). Instead, one could: "… incorporate rest and meaningful experiences in everyday life." (P13). That way, one could avoid falling into a position of: "… two weeks where you need to rest …" (P13). P13 exemplified that: "… just exchanging two words [with someone] can be quite meaningful when they land right. You can recharge energy in different ways."

According to P14, P15 and P16, all forms of movement outside of the city where one lives was tourism and hence problematic, no matter how one travelled: "… tourism will be tourism …" (P14). However, if one travelled slower and by land: "… it becomes a more natural mix with people who travel shorter distances …" (P15). In this way, commuters and tourists mixed more and tourists better blended in with the rhythm of the city compared to air travelling which took place: "outside [the city] and for a [specific] group" (P15). Furthermore, aviation allowed for a form of destructive mass-tourism that would not be possible if people travelled by land (P16).

P7 gave an example of how a slower life could be meaningful: "… we borrowed a car and went to Varberg [approximately one-hour trip]. For us, it was one of the best days [that summer]. … If you are used to less, then when you do a small thing, it feels like luxury …" P7 then continued: "… it sounds crazy when I talk about it with the people around me, for them this is nothing special … I feel boring, but it was a memory [from] that summer." P6 responded saying that: "… we who are born in the 50s and 60s, our parents were right all the time … You know, how they used to wash the plastic bags and repair the socks and how they were saving …".

'A calmer life at home.'

This narrative used a combination of national romanticism with changed social norms and a more relaxed lifestyle to argue that it was desirable to travel less. P1 explained that: "[t]o a certain extent, it may be possible to find sustainable solutions for aviation … but, it has to be more expensive so that people choose another alternative or stay at home or at least travel less." P13 questioned whether one needed to: "… see the world more than one time …?" and stated that they "… questioned the tendency of travelling a lot". P17 reminded that the flight-free movement has to be inclusive: "… from a class perspective, it is important not to exclude those who cannot afford to go on train vacations [by suggesting they replace a flight with an expensive train trip]."

For some participants, the increased 'need' to travel that Swedes experience, linked to problematic norms and expectations in contemporary society: "… in Sweden, there are many who travel to rest up from their shit jobs …" (P14). Therefore, the solution would be to create a society where people did not have to "tear themselves apart" (P14). For P15, travelling to get rest was a matter of norms: "… people think that this is what you should do because it is the norm …". Hence, their solution was to regulate the aviation sector as that would enforce new norms: "… you get another norm, they [the people who fly] find other ways to rest and will probably be happy with it …" (P15). P2 pointed out that the need to visit family abroad was created by aviation in the first place. P2 further stated that "… it is not a human right to fly and visit [family]." P2 also added: "…the best trip from an

environmental perspective is the trip that does not happen. … the priority must be to save the planet after that; people can do what they like to do."

Spending more free-time at home could benefit both the individual and the group: "I have been at home now, you get to know your own city much better and kind of explore stuff." (P14). As more people stop flying, life in Sweden would potentially be more enriching for everyone:

Stockholm is … much deader in July, or just overall, because all the fuckers are travelling. My point was, think if all these people were home partying in Stockholm, it would be much more fun. I think more things would probably happen at home if people did not leave. (P14)

P13 stated: "[e]verything related to tourism is a cultural project. It is about when you are free … it becomes a cultural question.". Previously, social status has been: "a car at the driveway" and today: "it is travelling" (P13). For P13, the solution was to "… free yourself from the status hunting [and feel well at home]."

P5 elaborated on the tendency that "…we should travel somewhere else" and stated that: "… one can wonder what kind of society we have created where people need to leave."

Furthermore, P9 recalled: "… we have a beautiful country which we can also spend our holidays in. … nowadays I feel like I might just as well hike in Sweden …". P13 said: "… I like having decent seasons and that you follow them … [when travelling abroad] I get the feeling that you break the seasons apart …". P11 agreed: "… there is something fantastic about Sweden in that we have the seasons … this tingling feeling when spring is coming …".

'Engage in society.'

