

# Democracy's Infrastructure

THE ROLE OF PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS IN  
FOSTERING CONSENT

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*Democracy's Infrastructure: The Role of Procedural Fairness in Fostering Consent*

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The poet Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (1651-1695) claimed that much philosophy could be learned from cooking. Cooking may indeed teach us something about life and its meaning, but it may also yield insights about dissertation writing. In order to minimize the time between starting a meal and eating, I generally begin cooking well before I have prepared all the ingredients and sometimes well before even selecting all of the ingredients. This strategy entails certain risks, like for example that the onions burn before the other vegetables are chopped and ready to join the curry. Or that as the dish takes shape on the stove and in my mind, I discover that key ingredients are not present in the pantry. Luckily, dissertation writing spans such a long period of time that most such glitches find a solution. In the meantime, however, advisors, friends and loved ones have come to the rescue in multiple episodes of burnt onions and missing ingredients.

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# 1 The Empirical Study of Consent

On 1 July 2000, suspended some 60 meters above the sound joining the Kattegat and the Baltic Sea, King Carl Gustaf of Sweden, together with Queen Margerethe of Denmark and 10,000 invited guests, celebrated the completion and inauguration of the Öresund Bridge. One intended 'guest' at this momentous historical event had, however, missed the proverbial boat. According to a decision by the Swedish government in the early 1980s, the inauguration of the Öresund Bridge was also to mark the completion and inauguration of an upgraded and modernized West Coast Line, the railway connection between Malmö and Göteborg. The modernized railway, together with the bridge, would facilitate European integration, shrinking the distance between Sweden and continental Europe, as well as providing needed infrastructure for environmentally sustainable economic growth along Sweden's west coast. In July of 2000, however, the West Coast Line, rather than being ready for inauguration, remained less than two-thirds complete with several segments mired in controversy regarding the local routing of the new tracks.

Justified in terms of collective needs, primarily regional economic growth and the reduction of fossil fuel emissions, the railway expansion project enjoyed unanimous support from the thirteen municipal governments along the line. The proposed new railway line, a double set of tracks much straighter and flatter than its century old, single-track predecessor, proved, however, to be much more popular on paper than in the local community. Conflicts between citizens and the Swedish National Rail Administration (*Banverket*) arose in many of the towns along the railway line. Local residents filed formal appeals against the Rail Administration's routing decisions and refused to cede property to the proposed new rail, effecting delays in the planning and decision-making process.

The expansion of the West Coast Line, like many political issues, involved conflicts among interests, values, long-term objectives and ideologies. Because of their tendency to embody such conflicts, political decisions more often than not entail losses for some members of the political community, either in the form of benefits sought but not

received, or as direct costs in order to realize a politically defined greater good.<sup>1</sup> The expanded West Coast Line, purported to satisfy regional needs, is considered by many residents along the corridor as a barrier in the local community, a source of risks, and a general nuisance and an eyesore.

Consequently, while the political conflicts and controversies that have arisen in conjunction with the planning and construction of the new rail are contextual and therefore unique, the Rail Administration faces a challenge that is pervasive in democratic governance. This challenge lies in making and executing collective decisions (i.e. wielding authority) in a manner that honors basic individual rights and freedoms. An indispensable element of democratic systems is that citizens have the right to express opinions, to voice concerns, and raise queries and objections in political debates. Even when citizens are not granted a formal role in decision formation (as, for example, in the form of a citizens jury or public hearing), the political system must guarantee their freedom to express opinions, to mobilize other citizens to lobby decision makers, or to enlist the help of interest groups or the media to attempt to amend existing decisions or influence the outcome of prospective decisions. Absent guarantees of such basic liberties, a political system cannot be considered democratic. The opportunity to challenge political decisions through appeals and legal proceedings exist in order to protect these rights.

On the other hand, if the members of a political community *routinely* opt to challenge or obstruct the implementation of decisions they find unfavorable or objectionable, the political system fails at central functions such as providing collective goods and facilitating resolution in disputes among citizens. A society populated entirely of fair weather democrats, who only accept those decisions that go their way, will find it difficult if not impossible to resolve its common concerns. Ideally, therefore, citizens will find it justifiable to accept occasional losses in collective decisions and forego the right to fight for their preferences.<sup>2</sup>

Democratic governance requires, in other words, that citizens find it reasonable to accept, or at least not categorically reject, unfavorable decisions. A political system must, to paraphrase Rawls, earn the consent of its citizens. This brings us to the questions that this book seeks to answer: does the procedural design and character of political decision

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<sup>1</sup> Even the provision of public goods that benefit all individuals in a collective entails a conflict of interests, namely a conflict between individuals' long and short term interests. Though individuals may 'win' in the long term by accepting a decision that leads to the provision of a public good, they may feel that they 'lose' in the short term in having to contribute to the collective effort.

<sup>2</sup> If not, coercion makes up the difference. To the extent that a state fails to induce citizens to accept short term losses in order to ensure the success of long term cooperation, it must resort to the use of force to bring its decisions to fruition. A state that categorically uses its coercive powers also renders meaningless the rights of expression and assembly, and can scarcely be considered democratic.

making play a role in engendering, or undermining, citizens' willingness to accept and acquiesce to decisions with which they disagree? Under what conditions and institutional arrangements do citizens find it reasonable to trust the judgment and decisions of political authorities?

Ample empirical research has explored the link between consent and the perceived fairness of decision-making processes.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, a large body of normative political theory grapples with the question of how political decision processes ought to be structured and carried out in order to be *worthy of citizens' consent*.<sup>4</sup> These two literatures rarely converse, however. The first aim of this study is therefore to address this oversight. This entails teasing out conceptualizations of fairness in decision making, two to be exact, from the manifold normative definitions offered by political theory. The first conceptualization of fairness examined here is citizens' own level of influence in the decision process, a theme in theories advocating greater citizen participation in political decision making (Barber 1984; Pateman 1970; Young 2000). The second definition of procedural fairness draws instead on deliberative democracy theory and deals with the extent to which authorities have responded to public concerns and engaged in open dialogue to explain and provide justifications for selecting one alternative over another in the decision process (Cohen 1997 [1989]; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Warren 1996). The empirical analyses then investigate whether people's assessments of decision processes in terms of these two conceptualizations of fairness play a role in shaping consent.

These efforts will hopefully shed empirical light on some of the claims of these normative theories. In addition, much of the existing empirical work tends to focus on small group settings in which the decision-making authority interacts directly with group members before issuing a decision. The extent to which citizens evaluate and react to decision making in the political arena, when they have not had face-to-face contact with decision-making authorities, is still quite an open question. Much political decision making transpires without citizens' direct involvement; this study advances a more rigorous examination of the theory of procedural fairness under such conditions.

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<sup>3</sup> Much of the empirical research on perceived procedural fairness and its implications for consent comes from the field of social psychology. The seminal works include Thibaut and Walker (1975), Lind and Tyler (1988), and Tyler (1990). Chapter five discusses the findings and the gaps in this research.

<sup>4</sup> All normative democratic theory deals, at some level, with the question of how political decisions ought to be made. Political philosophical debates regarding deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, direct democracy, representative democracy, and the role of experts in political decision making all center around the question of procedural fairness, normatively defined. Democratic theory seeks to define the attributes, however abstractly defined, that render political institutions or systems legitimate. While these theories tend to disagree on the exact definition of legitimacy, all definitions that I have encountered encompass the notion that legitimacy means that an authority is worthy of popular consent.

In particular, this study tackles the following questions, which, I argue, remain un- or at least under explored in empirical research: Does the perceived fairness of a decision process foster consent for a decision-making authority and for a decision, even when citizens have not participated directly in the decision process? Which of two conceptualizations of a fair process has a stronger bearing on an individual's inclination to consent: that a citizen feels satisfied with his or her own influence in the decision process, or the extent to which an authority is perceived as willing to justify its actions and decisions? Do assessments of the decision process have a varying role in shaping consent depending on a person's relationship to the issue? And, finally, a question which has received very little attention in empirical research, which approaches to decision making engender more laudatory assessments of a decision-making process, and which prompt more critical assessments? Do, for example, opportunities to participate directly in the decision process enhance citizens' satisfaction with the process?

The modernization and expansion of the West Coast Line provides an opportune case to explore these questions. The fact that the railway expansion entails substantial disruptions and negative consequences for some of the residents of communities along the line renders the case a comparatively tough test for democratic governance. Whereas many political issues lend themselves to compromise among contending parties, that option is more limited when the decision entails selecting a site for a physical structure or facility. A railway line – or a landfill, a power plant, a water treatment plant, or a dam – cannot be divided and distributed so that the burdens are evenly shared among those slated to benefit from the project. Given that the burdens in such decisions tend to fall on small groups of citizens, incentives and opportunities to protest are high. Decisions involving the siting of facilities or infrastructure could therefore be thought of as a litmus test for the legitimacy of a political system. If we can understand what may induce citizens to consent in such high stakes decisions, we may gain insight into the bases of consent in the political system more generally.

The empirical case and data are also uniquely well-suited for an investigation of whether the design of the decision process affects citizens' political consent. A longitudinal panel study of citizens' assessments of the planning and decision processes in the railway expansion project provides the foundation for examining whether assessments of decision processes actually are a causal determinant of consent. In addition, the West Coast Line issue has affected a number of local settings, and the planning and decision process has varied among these local settings. Furthermore, residents of these communities have had varying experiences and degrees of exposure to the decision process. These sources of variation allow for an analysis of the implications of the design of the decision processes for residents' assessments of those processes.

Since the concepts employed in this study have been used in many and disparate ways, a preliminary note of clarification is in order. *Perceived procedural fairness* as used here refers to people's assessments of the decision process along the two dimensions already mentioned above (satisfaction with influence exerted in the issue, and decision-making authorities' willingness to justify their decisions). Chapter two explains these two dimensions in detail, and also expounds on the concept of consent as employed in this study. The term *legitimate* is used throughout to describe political institutions, actors or processes that have earned the consent of their constituents.<sup>5</sup> Finally, *decision process* refers to how the Rail Administration has handled the planning and decision-making regarding the local routing of the new railway line. The contemporary literature surrounding the concept of governance has observed the increasing complexity in political processes, as corporations, private service providers, and non-governmental organizations assume an ever larger role in both decision making and implementation (e.g. Pierre 2000). The West Coast Line is no exception in this regard, yet some delimitation is necessary in order to make the analysis manageable. The actions and contributions of other actors will enter the equation only as possible alternative explanations of citizens' assessments of the decision process.

The empirical analyses in the chapters to follow yield considerable support for the theory that the design of a decision-making process plays an instrumental role in fostering consent to a political institution and its decisions. Both indicators of consent used here—institutional trust, and acceptance of decision outcomes—build, albeit to varying degrees, on assessments of decision processes. Moreover, perceived procedural fairness fosters consent irrespective of whether or not a person is directly affected by or has been actively engaged in the issue. On the whole, authorities' perceived willingness to provide justifications for their actions has a stronger influence on consent than citizens' satisfaction with their own influence in the issue. The extent to which the decision-making authority has engaged in dialogue with local residents and actively informed residents about the railway expansion project are bases for perceptions of fairness in the decision process.

### **The empirical study of consent**

Social contract theory, a strand of political philosophy concerned with finding liberal democratic justifications for accepting authority, has for several centuries contemplated the concept of consent. The driving force

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<sup>5</sup> This usage of the term legitimacy is more circumscribed than definitions which emphasize that a political system must be characterized by internal consistency *and* receive citizens' consent (Beetham 1991) and less philosophical than approaches that define normative theoretical standards which a political system must fulfill in order to be considered legitimate (e.g. Dahl 1979).

in the early debates within social contract theory, which emerged during the formative period of the liberal democratic state, was a desire to reconcile at the most fundamental level the principles of political freedom and equality on the one hand, with the existence of political authority on the other (Lessnoff 1986). If the members of a political community in fact are all free and equal as liberal democratic principles postulate, why accept an authority that sets constraints, commands behavior and resources, and otherwise limits individual freedom to pursue a chosen course of action?<sup>6</sup> The search for arguments to justify the very existence of political authority is today perhaps somewhat anachronistic. Contemporary political philosophers continue, however, to deliberate the properties of political institutions that warrant consent, a theoretical discussion which provides the foundation for this study. The exploration of citizens' own grounds for consenting to political decisions and institutions merits ongoing attention as well, and this for two reasons, one normative and the other pragmatic.

The normative position justifying the empirical study of consent consists of a preference for a political system that relies on less coercion over a system that relies heavily on coercion to implement and enforce political decisions. The tremendous variation in human psychology, behavior and values may relegate a political system that exercises no coercion to the realm of utopia; it is, however, certainly possible to distinguish degrees of reliance on coercion. Ian Shapiro presents a definition of democracy that succinctly summarizes this normative position. Democracy, he writes, is "a means of managing power relations so as to minimize domination" (2003, 3-4) where domination implies "the illegitimate exercise of power." Given this normative point of departure, it becomes imperative to understand not only what reasons a body of citizens *might have* for consenting to political authority, but why citizens *do or do not* consent to existing political decisions or institutions.<sup>7</sup> A clearer understanding of the conditions under which citizens themselves find it reasonable to comply voluntarily with political decisions

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Lessnoff (1986) traces the evolution of social contract theory from Thomas Hobbes through the contemporary literature, which centers around the work of John Rawls (1958; 1971). The answer to the question of why free and equal men should accept the existence of a state has varied. Hobbes offered the answer that a state is necessary to prevent free and equal men from engaging in an endless costly and destructive melee. For Rousseau, the primary justification lies in self-preservation, though he has more lofty ambitions for civic associations as well, such as the transformation of man from "...a stupid and unimaginative animal [to an] intelligent being of a man" (Rousseau 1973 [1762], 178). Chapter two revisits this tradition and its contributions, in order to formulate a basis for empirical research.

<sup>7</sup> This normative position acts as a point of reference with which to justify the empirical investigation of consent. Aside from this, however, the present study strives to be normatively neutral. Procedural fairness presents a plausible source of consent, a theoretical argument that is explored in greater detail in Chapter two. I do not advocate procedural fairness as a democratic panacea, and even less advance a specific normative definition of procedural fairness.

will contribute to a more founded theoretical base for amending political institutions so that they require less coercion to govern.

Independent of normative stipulations, the exploration of the bases and dynamics of political consent to authority has a pragmatic justification that deals, in economic terms, with the costs and returns of the political system. State monitoring of citizen behavior and coercion to secure compliance require expending resources, thereby increasing the economic costs associated with the policy process.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, if *both* voluntary compliance *and* forced compliance are lacking, then the political system fails to implement political decisions, and implies costs to the collective without yielding the benefits of collective goods and dispute resolution. A consenting citizenry increases the capacity of the state to implement decisions and decreases the economic costs of the governing process.

To some extent, this stylized description of the role of voluntary compliance and deference to collective decisions applies to all political systems and collaborative efforts, making consent a perennial concern in coordinating collective efforts. Focus on the dynamics of consent to political authority has, however, varied considerably over time, and tends to attract added attention during historical periods when popular consent falters or in some way becomes a complicating factor in governance. During the incipient decades of modern nation states, intellectual debates exploring the characteristics of political arrangements that warrant consent arose from the fact that the very consolidation of those new states depended on securing the consent and support of the local and regional economic and political elite.<sup>9</sup> Changes over recent decades in the relationship between citizens and the state indicate that waning political consent may be affecting states' capacity to govern, accentuating the need for renewed efforts to understand the bases of consent (Dalton 2004; Inglehart 1997; Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Norris 1999; Norris 2002). Societal and attitudinal changes have resulted in a situation in which a larger proportion of citizens of established democracies have a greater capacity, and seemingly also a greater propensity, to contest political decisions than perhaps ever before.

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<sup>8</sup> It must be noted that the use of force may in many cases be a cost effective means of facilitating policy implementation. If we consider a policy decision to build a dam, forced evacuation would in all likelihood be cheaper than expropriating and offering fair compensation to all affected property owners. With respect to the use of force, the moral objections weigh more heavily than the pragmatic ones. It may also be the case, however, that the use of force erodes the legitimacy of the political apparatus, thereby diminishing citizens' willingness to comply with political decisions and in the long run increasing the costs associated with policy implementation (Holmes 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Holmes (1995), Carole Pateman (1997 [1980]), and Michael Lessnoff (1986) all discuss from different perspectives the varying inclusiveness of the social contract over time.

Perhaps the most significant societal change in this regard relates to the unprecedentedly even distribution of the resources required for political participation and contestation within established democracies today. In Sweden, undeniably at the far end of the equality-and-enfranchisement scale, virtually all citizens receive primary and secondary education, and approximately half of all high school graduates continue to the university level.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, two out of three citizens in Sweden, when asked to assess their own competence in the art and skill of political intervention, state that they feel capable of writing an official letter to protest a decision; less than half of those who received the same question in 1968 felt they had this competence (Petersson et al 1998, 58). An overwhelming proportion of citizens in Sweden today feel that they have the capacity and knowledge to file a formal appeal to a decision; only three percent report that they would not know how to go about appealing a decision (Amnå and Munck 2003, 88). In short, a much larger proportion of people in Sweden have the confidence and perceived competence to mobilize and attempt to influence policy outcomes. Though perhaps more egalitarian than many other countries, Sweden is by no means singular in these achievements.

In tandem with the aggregate increase and more even distribution of political resources, attitudinal trends have further lowered the threshold to political protest. Ronald Inglehart (1977; 1990) examines value shifts in numerous countries and has documented, in particular in affluent nations, the increasing prevalence during the post-War period of an individualist worldview, in which self-definition and individual well-being are primary concerns. Pettersson (1992) offers a succinct summary of this worldview: "Individual judgments of right and wrong, good and evil take precedence over traditional norms and values; the individual becomes more reluctant to accept demands and constraints on individual forms of expression" (Pettersson 1992, 51, my translation).

These resource and attitudinal changes are also evident in political behavior. The number of citizens who report having engaged in some sort of protest action has increased markedly in recent decades. Pooled data from eight established democracies shows that the most dramatic increase is evident in the proportion of citizens who have signed a petition, which rose from 32 percent in the mid-1970s to 60 percent in the mid 1990s (Norris 2002, 198).<sup>11</sup> To illustrate the point further, in Sweden the percentage of people who reported having participated in a public demonstration doubled (from 15 to 30 percent) between 1968 and 1987 (SOU 1990:44, 213). Citizens today are more prone to value their own convictions and well-being to a greater extent than previous gene-

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<sup>10</sup> From census data available at:  
[http://www.scb.se/statistik/UF/UF0205/2004M02/UF0205\\_GOG\\_Tab6.xls](http://www.scb.se/statistik/UF/UF0205/2004M02/UF0205_GOG_Tab6.xls)

<sup>11</sup> The countries included in the analysis were Britain, West Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, the United States, Italy, Switzerland, and Finland.

rations, and are also less inhibited in entering the political fray to advance their own point of view. Studies in the Western European and U.S. contexts indicate that political protest and activism have lost their aura of extremism (Andersen and Hoff 2001, 184; Norris 2002, 196-197; van Aelst and Walgrave 2001).

Without reservation, the trends of increasing political self-confidence and involvement are encouraging to the liberal democrat; the principle of political equality becomes more meaningful as a larger proportion of the populous can exercise the rights of citizenship. A more critical, competent, and active body of citizens holds political decision-makers accountable and leaves less leeway for rulers to govern in a way that advances their own personal interest at the expense of the collective. Broader citizen involvement in political discourse also injects crucial information into the policy process, resulting in more well-founded decisions (Holmes 1995, 21; Owens 2004).

Though these trends in and of themselves signal the emergence of a more vibrant civil society, they may also represent a decrease in willingness to defer to institutions of representative democracy. Several other tendencies confirm this interpretation. Citizens' confidence in their elected representatives has waned in many established democracies since the mid-1960s (Dalton 2004). This trend has been exceptionally pronounced in Sweden, where today less than a third of citizens state that they trust the *Riksdag*, compared to well more than half in 1968 (Holmberg 1999). Political parties in Sweden are finding it difficult to replenish party membership with new recruits, and voter turnout, though still high, has declined in Sweden in recent decades (Pettersson et al 1998, 52). People seem to have become less willing to defer to elected representatives as the custodians of collective decision-making power, and are also less inclined to work within the structure of representative democracy to effect change.

These parallel trends of an increasingly competent and increasingly critical citizenry place new demands on political institutions. The authors of an extensive, government commissioned evaluation of democracy and political power in Sweden drew this same conclusion over a decade ago. After reviewing trends in political attitudes and involvement in Sweden over the past four decades, the authors conclude that: "There is a growing gap between what one could call potential and realized citizenship" (SOU 1990:44, 403, my translation). Citizens, the authors claimed, no longer regard decisions taken by democratically elected representatives as *a priori* legitimate and worthy of consent. The authors suggest that political institutions have been slow to adapt to demographic changes and citizens' expectations of their own role in the political process (SOU 1990:44, 403).

Samuel Huntington and colleagues (1975) struck a more alarmist chord in *The Crisis of Democracy*, choosing to see these trends as a sinister force that might lead to the collapse of democracy altogether.

The authors decried the emergence of a “stratum of value-oriented intellectuals who often devote themselves to the derogation of leadership, the challenging of authority, and the unmasking and delegitimation of established institutions,” that would obstruct the realization of political goals by democratic means (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975, 7). While democracy has yet to cede ground to dictatorship in the trilateral democracies as *The Crisis of Democracy* forewarns, the reasoning brings home the point that economic growth and political development might paradoxically result in a situation in which political institutions no longer satisfy citizens’ expectations.

In sum, political institutions in established democracies must now earn the consent of a much larger sector of society today than previously in history, and evidence suggests that they are not fully rising to this task. The problem is that it remains somewhat unclear *why* citizens in these political systems are less willing to grant that consent. Social science theories suggest several contending explanations that could account for why an individual might consent to a political decision or to a political institution. The following section mentions three of the theories that figure most prominently in investigations of the possible sources of political consent, thus setting the scene for the analytical model.