This narrative framed the traveller and the tourist as a consumer who did not participate (sufficiently) in society or produced social goods. For example: "… when you are a tourist, you are mainly a consumer; when we are at home we can be engaged [in society] …" (P11). P13 explained that it was acceptable to spend some time as a consumer, but that it became "unsound" at some point:

> … people who spend much time travelling, they become very, very consuming people
> instead of being active citizens of the community … [they fill] their lives [with travel]
> instead of taking their responsibilities. (P13)

Staying at home would not automatically make people engage more in society, but it would provide them with the time to do so: "[e]veryone can take climate leadership … it is about living reasonable and fair both to prevent your emissions and to be trustworthy and thereby being an opinion maker …" (P13). Similarly, P14 said that "I think more things would happen at home if people were not travelling away." To this, P15 replied that the people could engage in festivals and P16 filled in that they could engage in a climate campaign. This narrative linked to the 'a calmer life at home' narrative in that it encouraged people to spend their free time at home, but differed in that it gave the concrete example to use the time otherwise spent on travelling to engage in civil society. P5 got inspired from the focus group discussion and shared: "I will start doing more than what I am doing today. There is room in 'Vi håller oss på Jorden' for more engagement."

Discussion and conclusion

In the previous chapter, I identified, named and categorised twelve flight-free narratives used by flight-free change agents in Sweden. This chapter goes further in interpreting the results in light of the previously presented theory and places them in an academic context.

Thoughts on transformation

The study showed that it is possible to apply Scott's three levels of critique to narratives used by change agents and hence facilitate a discussion about what level of critique is the most strategic under which circumstances to bring about transformation. For example: the least radical narratives may be more successful in that they criticise the people in power directly (Scott, 1990); the radical narratives have the advantage of formulating a counter-vision which may grow over time (Sharp et al., 2016); and, the 'outside' narratives avoid activating Hegemonic Mobility frames and may construct new frames in which aviation or mobility can be understood (Lakoff, 2010).

According to Lakoff (2010), a transformative movement should not only avoid activating the frames used by the opponents but also plan and construct the frames necessary for future struggle. If the flight-free movement takes this claim seriously, the narratives used to criticise aviation should simultaneously build frames that allow for a more sustainable life in general. Such thinking connects the topic to a broader question of to what extent it is possible to shift collective values.

However, the thinking of Lakoff (2010) is short of definitions of exactly what words or phrases that should be avoided. I have handled this through defining (and comparing the SoGNs to) Mobility Hegemony. Thinking about this, the act of defining Mobility Hegemony was an act of repetition and activating hegemonic frames. This insight raises a set of questions: how should a transformative movement know what narratives to avoid if they do not define the opponent discourse; who should be invited to the act of defining; and, to what extent should the definition be communicated accounting for that it is in the interest of the movement to avoid activating it?

Reflections

Possible sources of error in this study include the risk that I have not identified all the 'Hegemonic Mobility Frames'. Hence, one or more of the narratives 'framed outside the Mobility Hegemony' could potentially activate the ideology behind aviation. Furthermore, the process of creating the narratives reduced the ontological complexity of articulations (Hajdu & Fischer, 2017). It would have been possible to form the narratives in slightly different ways so that they did or did not activate Mobility Hegemony. Figure 4 indicated that the conversation took place mainly 'inside' and

'outside' Mobility Hegemony and that there was a lack of 'opposite' narratives. The could be further elaborated with a larger sample and a more coding process.

Areas of improvement include a more meticulous literature review that more accurately mapped out the hegemonic frames behind aviation. Likewise, the process of comparing SoGNs to the Mobility Hegemony could have been more systematic. An alternative way to theorise about aviation transformation could have been to place the theories in the Multi-Level Perspective (Geels et al., 2011). However, this did not add any apparent advantages, and I hence opted it out.

A possible next step is to test the flight-free narratives empirically. For example, one could design a survey study where the effect of each level critique on respondents perceived willingness to take a flight is measured. It could also be interesting to replicate this study after the COVID-19 epidemic to see how the SoGNs have been affected. Finally, I encourage a discuss about how to avoid activating the opponent discourse when striving for transformation as stated in the previous section.

Conclusion

The study identifies twelve flight-free narratives which, if compared to the (neoliberal) Hegemonic Mobility discourse can be said to operate at three different levels of critique.

The first level encompassed narratives which did not question any of the fundamental ideological components of Mobility Hegemony such as: 'the train is more time-efficient'; 'if aviation was not subsidised or if there was a carbon tax then, the free market would favour more sustainable means of transport'; 'Sweden is a multicultural society and therefore; cultural exchange is possible at home'; and, 'networking and meetings can be done online'.

The second level was made-up by counter-hegemonic claims such as: 'tourists are not interacting with locals'; 'tourism is not happening out of solidarity; 'travel could be about the journey rather than the getting somewhere far away'; and, 'too much mobility can be harmful'.