### **Bases of consent**

*Rational choice* theory suggests that citizens’ consent to authority and decisions when doing so is the most favorable alternative in terms of personal material gains and losses (Gauthier 1986). If a decision outcome concurs with individual interest, acceptance is the obvious choice, regardless of the specifics of the decision process. If the decision is unfavorable, a citizen would choose to go along with it only if the costs of dissenting – the time and resources required to wage a protest but also possible repercussions – outweighed the expected benefits of a successful protest. Rational choice theory would therefore explain the observed decrease in citizens’ willingness to defer to authority as an effect of the gradual decline in the cost of contestation relative to resources available and to expected gains. Citizens fight unwanted decisions now more than before simply because they can. The explanation cannot be dismissed lightly. However, to the extent that rational choice theory provides an accurate interpretation of these trends, it paints a dismal prognosis for democratic governance, as it suggests that liberal democracy contains the seeds of its own undoing.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki (1975) posit exactly this argument. They write: “The European political systems are overloaded with participants and demands, and they have increasing difficulty in mastering the very complexity which is the natural result of their economic growth and political development.” Political institutions have created economic

The rationalist account of public contestation has been a prevalent interpretation of public mobilization and contestation in land use disputes. The epithet Nimby (Not In My BackYard) has become so established that it appears in late edition dictionaries, and is used by practitioners, public commentators and to some extent researchers (e.g. *Slaying the NIMBY Dragon*, Inhaber 1998).<sup>13</sup> The term connotes citizens who mobilize to defend local neighborhoods against the introduction of unwanted facilities irrespective of the local or regional need for these facilities. The Nimby assumption has become less prevalent, however, as mounting case studies of land use disputes reveal the complexity and diversity in such clashes (Boholm and Löfstedt 2004; Burningham 2000; Grimes 2000a; McAvoy 1998; Freudenburg and Pastor 1992; Wexler 1993).

Social justice theories offer a contending set of explanations for why citizens consent or dissent to political decisions. Rather than resulting from a computation of expected utilities, theories of justice suggest that consent derives from the belief that a decision or a political institution, based on various assessments, *warrants* acquiescence. Theoretical discussions of justice have focused on two overarching dimensions that may serve as important bases of consent: distributive justice and procedural fairness.

*Distributive justice* refers to the question of whether a political institution or specific decision advances a distribution of goods and burdens that conforms to some conceptualization of equity or fair distribution. Empirical research suggests that assessments of the fairness of a distribution of benefits and burdens implied by a given decision do affect people's willingness to accept a decision outcome.<sup>14</sup> Distributive justice has also become an increasingly prevalent theme in normative and empirical research on facility siting.<sup>15</sup>

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growth and political development, which has provided citizens with the means to participate and make demands, which now undermine the political institutions themselves.

<sup>13</sup> The *New Oxford Dictionary of English* provides the following definition of a Nimby: "a person who objects to the siting of something perceived as unpleasant or hazardous in their own neighbourhood, especially while raising no such objections to similar developments elsewhere."

<sup>14</sup> Kumlin shows, for example, that people who receive the welfare services they feel they have a right to are more inclined to trust politicians (2002, 225). Experimental research on game-theoretical predictions has observed a connection between distributive justice and consent to a decision outcome. An ultimatum game consists of two players. One is given a sum of money and told that he may offer the other person a portion of that money, and the second person may choose whether or not to accept the offered sum. If the receiver rejects the offer, both players receive nothing. Studies have demonstrated that people tend to reject a proposed distribution of money if they feel the offer violates norms of fairness, even if rejecting the decision means that they are left with no payoff at all (e.g. van Dijk and Vermunt 2000; Nelson 2002; Lopomo and Ok 2001; Nowak, Page, and Sigmund 2000; Page and Nowak 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Critics have pointed out that political decision makers tend to site noxious facilities far from affluent areas and often in areas already burdened with polluting or hazardous facilities (Cole and Foster 2001 review the literature on environmental racism and environ-

The *procedural fairness* theory claims, as the name suggests, that the legitimacy of a decision outcome depends on how well the process leading up to the decision conforms to criteria of fairness (Lind and Tyler 1988; Thibaut and Walker 1975). Liberal democratic theory argues, for example, that the principle of political equality represents an imperative attribute of a procedurally fair decision processes (Klosko 2000). Decision-making arrangements designed in manner consistent with the principle of political equality would then in theory be perceived as fair, and receive the consent of the members of the political community. An acceptable political decision would therefore be one made, for example, by popular referendum, or by elected representatives who give equal consideration to the preferences of all members of the political community in making the decision.

Both the rational choice and distributive justice theories present plausible, and empirically substantiated, bases of consent, and must therefore be taken into account in any empirical investigation of consent. However, these theories offer less viable means of advancing the normative position mentioned at the outset, namely that of minimizing domination in power relations. In fact, it is precisely because self-interest and distributive justice have been shown to affect willingness to accept the outcome of a decision process that it is important to investigate other possible bases of consent. The likelihood of satisfying all parties' preferences and notions of distributive justice in each decision is small. Reaching agreement on the procedures for making collective decisions is less demanding than reaching agreement on a particular distribution of collective benefits and burdens, or finding solutions to collective problems that satisfy everyone's preferences (Klosko 2000). This study focuses therefore on investigating the third possible source of consent: procedural fairness in decision making.

### **The analytical model**

The empirical analyses explore the relationships represented in Figure 1.1. In order to determine whether the design of decision processes actually does have implications for citizens' consent, it is necessary to establish that the relationships illustrated in Figure 1.1 in fact exist, that the direction of causality is not the opposite of what the theory postulates, and that these relationships are independent of other possible determinants of consent. Concretely, in order for the theory of procedural fairness to gain empirical support, we must establish that people

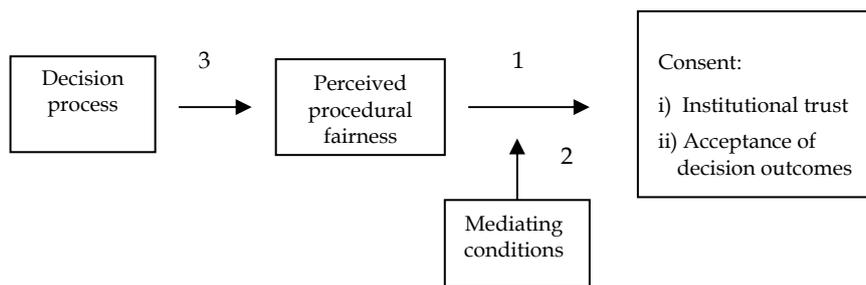
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mental justice). As another example of distributive justice considerations in siting issues, a study of the decision to construct a railway line to the northern part of Sweden has suggested that the decision was in part justified by a desire to provide assistance to a relatively disadvantaged part of the country (Andersson 2004). Chapter four discusses how distributive justice considerations may come into play in the West Coast Line case and how assessments are measured empirically in this study.

make assessments of the procedural aspects of the decision process, independent of their agreement or disagreement with the substance of the issue, and that these assessments play a determining role in fostering or eroding consent. This study employs two approaches to measuring consent: trust for the decision-making authority, and acceptance of the outcome of the decision-making process. These two indicators will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Figure 1.1 summarizes the analytical questions under investigation in this study. The numbered arrows indicate the four main research questions. The first two questions deal with the connection between citizens' assessments of the decision process, i.e. perceived procedural fairness, and the two indicators of consent. Both indicators of consent may build on myriad other factors, some of which relate to the West Coast Line and others not. A major challenge when addressing the first two research questions is therefore to isolate the effects. The third and fourth questions explore how variations in the decision processes affect perceived procedural fairness as well as consent.

Figure 1.1 Analytical model of the theory of procedural fairness



Note: The arrows indicate hypothesized causal relations. The numbers correspond to the research questions, expounded upon below.

The research questions are:

1. Do assessments of the fairness of decision processes foster consent to a political institution and acquiescence to decision outcomes? Which of two conceptualizations of fairness in decision making matters more, or less, for consent: citizens' satisfaction with their own influence in the process, or assessments of the decision-making authority's willingness to provide justifications for its decisions? Considerable research has already investigated this link, but the issue of causality has only successfully been demonstrated in settings in which people have interacted directly with decision makers. This study shows that perceived procedural fairness shapes consent even when citizens have observed the decision-making process as it has played out in the political arena.

2. While the first research question has received considerable attention in empirical research, very few investigations consider the

conditions under which perceptions of procedural fairness might matter more, or less. The second research question investigates several such conditions. Concretely, does the effect of perceived procedural fairness on consent vary depending on: a) stake held in the issue, b) exposure to and involvement in the issue, c) a person's own normative expectations regarding procedural fairness, and d) trust for national political institutions? Understanding whether procedural assessments have varying effects depending on these conditions is crucial to assessing the capacity of procedural fairness to mitigate the need for coercion. If perceived procedural fairness only fosters consent among some people some of the time, then it may not prove to be an effective means of augmenting legitimacy on a large scale.

3. To what extent do procedural fairness assessments build on observations of and experiences with actual decision processes? Which approaches to decision making lead to more positive vis-à-vis more critical assessments? If the responses to the first two questions are to enhance our understanding of the link between political institutions and citizen behavior, we must also understand the factors that shape perceptions of procedural fairness.

4. A fourth question expounds on the third. Do variations in approaches to decision formation have implications for institutional trust and for decision acceptance? The most conclusive indicator that the structure of a decision process matters for citizens' consent is of course if we can detect a direct connection between the two. This last question addresses whether variations in consent can be explained in terms of differences in the authority's handling of the decision-making process.

The first of these questions deals with the implications of perceived procedural fairness, and therefore draws on and seeks to contribute to the growing empirical literatures on political trust and compliance. Research on political trust, primarily following the theoretical work of David Easton (1965), investigates the variations in institutional support over time and across nations, the implications of these variations, and the empirical sources of citizen support for political institutions. This empirical work on citizens' attitudes toward political institutions has identified numerous correlates of political trust – the perceived honesty of political representatives (Rose-Ackerman 2001), satisfaction with government services (Bok 1997; Cusack 1999), perceived personal and national economic well-being (Cusack 1999; McAllister 1999), and perceived fairness in political decision making. Uncertainties remain, however, since many of the findings regarding correlates of political trust are inconclusive regarding whether these factors are causes or consequences of political trust (Stoker and Levi 2000).

Social psychological research on procedural justice has directed more considerable and rigorous attention at determining the effect of perceived procedural fairness on indicators of consent. Experimental research has demonstrated that people presented with a description of a

hypothetical decision process that complies with certain criteria of fairness (e.g. transparency or impartiality) are more likely to accept a hypothetical decision outcome than people who are presented with a description of an unfair decision process (Tyler 1994). Longitudinal studies have also shown that perceived fairness in face-to-face interactions with law enforcement authorities affects perceived obligation to obey the law (Tyler 1990), and that the perceived fairness of court proceedings enhances convicted individuals' willingness to accept a sentence ruling in court (Tyler, Casper and Fisher 1989). While these findings offer credible support for the procedural justice thesis, they leave important questions unanswered. Most of the information that citizens receive regarding political decision-making is not as clear and concise as that presented in experimental studies, and the large proportion of citizens' experience with political decision makers is not face-to-face. What remains uncertain is whether the structure of a real, i.e. not experimental, decision processes has a legitimating capacity in citizens' actual (i.e. not hypothetical) consent to political authorities and decisions, and whether this effect exists even when citizens do not interact directly with decision authorities.<sup>16</sup>

The model implies a stylized form of the theory of procedural fairness: a citizen assesses the fairness of a decision process in a particular issue (as well as of the expected utility of the decision, and perhaps also the fairness of the distribution of benefits and burdens implied by a decision) and then consciously decides whether or not to acquiesce to the decision. The cognitive processes of living breathing people probably deviate from this description on a number of points. It is unrealistic to expect that citizens on a regular basis follow individual policy decisions and make assessments regarding the fairness of the procedural aspects of the decision process, and subsequently elect to accept or reject the decision outcome. Instead, public opinion research suggests that opinions regarding political issues and the functioning of the political process build to some extent on cognitive evaluation, but also reflect a person's political predisposition (Zaller 1992), and that people use various forms of social cues and cognitive heuristics in making judgments and forming opinions (Kinder 1998; Lupia 1994; Tversky and Kahneman 1974).