The third level was narratives operating without accounting for Mobility Hegemony such as: 'climate justice must be prioritised'; 'you can have a better life if you do less'; 'staying at home is the best way to recover'; and, it is more meaningful to engage locally than to travel'.

The analysis showed that although all levels of critique had different strategic advantages, findings from cognitive and brain science support using third-level narratives to facilitate transformation. The results are useful for the field of sustainability science as they provide an innovative method to categorise (and theorise about) transformative language. The flight-free movement(s) may use the results both as an overview of arguments and as a tool to develop their own 'theory of transformation'.

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Appendix A

Interview guide (Swedish)

Välkomna, vi är här för att prata om flyget. Mitt namn är Sebastian, jag studerar klimatförändringar ur ett samhällsvetenskapligt perspektiv och samlar nu in data till min masteruppsats vid Lunds universitet. Vi vet att flyg är ohållbart ur ett miljöperspektiv och att de grupper ni är engagerade i har varit delaktiga i att skapa en debatt kring det i svensk media. Jag vill ta reda på hur grupper som era bidrar till att ställa om samhället. Forskare kan komma att använda denna information för att veta mer om hur omställning går till och ni kommer förhoppningsvis att ha nytta av diskussionen i ert arbete. Jag kommer att ställa ungefär 10 diskussionsfrågor till er, det finns inga felaktiga svar och det är helt i sin ordning om ni inte håller med varandra om allt. Jag vill uppmana er att dela era åsikter även om de inte stämmer överens med vad andra sagt. Ni behöver inte heller rikta era svar till mig utan känn er fria att prata och diskutera med varandra. Jag kommer att spela in samtalet eftersom jag inte hinner skriva ner allt som sägs medan vi pratar. Efter att ha transkriberat ljudinspelningen kommer jag att radera den och era namn kommer inte att finnas med i den information som jag sparar. Ni kan också när som helst under intervjun välja att inte svara på en fråga eller att lämna rummet. Innan vi börjar skulle jag vilja att vi har en presentationsrunda där alla säger vad de heter och vad ni har för förväntningar på samtalet.

Interview guide (English)

Welcome, we are here to talk about aviation. My name is Sebastian. I study climate change from a social science perspective and am now collecting data for my master's thesis at Lund University. We know that air travel is unsustainable from an environmental perspective and that groups such as yours have been involved in creating a debate about it in Swedish media. I want to find out how groups like yours help to change society. Researchers could use this information to know more about how the transition is happening, and you will hopefully benefit from the discussion in your work. I will ask you about ten discussion questions, there are no wrong answers and it is perfectly fine if you do not agree with each other about everything. I would urge you to share your views even if they do not agree with what others have said. You also do not need to direct your answers to me but feel free to talk and discuss with each other. I will record the conversation because I do not have time to write down everything that is said while we talk. After transcribing the audio recording, I will delete it, and your names will not be included in the information I save. You can also, at any time during the interview,

choose not to answer a question or leave the room. Before we begin, I would like to have a presentation round where everyone says what they are called and what expectations you have for the conversation.

Questions for focus group interviews

	Question in English	Question in Swedish	Time:
	We start by a presentation round. Tell your name, why you are interested in aviation and how you engage with the topic.	Vi börjar med den presentationsrunda. Berätta vad du heter, varför du är intresserad av flyg och hur du engagerar dig i frågan.	**10**
Theme	**Problems and solutions**	**Problem och lösningar**	**40**
a)	Why is aviation not a sustainable mean of transport? Are there other problems except for the environmental?	Varför är flyget inte ett hållbart transportmedel? Finnas det andra problem förutom de miljömässiga?	10
b)	What would need to be changed to solve the problem, and who has the responsibility to realise that change?	Vad skulle behöva ändras för att lösa problemet och vem har ansvaret att genomföra de förändringarna	10
c)	Is there anything valuable about the current transport system that you would like to retain in the future?	Finns det något värdefullt med det nuvarande transportsystemet som ni vill behålla i framtiden?	10
d)	Is it possible to solve the problem with technological improvement? In that case, what needs to be done?	Går det att lösa flygets problem med teknisk utveckling? Vad behöver i så fall göras?	10
Paus			**10**