One significant heuristic for acquiescence to political decisions is political trust itself. Trust for political institutions makes people more inclined to pay taxes (Murphy 2004), comply with building codes (May 2004), and abstain from littering and parking illegally (Tyler 1990). Political trust may therefore play an intervening role between procedural fairness assessments and decision acceptance. In order to keep the analytical lens focused on the theory of procedural fairness, however, this study will not examine the link between institutional trust and

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<sup>16</sup> Chapter five presents a review of this literature.

willingness to accept decision outcomes. Instead, a person's level of trust for the decision-making authority, and his or her willingness to accept the outcome of the decision process are treated as two separate indicators of consent.

*A self-evident thesis?*

Before turning to the discussion of the remaining research questions, this section briefly considers the factors that speak for or against the procedural fairness theory. As mentioned above, liberal democratic theorists have posited that only institutional arrangements that embody and protect the principle of political equality can expect to receive the endorsement and voluntary consent of all the members of the political system. One might argue that it is obvious that trust for a political institution builds on the way the institution handles its decision-making authority. The procedural fairness theory has a powerful intuitive logic in its favor. Why would individuals endorse political institutions that treat them in a way they regard as unfair? Returning to the example of political equality, the logic seems irrefutable. It seems unreasonable to expect that an individual would consent to political arrangements that regard that individual as having lesser inherent worth than other members. Though the liberal democratic argument is not intended as a description of empirical reality, it certainly can be treated as a hypothesis and examined empirically, and there are several reasons to suspect that it might be a poor description of empirical reality.

First, history offers notable examples of individuals or groups who have actively fought to preserve institutional arrangements that do not consider them free and equal members. The existence of women's anti-suffragist movements highlights the fact that individuals' willingness to accept a state may not depend at all on the way in which decision formation is structured. Women in both England (Faraut 2003; Bush 2002) and in the United States (Camhi 1994) waged an organized opposition against suffrage. Political equality is apparently not unequivocally desirable and sometimes apparently provokes dissent. Consent may, in other words, build entirely on other types of sentiments and assessments.

A second way in which empirical reality may depart from the theory of procedural fairness is that the direction of causality between perceived procedural fairness and institutional legitimacy may be spurious or quite simply be the reverse of what is indicated in Figure 1.1. As discussed in Chapter two, both institutional trust and decision acceptance may derive from myriad sources. Research on political communication has shown that people tend to consume information quite selectively, paying more attention to information that supports prior attitudes than to information that contradicts them. In addition, information is filtered through an individual's values and belief systems, also known as political predispositions (Zaller 1992, 22-23).

Citizens' assessments of decision processes may, in other words, stem from political sympathies with or antipathies toward decision-makers, or even from diffuse sentiments toward the political system acquired through socialization (Easton 1965; Easton and Dennis 1969). A person who feels apprehensive about the authority entrusted in political institutions or critical of the structure and workings of the political system will in all likelihood judge decision processes more critically than one who generally trusts political institutions. It is therefore plausible that perceived procedural fairness derives from institutional trust, or that both procedural fairness and institutional trust in this case derive from sentiments toward more well-known political institutions.

Similarly, evaluations of decision processes may also derive from reactions to the substance of political issues and how the various alternatives under consideration might affect personal interests. Rather than forming judgments on the decision process per se, it is conceivable that individuals extrapolate these judgments from their assessments of the issue debate or the decision outcome. Self-interest considerations may, in other words, be the true source of perceived procedural fairness and of indicators of consent. If so, then any observed relationship between procedural fairness and consent would be spurious. In sum, despite the plausibility of the procedural fairness theory, it should not be assumed that it aptly describes the cognitive processes that form political attitudes and behavior. Panel data and care in specifying the models are key components in answering the first research question.

*Does perceived procedural fairness matter always and everywhere?*

The second research question relates to the contingencies of the procedural fairness thesis. Social psychological research on procedural fairness has explored the implications of procedural fairness in various settings, including family relations, students' sentiments toward university administrators, and above all employees' assessments of their superiors at work (Kramer and Tyler 1996; Tyler, DeGoey and Smith 1996; Tyler and Lind 1992). The primary aim of the social psychology research has been to establish that fairness in decision processes is a social psychological mechanism, and can therefore affect the perceived legitimacy of authority generically defined.

With the exception of studies of employer-employee relations, social psychology research has not examined the conditions under which procedural fairness might matter either more or less for consent to political authority. The second research question explores whether the procedural fairness effects observed in answering the first research question depend on a person's relationship to the issue (situational factors) or a person's political orientation (dispositional factors). Situational factors refer to a person's relationship to the issue (the situation), in particular whether or not the person has a stake in the issue, and the degree of exposure to and involvement in the decision-making process.

Dispositional factors refer instead to overarching attitudes not directly connected to the West Coast Line case, specifically a person's own expectations of procedural fairness in land use decisions, and trust for national political institutions. Does, for example, perceived procedural fairness play a more or less pronounced role in fostering consent among citizens who have a stake in the issue? Do people who distrust political institutions more generally react more or less strongly to process assessments?

If perceived procedural fairness has a strong bearing on consent among those who are directly affected or involved in the issue, then procedural fairness would seem to present a viable means of averting or at least hindering the escalation of conflicts between citizens and decision-makers. It is, after all, those who have a stake in an issue who are the most likely to contest an unwanted outcome. If, on the other hand, procedural fairness proves to have no effect at all among those closest to an issue, then the procedural fairness theory provides a less useful foundation for improving the efficiency of political institutions.

The third contingency deals with a person's own expectations of fairness in decision making. Given that procedures themselves vary among political systems and have changed considerably over time, it would seem a reasonable supposition that variation in citizens' notions of procedural fairness may also exist. While some citizens may feel that the public should have a direct role in land use decisions, others may feel that these decisions should be left in the hands of elected representatives. Variation in citizens' procedural expectations could, in an extreme case, result in the troublesome situation in which participatory decision making fosters consent among some citizens but undermines consent among others.

#### *Decision processes and procedural fairness assessments*

In addition to the reasons mentioned above, studies of public knowledge of political affairs raises questions regarding the findings of previous research regarding the implications of perceived procedural fairness. Despite the trends of increasing civic education and competence, the findings of a long tradition of public opinion research suggest a need to exercise caution when analyzing survey responses regarding public assessments of political goings-on. Both John Zaller (1992) and Donald Kinder (1998) present extensive reviews of research on political opinions and attitudes and conclude that information on political issues generally reaches only a small sector of the populous with the highest level of political interest and awareness. Kinder writes, albeit somewhat facetiously, that "...the depths of ignorance demonstrated by modern mass publics can be breathtaking" (1998, 168). Do members of the public in fact evaluate how decision-makers go about the day-to-day business of making political decisions?

Even if previous research had conclusively demonstrated that perceived procedural fairness had a causal role in shaping consent, and I argue that it has not, our understanding of the importance of decision process design would therefore remain incomplete. The connection between actual decision processes and perceived procedural fairness, the subject of the third and fourth research questions, represents a virtual blind spot in empirical research on procedural fairness. What aspects of a decision process shape perceptions of procedural fairness? What approaches to decision making enhance the perceived fairness of the decision process? Without answers to these questions, it is impossible to understand the implications of decision process design for consent. This issue is difficult to investigate in non-experimental settings. In order to explore the effects of a contextual factor on individual attitudes or behavior, there must be contextual variation. Only a handful of studies have previously identified and utilized variation in decision-making settings to study their effects on citizens' assessments toward political institutions; these will be discussed in Chapter seven.

The West Coast Line presents one significant advantage in exploring this connection. A timely (for the purposes of this study) legislative reform regarding decision making in land use issues, combined with a decoupled organizational structure in the Rail Administration, has resulted in considerable variation in the decision-making processes regarding the local routing of the tracks. In some local settings, the Rail Administration has primarily interacted with residents of the local community via written information distributed by mail, while in others informational meetings have been the main channel of communication. In one community, the Rail Administration offered extensive opportunities for public participation. This contextual variation constitutes somewhat of a natural experiment, in which the design of the decision process varies while the content of the issues and other contextual factors are fairly similar. For reasons that will become clear in the empirical chapters, the findings regarding the third and fourth research questions are more tentative than the findings for the first two research questions. Nonetheless, the analyses provide important, if preliminary, insights on this link in the analytical chain.

### **Making tracks – a political issue like any other?**

Two questions need to be addressed in order to situate this study in the procedural fairness literature and to lay the groundwork for determining the generalizability of this study to other interactions between citizens and the state. First, how is the Rail Administration similar or dissimilar from other political institutions, and second, how do land use issues resemble or differ from other political issues?

Two attributes make the Rail Administration a tough case for the procedural fairness theory: the fact that it is an administrative body and

not popularly elected, and the extent to which its functions build on expert and professional knowledge. As an administrative institution, the Rail Administration's primary function in the political system lies in implementing decisions taken by democratically elected decision-making bodies, either at the national or the municipal level. Despite this formal division of labor, the Rail Administration, like most other administrative institutions, has considerable discretionary power when it comes to how decisions are to be implemented. The legitimacy of such administrative institutions has traditionally rested on criteria such as professional experience and technical expertise rather than on responsiveness to citizens' demands and the fairness of their decision processes, (Rothstein 2001). Rothstein (1998, 80) points out that this constitutes a deficit in democratic governance, as the civil servants making these decisions cannot be held accountable via standard democratic channels of influence (such as voting or party activity). In the context of this study, however, these observations suggest that procedural fairness may play less of a role in fostering consent for an administrative institution than for a popularly elected representative body, whose primary function is to respond to the will of the demos.

A third attribute of the Rail Administration and its decision-making procedures sets this study apart from existing research on the theory of procedural fairness, enabling this study to contribute new knowledge regarding procedural fairness effects. As I argue in the literature reviews in the empirical chapters, the most conclusive results on the link between the design of decision processes and consent builds on analyses of settings in which citizens and decision makers interact in a way that entails face-to-face contact. This research has, for example, examined interactions with the judicial system (Tyler, Casper and Fisher 1989), the police (Tyler 1990), and various welfare state programs (Kumlin 2002; Möller 1997; Soss 1999). While some of the residents have had face-to-face contact with the Rail Administration, many have not. The empirical analyses will consider whether the procedural fairness effect differs among those who have had direct contact with decision-making authorities and those who have not, thereby adding a dimension to our current understanding of the implications of the design of decision processes.

The empirical case examined in these analyses is an example of land use policy, and more specifically of a category of issues that has come to be known as facility siting controversy. It is the fact that facility siting issues involve the use of land that sets them apart from other political issues. Facilities that have proven difficult to site include everything from public housing to prisons, and from nuclear power plants to wind power turbines. These facilities are generally considered undesirable as neighbors, and some may prompt questions regarding the prevailing definition of the public good and the distribution of goods and burdens in society. Virtually all major decisions regarding transport or commu-

nications infrastructure, energy production and distribution, water and waste water, minerals extraction, waste management, and even the management of public lands entail the use of physical space and may therefore have intense ramifications for nearby residents and local environment.