Theme	Development	Utveckling	20
	What is the role of aviation in developing the Global South?	Vilken roll fyller flyget för att skapa utveckling i Globala Syd?	6
e)	What is the role of aviation in creating world peace?	Vilken roll fyller flyget för världsfreden?	7
f)	What is the role of aviation in creating global justice?	Vilken roll fyller flyget för att uppnå global rättvisa?	7
Theme	Globalisation	Globalisering	20
g)	Is globalisation, as it is done today, mostly a positive or negative phenomenon?	Är globaliseringen, så som den ser ut idag, mestadels ett positiv eller negativ fenomen?	5
h)	Is it possible to have globalisation without aviation?	Går det att ha globalisering utan flyg?	10
i)	Do you agree with the statement "time is money"?	Håller ni med om påståendet "tid är pengar"?	5
Theme	Summary	Sammanfattning	10
k)	Have we missed anything? Is there anything we should have discussed that we did not?	Har vi missat något? Är det något vi borde ha diskuterat som vi inte pratat om?	10
Time total			120 min

Appendix B

Examples of coding

The following figures are examples of how articulations coded as being 'inside', 'opposing' or 'outside' Mobility Hegemony.

Is tourism making the world a better place?

"… people get a job and see other ways of doing things, those who work at the hotel learn about hygiene." (P12)

"This feeling [of us and them], I do not think it has diminished. Rather 'ok, I was lucky to be born here, but they will have to sort themselves out'. That is, even if you have been on vacations …" (P9)

Inside hegemony

Outside hegemony

"… to a certain extent, in theory, I buy it, all the blends and hybrids in our culture that are emerging because we have moved, it is fantastic, all music styles, food everything that comes … but 99% of tourism. … [may even] reinforcing the barriers." (P11)
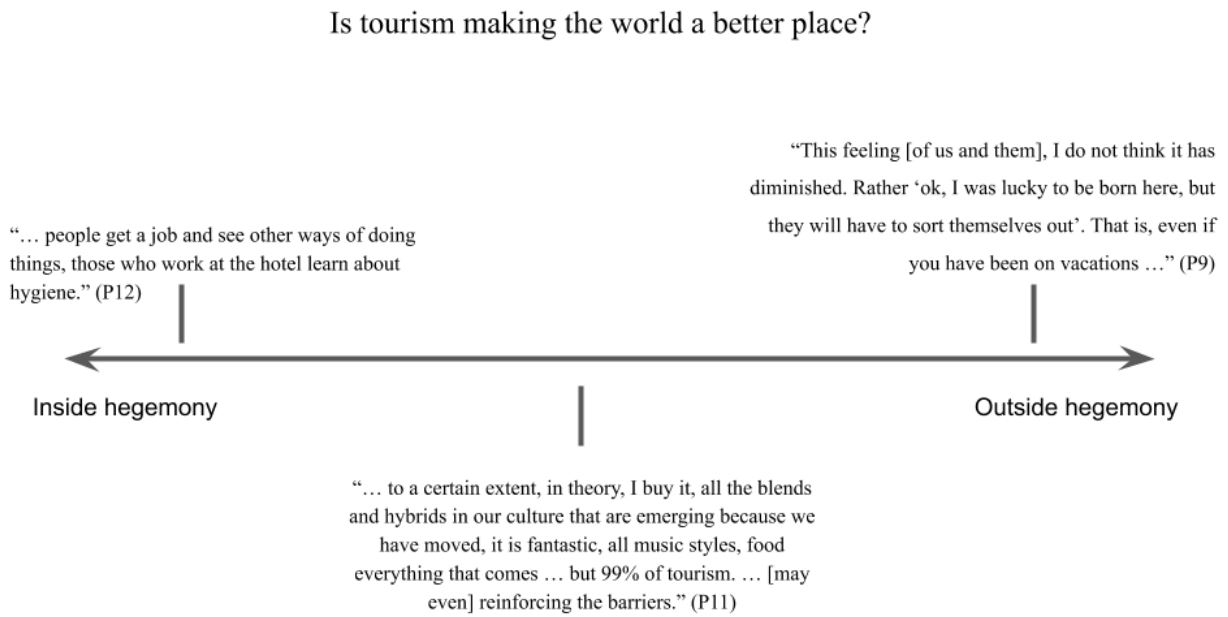
Figure 6. Different answers to the question: "is tourism making the world better?" placed on a scale 'inside', 'opposing' or 'outside' Mobility Hegemony.

Is travelling making the world a better place?