Controversies regarding land use policies often go beyond being a clash between public representatives or officials and affected property owners. Land use issues may involve diverse and conflicting forms of expert knowledge, and divergent ideas regarding the value of assets such as biodiversity or the aesthetic or historical significance of a landscape or cityscape (Sjölander-Lindqvist 2005; Stoffle et al 2004). Furthermore, many facilities may pose technological or social risks, the evaluation of which is by definition an uncertain enterprise. Land use issues may also prompt conflicts not only between citizens and public offices, but among authorities, experts, interest groups, and between different levels of government.<sup>17</sup>

What distinguishes facility siting issues from other political issues is that the distribution of the burdens tends to be both skewed and visible. A facility such as a landfill, a wastewater processing plant or a highway potentially benefits the residents of a region, but the burdens fall solidly on those who reside near the chosen site.<sup>18</sup> Thus in addition to the normal cost to citizens (as taxpayers) implied by virtually all public ventures, the construction of facilities entails an additional cost—in the form of health risks, odor, noise pollution, social stigmatization (Edelstein 1988), or quite simply the introduction of an unsightly facility in the local environment—to a small group of citizens (as local residents, Holzinger 2001, 130). Furthermore, the negative aspects that the introduction of a new facility may entail for the local environment cannot be divided and distributed among a larger set of citizens, which reduces the possibility of compromise. Siting decisions in this sense constitute rather high stakes decisions, since the most visible costs can at best be mitigated, not distributed.

Two other inherent characteristics of land use issues set them apart from other political issues and may in particular shape citizens' expectations of and reactions to the decision process. First, the exit

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<sup>17</sup> One of the most contentious land use conflict regards the storage of high-level nuclear waste. In the United States, the Department of Energy has for decades investigated and prepared a permanent repository inside Yucca Mountain, 150 km northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The state of Nevada has answered by enacting a state law prohibiting the storage of high level radioactive waste anywhere in the state of Nevada and filed suit against the Department of Energy for ignoring its own standards for bedrock quality for such a storage facility.

<sup>18</sup> The construction of, for example, a road, prison, or waste water facility may of course bring benefits to those residing near the proposed site as well, among other things in the form of employment. Since it is seldom the desirable aspects of a facility that prompt citizens to contest a decision, emphasis is given here to the disadvantages introduced by proposed facilities.

opportunities available to citizens potentially affected by the siting of an unwanted facility are rather limited. Whereas a disagreement with the management of a local school may prompt parents to move their children to another school, and dissatisfaction with a public health clinic may lead a citizen to seek private health care (if available), the exit alternative in a facility siting dispute consists in selling one's house and relocating to another area.

Second, those citizens most affected by facility siting decisions are those who live contiguous to a proposed site – and therefore contiguous to each other – and can therefore easily identify other individuals who may have an interest in engaging in a collective effort to influence the decision outcome. In issues such as health care policy or decisions regarding taxation, citizens may find it difficult to form associations with like-minded citizens simply because of the lower likelihood of encountering others with a similar viewpoint.

It is perhaps due to these attributes that decisions regarding the construction of public facilities tend to attract intense attention and in many cases strong opposition from the local communities.<sup>19</sup> Observers have noted that mobilization against proposed facilities has become increasingly common during the post-War era.<sup>20</sup> Boholm and Löfstedt, in a recent overview of the facility siting literature, cite a fact that illustrates the contentiousness of noxious facilities all too clearly. "In the US, where around 300 million tones of hazardous waste is produced per year, no large freestanding hazardous waste facility has been sited anywhere since 1980" (2004, xiv). In the Swedish context, a tally of citizen initiatives in 1994 in all of Sweden's municipalities also indicates the contentiousness of land use issues. Of the total 70 initiatives to impetrate a referendum, two dealt with the storage of nuclear waste, two with the construction of housing, and a full 20 related to the building of infrastructure (railways, roads, and in one instance a harbor, SOU 2001:48, 404-405).

The contentiousness of land use issues makes them appropriate cases in which to explore the capacity of fairness in decision making to foster consent. The high stakes nature of land use decisions and the low threshold for citizen mobilization and involvement simply increase the incentives to dissent. Land use issues present a difficult challenge for

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<sup>19</sup> Siting issues may also attract intense reactions because people value their place of habitation differently from other resources. Anthropological research documents that people have often strong attachments to place. Unlike more transferable resources, a home, neighborhood, or neck of the woods are by definition unique and can not be easily altered or substituted without disrupting local residents' place attachment (Hornborg 1994).

<sup>20</sup> To my knowledge, no research has tracked and documented the increase in controversies in land use issues during the post-War period. Several siting researchers who make this claim have, however, studied siting for several decades, lending credibility to their claims (Kunreuther, Fitzgerald and Aarts 1993; Quah and Tan 2002; Renn, Webler and Wiedemann 1995).

democratic governance and consequently also a tough test for the theory of procedural fairness. It is therefore possible that the effects of procedural fairness seen in the data from the West Coast Line underestimate the effect that would be observed in other sorts of political issues.

Dwelling on the distinctiveness of land use issues of course raises the question of whether the findings of this study may generalize to other sorts of political issues. Albert Hirschman (1970) advanced a convincing argument that the opportunity for clients, customers or citizens to express opinions becomes more important for the legitimacy of an organization in situations in which exit opportunities are small. The limited exit opportunities in land use issues, combined with the fact that stakes tend to be high and people can more easily mobilize to attempt to exert influence, may mean that citizens expect more opportunities for direct influence in land use issues than other political issues. The high local salience of land use issues may also lead to an overestimation of procedural fairness effects. Local residents may have more direct exposure and therefore more detailed knowledge about the content and planning of a land use issue than they might have about other political issues.

Fortunately from a methodological point of view, the West Coast Line case offers variation along the parameters that analytically set this case apart from other political issues. Within the surveyed population, some individuals are directly affected by and have been actively involved in the railway expansion issue, while others are touched only peripherally. Respondents also hold divergent views regarding the extent to which they feel citizens ought to have a direct say in land use issues. The analyses presented in answering the second research question explore the implications of these parameters for the procedural fairness theory. In doing so, the results also provide a foundation for predictions regarding the role of procedural fairness in other kinds of political issues.

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The discussion in this chapter has by necessity used the concept of consent without providing a comprehensive definition of the term. Consent may at times have seemed to blur with political subordination, apathy or alienation—qualities generally considered undesirable in liberal democratic systems. Briefly, consent implies acceptance of political institutions and decisions based on an informed understanding of the workings and content of what is being consented to. Chapter two focuses primarily on two tasks. Most of the theoretical work linking consent to the justness of political institutions has primarily focused on the definition of justice and has therefore remained at a high level of abstraction. The first task is therefore to advance a middle range theory

that explores *why* procedural fairness may foster consent. The second task is to explore existing theoretical and empirical work on the concept of consent in order to advance a framework for the empirical analyses.

Though a single issue in some sense, the planning and decision-making processes of the local segments along the West Coast Line have followed quite different trajectories in the seven case study communities. Chapter three tells the seven stories about how the Rail Administration has approached each local project, as well as the response from the local communities. Chapter four describes the data used in the empirical analyses. Chapters five through seven tackle the research questions. Chapters five and six investigate the influence of perceived procedural fairness on consent, and whether this effect varies among different groups of respondents. The analyses in chapter seven explore the contextual and individual level determinants of perceived procedural fairness. The concluding chapter considers the implications of this study for our theoretical understanding of political consent, as well as for political institutions and governance more generally.

## 2 Procedural fairness and consent

The theory of procedural fairness claims that citizens will consent to a political authority and its decisions if they deem the means by which the authority arrives at decisions to be fair. But what does it mean to consent to an authority and its decisions? And is perceived fairness in decision making the only relevant aspect of political authority which determines consent? What other factors (factors not related to the authority itself) affect levels of consent? And perhaps most importantly, why is it even reasonable to expect that the fairness of decision-making processes *would* play a decisive role in citizens' willingness to consent to authority?

Two types of answers have emerged with regard to this last question, neither of which provides a theoretical account that might help interpret the findings of this investigation. The social contract theory answer is that fairness in decision making procedures ensures that no member of a collective has more power or worth than any other member, and it is only such a condition of political equality that can be justified to, and therefore warrant the consent of, all of the members of a collective (Klosko 2000; Nagel 1991; Rawls 1958; 1999). While elegant and normatively compelling, I argue that this answer is less useful when explaining why citizens might react to a decision-making situation where the principle of political equality is conceivably less meaningful and even difficult to conceptualize in theoretical terms.

Social psychology offers a second answer, which, unsurprisingly, emphasizes the social psychological aspects of interactions between individuals and an authority. In this account, fair and respectful treatment by an authority in a decision process acts as an indication of a person's status in a group, that is to say his or her value relative to other members in the group (the theory is for this reason called the group-value model, Lind and Tyler 1988; Tyler and Lind 1992). A feeling of less worth or lower social standing relative to other members of the group would, claims the group-value model, erode an individual's willingness to comply with the group's demands and collaborate in group efforts (Tyler and Lind 1992). The group value model emerged from

research on small groups, either in experimental situations or in employer-employee relationships, in which decision-making authorities interact directly with the members of the group. The explanation seems insufficient, however, when the group is an inordinately diffuse entity, such as those individuals affected by a railway expansion, and when the authority does not interact directly with the members of that 'group'.

This chapter therefore has two main objectives. The first is to develop a middle-range theory regarding the mechanisms linking consent to procedural fairness. Using social contract theory as a point of departure, I advance a theoretical framework that is suited to the relationship between citizens and decision makers examined in this study. Social contract theory elucidates the logic linking institutional design with citizen consent. Because it operates at the constitutional level, however, the logic must be adapted to quotidian political life, which entails decision making of a more concrete and detailed nature.

The second objective of this chapter is to explore in more detail the concept of consent. In particular, the aim is to take stock of empirical findings regarding the various factors that foster or undermine political trust and decision acceptance in order to determine to what extent these two may be treated as indicators of consent. This survey reveals that both political trust and acquiescence to political decisions may stem from assessments of political institutions, but that both also have affective and psychological fundamentals as well. The review provides the basis for identifying gaps in our current understanding of the role of perceived procedural fairness in fostering political trust and decision acceptance. The existing empirical studies on the theory of procedural fairness tend to ignore the affective and psychological bases of political trust and decision acceptance, which brings into question the reliability of their findings. The second portion of this chapter therefore lays the foundation for the argument advanced in later chapters that our current knowledge of the implications of decision process design is wanting and that this study offers methodological advantages that enable a more rigorous exploration of the theory of procedural fairness.

### **Social Contract Theory**

Contract theory grapples with, as Thomas Nagel puts it, the problem of "reconciling the standpoint of the collectivity with the standpoint of the individual" (1991, 3) in matters in which the two standpoints are at odds. Liberal democracy centers on the principles of political equality and individual autonomy, yet collective problem solving per definition requires an authoritative structure and limitations on individual autonomy. Contract theory seeks to delineate the conditions under which an individual might be justified in ceding individual autonomy to the collective.

Contemporary social contract theory, centered around the work of John Rawls, takes as a point of departure the assumptions that people are rational, self-interested actors whose needs and interests are "...in various ways complementary, so that fruitful cooperation amongst them is possible" (Rawls 1958, 171). Rawls, just as Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke, begins his quest in what has come to be known as the social dilemma. The term social dilemma describes a situation in which a) a group of individuals share a common interest, b) attaining that interest requires that all of the individual members of the collective contribute in some fashion, c) that contribution entails a cost to the individual, and d) an individual can benefit from the common interest without necessarily having to contribute.<sup>21</sup> Rawls (1958) does not use the term 'social dilemma' but instead refers to joint undertakings among rational actors, which is analytically synonymous except with the normative addition that the status among the actors involved is one of equality. Social contract theorists see social dilemmas as the justification for the need for a state, yet a state which has the characteristic of a contract among equals. How is it possible to form an authority that has the responsibility of assuring that individuals collaborate to bring about the provision of collective goods without establishing an absolute authority with unlimited right to use force? Social contract theory responds: by constructing political institutions that satisfy principles that are justifiable to every individual member of the collective. A shared conceptualization of justice, one which is acceptable to all members of a society, provides the neutral ground that is necessary in order to construct institutions that can organize and implement collective decisions.