"… the great value of flying, above all the long journeys, is to enrich oneself and see other cultures. I have been to different parts of the world and it has enriched my life, it has made me gain better insights and become a better person, I believe [it has] even given me a better understanding of other people, and I want everyone to experience that. But, it is not possible for everyone to fly." (P4)

"I don't think you should exaggerate it, it is like people become good from reading a good book or good from seeing the world. I'm pretty sceptical of that, I think it's more about actions in everyday life. You can invite the world to yourself." (P13)

Inside hegemony   Outside hegemony

"I think it's good if people get to see other countries and things like that, but I think many people [who are traveling] still don't see anything in any way, you live in your bubble and we all do that…" (P9)

Figure 7. Different answers to the question: "is travelling making the world better?" placed on a scale 'inside', 'opposing' or 'outside' Mobility Hegemony.

How is aviation related to justice?

"First, there is a question of justice. And those who have never flown before and have never been outside [of their country] I really wish them to make this trip and I think it is important both for them and for society that as many people as possible have the opportunity to experience other cultures… "(P4)

"Yes, in general you can say that it is a minority of the earth's population who fly. Most people never fly. So, it is we who are wealthy that can actually afford to fly. And on the contrary, those who cannot afford to fly will often be the first to be affected by climate change." (P2)

Inside hegemony   Outside hegemony

"… it may [or may not] be fun to travel with train, but in my view, it is a moral question, what do we have the right to do and on whose expense?" (P13)

Figure 8. Different answers to the question: "how does aviation relate to issues of justice?" placed on a scale 'inside', 'opposing' or 'outside' Mobility Hegemony.

Appendix C

Number of articulations in nodes

| Narrative	Number of nodes in interviews	Inside Mobility Hegemony	Opposin Mobility Hegemony	Outside Mobility hegemony
'I love the train'	71	80	0	0
'Let the market decide'	48	80	0	0
'More cultural exchange at home'	12	80	0	0
'Go online'	21	80	0	0
'Tourists live in their bubbles'	13	0	80	0
'Tourism is not solidarity'	54	0	80	0
'Make it is about the journey'	7	0	80	0
'Too much mobility is harmful'	24	0	80	0
'Climate justice first'	64	0	0	80
'Less is more'	53	0	0	80
'A calmer life at home'	24	0	0	80
'Engage in society'	17	0	0	80
Number of nodes	408	320	320	320
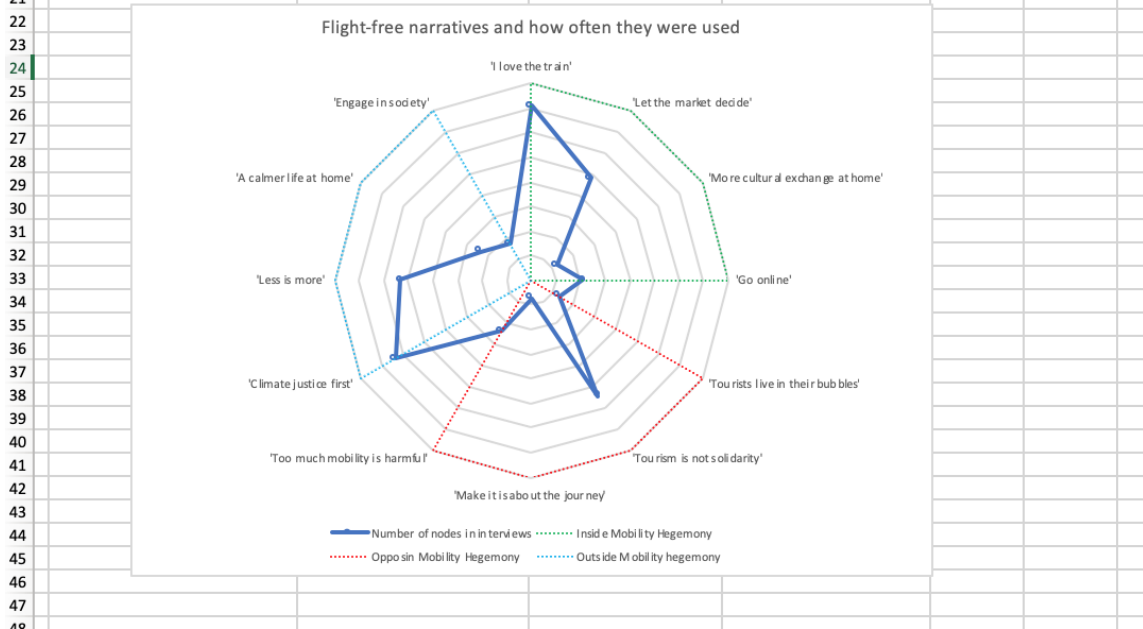
Figure 8. Data from NVivo 12 used to construct the graph showing number of articulations coded under each narrative.