It is this reasoning that spotlights and justifies the principle of political equality, the normative cornerstone of liberal democratic institutions. Liberal democratic theory seeks to construct a platform for coordination (which implies constraints on individual freedom) among individuals who differ, and should have the right to differ from one another in terms of visions of the good life (which implies guaranteeing individual freedom), a project which begins with the identification of principles that are justifiable to all individuals in the society. It is for this reason that liberal democratic theory posits political equality as a non-negotiable aspect of acceptable political institutions. The principle of

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<sup>21</sup> The attributes of a social dilemma characterize a large proportion of problems for which the solutions require collaboration among individuals. The eighteenth century philosopher David Hume mentioned examples such as bridges, armed forces and light houses. All of these require individual sacrifices yet benefit a collective and can also benefit individuals who have not contributed to their provision. Hobbes portrayed peaceful coexistence itself in social dilemma terms (Lessnoff 1986, 50). Everyone benefits from the existence of, and universal compliance with rules of social order, but I as an individual would benefit most if all others abstain from ruthless competition while I continue to swindle and connive. Mancur Olson (1965) examines the same dynamics in the context of interest group success and failure, and Elinor Ostrom (1990) focuses on the sustainable use of natural resources such as water and fisheries.

political equality cannot, according to liberal thought, be rejected on grounds that are acceptable to all other members of the political association (Nagel 1991, 38). Any departure from political equality would be unacceptable to those individuals regarded as being of lesser worth. With respect to governing institutions, political equality means that decision making must be characterized by impartiality – the notion, as Nagel (1991, 34) puts it, “that everyone’s desires have a value and that none can be said to be more valuable than another.” Robert Dahl succinctly defines political equality as meaning that “the decision rule for determining outcomes at the decisive stage must take into account, and take equally into account, the expressed preferences of each member of the demos as to the outcome” (Dahl [1979] 1997, 111). Impartial institutions are justifiable to equal and free individuals, and therefore warrant consent.<sup>22</sup>

A political association, governed by institutions that satisfy principles which can be justified to every member of that political association, should, according to this reasoning earn the voluntary collaboration of its members. In an ideal system, one in which all of the individuals not only endorse the principles that shape political institutions, but also knowingly benefit from the collaboration that these institutions enable, collaboration takes on the status of a duty (Rawls 1958, 178-180). This duty to comply arises from having benefited from others’ collaborative input. “When any number of persons engage in a practice, or conduct a joint undertaking according to rules, and thus restrict their liberty, those who have submitted to these restrictions when required have the right to a similar acquiescence on the part of those who have benefited by their submission” (Rawls 1958, 179). This ideal system is internally consistent, legitimate, and requires no coercion, only transparency. According to this contract approach, *non*compliance would be justified if governing arrangements depart from reasonable and publicly shared standards of justice, or if other members failed to submit to restrictions in past collaborations (Rawls 1999, 309).

Social contract theory has been disputed from many theoretical perspectives. Perhaps the most challenging issue has been the point that political equality is not compatible with all visions of the good life and therefore not justifiable to all members of any given society. Individuals or groups of individuals may choose *not* to reason in terms of what is acceptable to all members of a society, and therefore simply reject the principle of political equality (Sandel 1984). What Rawls and other contract theorists present, however, is not a portrayal of the reasoning of individual residents of liberal democratic nations, and also not a

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<sup>22</sup> This discussion emphasizes the principle of political equality because it has relevance for this study. Rawls’ second principle of justice, and the myriad other modifications and additions to Rawls’ theory that have emerged in recent decades, are not discussed here.

theoretical weapon with which to justify any manner of coercion.<sup>23</sup> Instead, Rawls advances a sophisticated and comprehensive theory concerning the normative underpinnings of liberal democratic associations. The social contract perspective provides a plausible theoretical account for why just institutions might engender the voluntary participation of free individuals in collective efforts that impose constraints on individual liberty. Viewed from the perspective of the individual, the internal consistency of such a system makes compliance not only reasonable but even obligatory.

Social contract theory presents a plausible, and eminent, account of why procedural fairness might induce free citizens to accept constraints on individual autonomy and in so doing elucidates the logic underlying the theory of procedural fairness. While the logic of social contract theory has led many political philosophers to conclude that political equality must be the cornerstone of any regime hoping to warrant the consent of all its members, political equality is by no means the only conceivable criterion of just decision processes. The preceding discussion has focused on political equality because it clearly illustrates the theorized link between political procedures and citizen consent. I argue below that in some areas of day-to-day political life, other qualities and criteria of procedural fairness may take precedence over political equality in shaping consent. Expanding the definition of propriety in decision making necessitates a reconsideration of the theoretical mechanism that links procedural fairness to political consent.

Before turning to this task, however, it is necessary to define the concept of decision-making procedures. Most social contract theorists do not specify that it is decision processes that are the most important source of consent. In part this may depend on the fact that political theory tends to operate at a level of abstraction at which it is difficult to make a distinction between the substance and processes of politics. Even in real political life, however, an airtight distinction between the substance and the process of politics cannot be made. Given that all of the empirical examinations that follow hinge on the idea that it is possible to distinguish between the substance and process of politics, a brief consideration of these issues is in order.

### **What is a procedure?**

According to David Miller, a decision procedure "...is a rule or mechanism whereby one agent—an individual or an institution—assigns benefits (or burdens) to a number of others" (Miller 1999, 93). Miller's

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<sup>23</sup> Both Rawls (1999) and Nagel (1991) acknowledge the possibility that a group of individuals may find it impossible to reach agreement on principles of justice upon which to construct political institutions, and that disagreement on this level would undermine the state's authority to force compliance among dissenting individuals or groups.

definition emphasizes the formalized, institutionalized aspect of decision procedures, and for this reason is too narrow for the purposes of this study. The formal rules of decision-making may certainly be more or less adequate according to a given criterion of fairness, but how these rules and mechanisms are applied and used in practice may have tremendous bearing on the perceived fairness of a decision process.<sup>24</sup> Expanding the definition of decision procedure to include the operative aspects—the manner in which decision makers behave within the formal framework—runs the risk of blurring the distinction between process and substance, however.

Robert Dahl (1997 [1979]), Iris Marion Young (1990), and Joshua Cohen (1989) have argued that the fairness of decision-making procedures cannot be assessed completely independently from the fairness of the substantive outcome of the political process. Unless all the members of a political association possess the necessary resources to take advantage of the rights and freedoms offered by the political system, the fairness of formal procedures for decision making becomes rather meaningless. From the perspective of the normative theorist, and in evaluations of political systems at the aggregate level and in the long term, I agree that it is impossible to assess the fairness of decision-making procedures independently from the fairness of policy outcomes. If, for example, only a portion of citizens in a political system have access to primary education, then formal rights to voice opinions and objections in policy debates may be equal in constitutional terms, but can hardly be considered to grant equal influence in practice.

While these observations illuminate the difficulty of treating the substance and process of politics as two discrete phenomena, the issue does not preclude an empirical study of procedural fairness. First, with respect to a specific issue, it is certainly analytically possible to distinguish between the decision process and the outcome that results from this process. And secondly, from the perspective of the public opinion researcher, the issue is largely an empirical one. If citizens make assessments of decision processes independent of their assessments of the outcomes of those processes, then the two are to some extent discrete and independent factors in citizens' minds.

Assuming for now that it is possible to distinguish between the substance and process of politics, and that citizens also see this distinction, are there any reasons to expect that procedures should play a more pivotal role than other considerations in citizens' willingness to defer to political institutions? George Klosko (2000) has argued that decision-

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<sup>24</sup> Warren (1996, 54) summarizes Flathman's (1980) useful insight in this issue: "As Flathman points out, advocates of formal-procedural models...understand authority to inhere in the procedural rules (or laws) themselves. He makes the Wittgensteinian point that 'authority' cannot be located within rules in this way, any more than the meaning of a sentence can be determined by the definition of terms and rules of grammar (1980, chapter 3)."

making procedures play a more decisive role in shaping citizens' consent to the political system than reactions to the output of the political process. Though he too acknowledges that the line between substantive and procedural principles can be hard to draw (146), he concludes that the moral and ideological heterogeneity in contemporary societies makes it veritably impossible to reach agreement on the propriety of all decision outcomes. In his words, it is unlikely to find neutral ground "acceptable to proponents of widely different comprehensive moral, religious, and philosophical views" that would be "sufficiently robust to allow disputants to proceed from them to generally accepted conclusions of morally disputed issues" (Klosko 2000, 147).

Procedures can more easily meet the requirements of political neutrality than substantive outcomes and therefore more effectively communicate to citizens whether the political system or a specific political institution regards constituents as having equal worth. Because procedures and conventions in decision making set the framework for the distribution of power and influence in decision processes, they may indicate to citizens the extent to which the decision-making apparatus conforms to the underlying principles of the political association. It may, for example, be possible to structure a set of procedures that treats individuals and their life projects of equal worth; it would be a momentous task to justify each decision outcome in terms of political equality to all members of a political community.

### **Conceptualizing procedural fairness**

Innumerable normative definitions of fairness in decision-making have emerged in the manifold branches of political theory. If interpreted in the broadest sense, the issue at stake for theories of procedural fairness concerns which model of democracy—representative or participative, deliberative or adversarial—is most apt to produce rational, just, and publicly acceptable results. Normative theorists treat diverse aspects of procedural fairness, including the definition of the demos (Dahl 1997 [1979]), the merits and deficiencies of various systems for selecting political incumbents in representative systems (Manin 1994), the distribution of control over placing items on the agenda for discussion (Bachrach and Baratz 1962), the transparency of the decision process (Klosko 2000; Miller 1999), and the willingness of decision-makers to listen to divergent forms of information (Holmes 1995), to their constituents, and to each other (Gutmann and Thompson 1996).

The liberal democratic theorists discussed above emphasize political equality as the central component of procedural fairness. From this point of departure, we might expect that decision processes in which citizens are treated as equals, and in which citizens also have a reasonable chance of recognizing this impartiality, would engender consent. But what does political equality mean in terms of decision making

procedures? The institutional arrangement most frequently advanced as satisfying the principle of political equality is that of one person, one vote. In fact, some authors consider universal suffrage the cornerstone of democratic legitimacy, and voting as perhaps the foremost indicator and affirmation of consent to a regime (Beetham 1991; Manin 1994). Elections, whether to choose political representatives or a policy alternative (as in a referendum), guarantee that the preferences of every member of a political association carry the same weight.

Is it plausible to assume that referenda automatically bestow legitimacy on a decision and ensure public acceptance of policy choices? Perhaps. Is it also safe to conclude that all decisions made by elected representatives will be accorded the same legitimacy in the public eye and therefore awaken a sense of moral duty to comply on the part of citizens? On this issue, political reality departs sharply from social contract theory. Decisions taken by elected representatives are not immune to citizen protest and evasion, not in Sweden nor in any other country. The authors of the *Study of Power and Democracy in Sweden* suggest that the legitimating capacity of representative democracy and parliamentary procedures has diminished markedly in recent decades (SOU 1990: 44). Johan P. Olsen (1990), most noted for his work on organizations, concludes that the prevailing definition of democracy has undergone a shift in Sweden. This shift consists in a move away from a collectivist model that prevailed in Sweden during the post-War period. In the collectivist model, citizens participate in political life primarily through elections, which serve both to decide the composition of parliament but also to authorize that parliament to intervene in an increasing array of societal areas through an ever-expanding litany of welfare programs. This model of democracy has gradually given way to a more individualist model as the ideal to strive toward in Sweden. The individualist model instead emphasizes individual autonomy and therefore freedom from, among other things, state intervention. These observations suggest that political equality, at least in the form of one person, one vote, may not have legitimating capacity that it once had.

In addition, there is reason to suspect that the principle of political equality may matter more in some types of decision-making situations than in others. The nature of the issue being examined here, the expansion of the West Coast Line, brings into question the plausibility that universal suffrage combined with proper parliamentary procedure might credit the Rail Administration with a free hand in the planning of the routing of a new railway line. Parliamentarianism, even if universally deemed as operating perfectly (in and of itself an unlikely scenario), does not and in reality *cannot*, have responsibility over and therefore be held accountable for decisions regarding local routing alternatives. The need to adapt the rail to local conditions and requirements prohibits such a centralization of decision power in the rail

sector, just as in many other ground level decisions in many other policy sectors (Rothstein 1998).

*Effective influence defined*

What procedural form, then, might take precedence in fostering consent in an issue such as that of the West Coast Line expansion? The call for greater citizen empowerment and influence has hailed from several theoretical directions in recent political philosophical work. Both normative and empirical theories suggest that *citizens' own ability to exert influence* might be a central legitimating factor in a land use issue. Robert Dahl, generally not associated with models of participatory democracy, put forth (1997 [1979]) a set of criteria for democracy that, among other things, advocated that any citizen affected by a particular issue ought to have the opportunity to participate in deciding that issue, what he called effective participation. Participatory democrats (Barber 1984; Pateman 1970; Young 2000), tend also to advocate greater citizen influence in decision making, though it would be reductionistic and misleading to equate participatory democracy theory with a call for more popular influence in politics.

It is important to state explicitly that citizen influence is not synonymous with participatory decision making. In Carole Pateman's renowned discussion of participation, the two are, however, strongly linked. A participatory decision process must, in her account, offer a meaningful opportunity to influence the outcomes of decisions, and in order to meet criteria of 'full participation' must offer equal power to all participating members to determine the outcome of decisions (Pateman 1970, 70-71). And while the primary aim of participation (primarily at the workplace) in Pateman's estimation is educative, she does advance the hypothesis that participation "...aids the acceptance of collective decisions" (1970, 43). Pateman does in some sense advance the claim that influence in a decision process might enhance people's willingness to consent to a decision.

The *Study of Power and Democracy in Sweden* also puts forth a recommendation for greater citizen involvement and influence in matters of public concern. Upon surveying the political and economic changes over the past several decades and identifying the shift in prevailing ideas regarding democracy as an ideal, the authors arrived at the normative stance that citizens ought to be granted greater influence directly in politics and in public sector operations (SOU 1990:44). A second nation-wide evaluative study of democracy in Sweden completed in 2000, advanced an even more emphatic call for greater, citizen involvement in political matters, claiming opportunities to exert political influence would revitalize citizens' political interest and therefore democracy as a whole (SOU 2000:1, 243-245).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The scope and size of most public sectors in developed countries today have led some authors to conclude that representative government no longer offers a democratic means

The nature of land use issues gives cause to expect that ability to exert influence might play a larger role in citizens' willingness to accept the final decision than in other types of political issues. Within the literature on facility siting issues, a number of authors have advocated that residents of areas considered as possible sites for unwanted facilities should have the right to participate in and have influence in decisions (Bradbury, Branch and Focht 1999; Rabe 1994; Fischer 1993; Renn, Webler and Kastenholz 1996; Renn, Webler and Wiedemann 1995; Hunold and Young 1998). What theoretical reason justifies more direct citizen influence in land use issues as opposed to other issues? The introductory chapter identifies a number of attributes that set land use issues apart from other political issues. Two attributes in particular have relevance in answering this question: a) the high stakes nature of these issues, which derives from the indivisibility of the burdens associated with physical facilities, and b) that land use issues often affect resources of highly subjective value. Political theory has pointed out that each of these by itself might lead us to expect that citizens might desire and feel entitled to greater influence in land use issues. A few words on each will explain why.<sup>26</sup>

First, the visibility and indivisibility of burdens in siting issues mean that the people that live near proposed sites for a facility may have very intense preferences in the issue, both regarding site selection and subsequent regulation of facility operations. For the small group of individuals affected by such an issue, the circumstance of having to bear a disproportionate burden in the issue may give rise to a desire for disproportionate representation. A representative model of democracy grants these citizens the same leverage as all other citizens in the territory, despite the fact that the issue may have adverse effects only for a small minority. The dilemma is not unique. Political theorists, as well as drafters of constitutions, have long recognized the problem of equal representation in decisions with unequal ramifications.

Robert Dahl addresses (Dahl 1962, 106) this problem in more general terms, recognizing that a pure representative and majoritarian decision

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of solving collective problems. The capacities of democratically elected bodies are dwarfed both by the sheer number of decisions to be taken and by the power concentrated in large corporations (Hirst 1994; 2000). Unlike participatory democrats who advocate greater citizen participation to re-democratize representative government, these observations lead Hirst to advocate a model of governance that he terms associative democracy. Associative democracy, also known as stakeholder democracy, prescribes the stimulation of associations within which individuals might have a means to influence decisions that affect their livelihoods. This normative position suggests a need for public responses to decision making in associations and large corporations.

<sup>26</sup> Christian Hunold and Iris Marion Young (1998) advance a normative argument for citizen influence in decisions that imply the imposition of risks to health and safety. Hunold and Young argue that in addition to being members of the demos of the larger national political association, those potentially affected by the siting of a hazardous facility belong to the demos of that particular decision, and should therefore *prima facie* have direct say in those issues.

structure is problematic precisely in issues in which small groups of citizens have intense preferences, and these preferences differ from the majority. Dahl notes that the United States Constitution includes a provision for the protection of minorities with high stakes in an issue, namely judicial review of legislation to ensure the protection of minority rights. Other institutional arrangements have also arisen to address this dilemma. For example, both labor and employers have a great deal riding on political decisions in a planned market economy. Leif Lewin (1992) argues that corporatism arose as an institutional means of granting these two politically relevant groups direct influence in labor market policy. By linking the organizations representing specific interests directly into the political realm, the corporatist model departs from a pure one-person-one-vote model. Analysts of Swedish labor history credit this decision-making model with the stability in labor relations, precisely because it increases the willingness of the two key parties to comply with labor policy.<sup>27</sup>

The second, and interrelated, reason that opportunities to influence might take precedence over political equality in land use issues relates to the significance that people tend to attribute to their local environment. From a national perspective, cutting down a swath of forest may mean lost income to the forestry industry, or perhaps the creation of a small environmental problem if the deforestation might result in erosion. Residents of the area in question may, in contrast, see the swath of forest not only for its economic and ecological worth, but also consider the trees a defining feature of the local landscape, the setting of numerous individual and shared memories, and recreation facility. Hanna Pitkin (1967), in her well-known exploration of the concept of representation, suggests that representative decision making may be more or less appropriate depending on whether a decision involves primarily expert knowledge or subjective valuations. She argues that decisions that largely are a matter of values and tastes should be made in consultation with (or at least considering the opinions of) constituents (Pitkin 1967, 210-212).

All of the above reasons provide grounds for expecting that consent in land use issues might depend more on citizens' ability to exert influence in the decision-making process than on decision processes that strictly adhere to the principle of political equality, or on properly implemented parliamentary procedure. Local residents' satisfaction with their perceived ability to exert influence in the West Coast Line case is therefore the first dimension of procedural fairness that I examine in the empirical analyses. This dimension is termed *effective*

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<sup>27</sup> Between the mid-1930s and the late 1970s, a period when labor organizations had their heyday, Sweden had one of the lowest rates of strikes and lockouts among the industrialized nations (Lewin 1992, 41-43). Lewin credits this stability to the corporatist model of decision making.

*influence*, and represents the difference between a person's *perceived* level of influence, and his or her *desired* level of influence in the railway issue.<sup>28</sup>

How can we understand the concept of 'influence'? Influence might be understood as having a purely instrumental value and meaning. In this sense, influence would be equivalent to securing a specific outcome in a decision process. Since the objective is to understand why influence might engender consent irrespective of the outcome, an instrumental definition provides a poor point of departure for this study. A person who, for example, writes a letter to the editor may feel that they have exerted influence without having concrete evidence that decision makers altered their course of action as a result of the letter. Similarly, a group of residents who collect signatures and submit a petition in support of one policy direction over another might prompt decision makers to arrange a public hearing and engage in a broader public discussion on an issue under consideration. Independent of the final outcome of the decision process, the petitioning group may feel that they have exercised influence in the process since they convinced authorities to engage in debate. Exerting influence might entail persuading one or several other individual of a particular point of view, generating discussion, or prompting decision makers to provide more substantiated or detailed explanations of a chosen policy option.

#### *Public justification defined*

The two possible procedural bases of legitimacy mentioned so far, the one-person-one-vote approach, and disproportionate representation justified by disproportionate stake, both center around the role of the individual citizen in the political process. These two procedural aspects are far from exhaustive, however; other aspects of the decision process may reach the public eye and either enhance or dampen citizens' willingness to defer to the judgment of a decision-making body.

The majority of citizens do not attempt to influence the outcome of political decision processes, and it is not necessarily even true that most would want a more extensive role in decision-making (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002b). Members of the demos may react to aspects of authorities' conduct and demeanor toward the citizenry at large—whether authorities respond to queries and objections raised in the public debate, whether authorities welcome and incorporate input from the local community, and whether citizens feel that they are made aware that a locally salient decision is even under negotiation. The second dimension

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<sup>28</sup> Why use the term 'effective influence' rather than 'voice' or 'efficacy'? Quite simply because it differs slightly from both. Voice generally denotes that a person has been given the chance to express an opinion (e.g. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002a) and therefore describes an objective contextual factor rather than a person's perception of his or her role in a process. Efficacy, like effective influence, describes an individual's perceived ability to exert influence in the political system (Craig, Niemi and Silver 1990), but does not put perceived influence in relation to an individual's desired influence.

of procedural fairness examined in this study, termed *public justification*, refers to the transparency of the decision process, the extent to which decision-makers engage in public discussion and provide information and above all give an account for decisions. This second aspect draws on a theme developed within deliberative democracy theory.

Though deliberative democracy theorists differ considerably in the specific normative ideal put forward, the unifying argument is a rejection of the idea that democracy is solely a system for aggregating individual preferences into a collective decision. As Simone Chambers summarizes it, "Talk-centric democratic theory replaces voting-centric democratic theory" (2003, 308). Deliberative democrats instead see democracy as a platform which encourages the open exchange of ideas and information in order to reach agreement at least on what is at stake in different issues and what distinguishes one policy position from another (Knight and Johnson 1994), and ideally to reach consensual agreement on the issues themselves (Cohen 1997 [1989]). A key component of the deliberative model of democracy is therefore that political actors "state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them or criticizing them" (Cohen 1997 [1989], 146). These arguments should ideally be justifiable and reasonable to all parties. "Deliberative democracy asks citizens and officials to justify public policy by giving reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by it. This disposition to seek mutually justifiable reasons expresses the core of the process of deliberation" (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 52).

The second central component of effective deliberation is implicit in the first, namely that involved parties demonstrate a willingness to incorporate others' arguments into their understanding of an issue. The preferences held by the various actors in a political system are not seen as fixed and impervious to transformation or refinement. Opinions and perceptions are instead considered to be subject to change given new and credible information, or even when confronted with another party's affective reaction to an issue (Fishkin 1995). Rather than seeing politics as an adversarial battle among conflicting interests in which parties seek triumph rather than agreement and compromise, deliberative democrats envision democracy as a process of rational communication both among political actors, authorities and experts, among citizens, and between political authorities and citizens. Thus, rather than centering around a recommendation for a specific form for decision making, as for example direct democracy recommends referenda, deliberative democracy theory instead advocates a mode of interaction and builds on a belief in dialogue as a necessary component of good policy and legitimate democratic decision making.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> To say that deliberative democracy theorists do not advocate a common practice in decision making is not the same thing as saying that deliberative democrats do not advocate specific practices in decision making. These practices differ considerably from one

What underlies the deliberative perspective is the conviction that, even in representative democracy, "...citizens retain their powers of judgment about public matters" (Warren 1996). Because preferences are not fixed, and because citizens are not only citizens when they go to the polls to elect representatives, political authorities, in the deliberative perspective, must engage in a continual discursive relationship with interested citizens. The discursive relationship consists in allowing and even encouraging scrutiny of decisions, incorporating relevant information offered by individual or organized political actors, and publicly articulating, explaining, and most importantly justifying public policy (Chambers 2003; Warren 1996, 55). Political institutions and authority must, therefore, continually justify policy decisions and even their own authority.

Using the deliberative perspective as a source of inspiration, the second dimension of fairness that I examine in this study concerns the extent to which citizens perceive that authorities have publicly justified the decisions surrounding the railway issue.<sup>30</sup> Public justification encompasses assessments of whether authorities have been receptive to incoming information from local residents, but also provided sufficient and explanatory information regarding the local routings and implications of the new rail. Public justification in a decision process does not, in other words, necessarily refer to whether authorities have adhered to a specific set of obligations, even if planning laws do place quite specific demands on authorities to create the conditions for an open exchange of ideas and information with local residents. These demands will be discussed in chapter three. Instead, public justification refers to local residents' perceptions that the decision authority has exhibited a certain disposition and demeanor in its interactions with the public.

The public justification dimension and effective influence dimension are similar in that both deal with the interaction between citizens and

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another, however. Some deliberative democrats envision deliberation as semi-structured discussion among citizens brought together solely for the purpose of engaging in political discussion intended to produce more informed and enlightened opinions (Fishkin 1995; Ackerman and Fishkin 2002). Gutmann and Thompson (1996; 2000) in contrast, do not advocate a new role for citizens in politics but rather see deliberation as a more reasonable mode of interaction among elected representatives. As a third example, Dryzek's (2000) envisions organizations and interest groups as engaging in a broad, ongoing discursive process.

<sup>30</sup> In some sense, public justification as conceptualized here only captures half of a deliberative process, though I would argue it captures the more important half. Deliberative democracy theory sets as a normative standard a deliberation in which citizens and authorities alike participate, each 'accountable to all' and showing mutual respect for one another (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). In order to be true to this definition of deliberative democracy, this study would also have asked citizens in this specific case to assess whether local residents had listened and shown respect for one another and for decision-making authorities. Such questions would, however, have taken us far afield of the investigation of the effects of how authorities behave in decision-making situations on consent.

the decision-making authority. The important distinction is that effective influence approximates an ideal of direct democracy, which offers all members a satisfactory (to the citizen) level of influence in each political decision. The public justification dimension, in contrast, refers to how authorities behave in their relation to the citizenry but without relinquishing their role as the primary bearers of decision-making authority.<sup>31</sup>

From social contract theory's broad and overarching idea that citizens' willingness to consent to political authority stems from the perceived justness of political arrangements, we have now arrived at two relatively concrete aspects of a decision process (effective influence and public justification) that may play a role in this formula. To reiterate, this study does not primarily seek to evaluate the actual decision processes in terms of these two aspects of procedural fairness, but instead focuses on citizens' own assessments of the decision processes along these two dimensions. The first two research questions, specified in the introductory chapter, delve into the connection between perceived procedural fairness and the two indicators of consent—decision acceptance and institutional trust. While the connection between perceived procedural fairness and consent has received considerable attention from empirical researchers, the connection remains, in my assessment, under theorized. Social psychological researchers tend to interpret perceived procedural fairness as affecting consent largely via self-esteem (Tyler and Lind 1992; Lind and Tyler 1988), an explanation that seems insufficient with respect to political relationships in which authorities and citizens have not interacted in face-to-face, small group settings. The following section advances a middle range theory to close the gap between the social contract meta-theoretical perspective, and the empirical analyses to come. What mechanisms might be afoot if perceived procedural fairness proves to engender consent to decisions and political institutions? The section that follows considers more closely the possible mechanisms linking perceived procedural fairness with consent.

#### *Effective influence and consent*

By what mechanism might the opportunity to influence a decision make citizens more inclined to trust a decision-making authority and accept a decision outcome? The obvious, but insufficient, answer is that exerting influence in a decision process increases propensity to accept a decision

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<sup>31</sup> Though I may be running the risk of belaboring the point, the *public justification* aspect is by no means orthogonally distinct from *effective influence*. Such a definition of fairness would approximate a Schumpeterian model of representative democracy, in which citizens surrender all power of judgment to elected representatives. Nor does it entail an antagonism to citizen involvement in what Mark Warren (1996, 48) terms the neo-conservative view of authority advocated by Samuel Huntington (1981). Huntington has attributed today's crisis of governability to the surge of egalitarianism and participatory democracy.

outcome because the influence brings about the desired outcome. While it is self-evident that getting one's way increases the inclination to accept a decision outcome, this explanation would, of course, only apply to those whose attempts at influence were successful in the instrumental sense. How might an opportunity to exert influence in a process foster consent independent of the outcome?

Charles Beitz (1989) offers one possible explanation. Beitz argues that an important aspect of fairness in decision-making is that citizens feel they have the possibility to influence the decision process if they so choose. The availability of opportunities for citizens to influence political decisions encourages people to see themselves as agents that can exercise control rather than "passive victims who must accept those decisions as *faits accomplis* that are beyond challenge" (Beitz 1989, 93). People who perceive that they have a say in political decisions feel validated in their role as citizens, and feel that the political system regards them as the best representatives of themselves and their own interest (Warren 1996, 50). This sense of empowerment and agency may mitigate the sense that collective decisions are imposed from above.

This argument can be taken a step further. Perceived ability to exercise influence in political issues may also generate a sense of having participated in the process that led to a specific outcome, and therefore a perception of shared responsibility in the policy choice. Stephen Holmes makes this point in arguing the importance of protecting citizens' rights to scrutinize and criticize a regime. Holmes asserts that the existence of opportunities to object to a decision can mobilize consent for political decisions by virtue of the fact that the losing party was not silenced by force but rather has had the right, whether exercised or not, to participate in what he terms the public discussion. The active protection of the freedom of expression, and in particular the right to criticize regime decisions, disperses the burden of responsibility for the decision outcome to all citizens (Holmes 1995, 197). This connection between freedom to criticize and shared responsibility in collective decisions is especially valid when the outcomes of decisions are uncertain. No decision or even statement of fact can be known so certainly that it is impervious to scrutiny and challenge (Holmes 1995, 184). Holmes writes:

Collective decisions to break a military alliance or build a nuclear reactor are risky ventures. The question of what to do in such circumstances does not have a true or false answer. ... If things turn out badly, a community will have only itself to blame for a decision based on popular consent (Holmes 1995, 197).

Guaranteeing the freedom and opportunity to criticize policy decisions therefore mobilizes public consent. Citizens who feel they have had a chance to object to or demand justification for collective decisions will feel that they are a party to those decisions and therefore understand

that they share the responsibility if those decisions later prove to have been incorrect.

While both Beitz and Holmes seek to buttress the normative justifications for freedoms of expression, their arguments can be borrowed for the purposes of this study. Individuals who feel that they have exercised their rights and freedoms as citizens may see themselves as having agency and autonomy, and also as engaged in and contributing to the formation of collective policy. This agency and involvement constitute a fulfillment of citizenship, facilitating a bond between the individual and the political, and mitigating the sense of political authority as remote and alien. It is via this bond that perceived ability to exert influence in the political sphere might increase an individual's inclination to accept a policy decision that infringes on individual autonomy. Why, then, might ability to influence decisions foster trust in authority?

It seems reasonable to expect that perceived ability to exert influence in political decisions would foster trust for political decision-making institutions in situations in which citizens feel entitled to such influence. Trust implies an expectation that an actor or institution will behave in a manner consistent with norms of proper conduct (Rothstein 2000, 486-488). If members of a political association feel entitled to have a direct say in a collective decision, then deviations from this expectation could have detrimental effects for trust.<sup>32</sup> Whether effective influence affects consent therefore depends on citizens' own procedural preferences, and whether decision makers indicate that influence opportunities will be available. If citizens expect to be able to influence decision outcomes but perceive that those expectations go unfulfilled, then institutional trust will invariably suffer more than if citizens do not harbor such expectations.

Though the objective with this discussion is to establish a theoretical framework for interpreting how perceived influence might foster consent, it is worth noting that the relationship is invariably more complex than the preceding discussion implies. If citizens themselves construe 'exerting influence' to mean actually precipitating a desired outcome, then effective influence can hardly induce consent among those who are confronted with an unfavorable result, since the only evidence of influence is a favorable outcome.

#### *Public justification and consent*

Whereas perceived ability to exert influence may affect a citizen's perception of her own role in the political system or create a bond between a citizen and a decision outcome, public justification may instead

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<sup>32</sup> Institutional trust and desire to influence may also be inversely related. Citizens who have little or no trust in political decision makers may feel more inclined or even compelled to attempt to influence policy (Kunreuter, Fitzgerald and Aarts 1993). Even if true, it does not logically follow that the reverse - that perceived ability to exert influence *undermines* trust for a political institution - would also hold.

cultivate consent by conveying essential information about the decision-making institutions themselves, and how incumbents in those institutions view citizens as well as how they conceptualize their own power.

Unlike in political systems in which the source of legitimacy is exogenous to human interactions, such as authority justified by divine right or dynastic lineage, liberal democratic authority, in theory, requires continual justification. If the general public feels that authorities show a willingness to justify both specific decisions, and the overall way in which they manage their power in decision making and implementation, then citizens may deem that authorities see themselves as equals with other citizens, even when they act in the capacity of elected representative or expert civil servant. Authorities perceived to have such a disposition may also convey an understanding that their power is limited, either to an area of expertise, or to the boundary of individual autonomy.

Authorities who exhibit a willingness to engage in critical discussions regarding policy choices may also foster the sense that the policy process itself is transparent to the general public and permeable to knowledge from various sources. Perceived transparency in the decision process may mitigate the sense that authorities base decisions on the knowledge most easily available or even worse on knowledge provided by a few particular interests attempting to manipulate the process to secure a specific outcome. In participating in a broad discursive process, authorities demonstrate their competence and willingness to avail themselves of others' competence, thereby fostering confidence both in the decision making authority, and in the decisions made by that authority.

Mark Warren's (1996) discussion of the complementarity of authority and broad public deliberation clarifies how consent to political authorities might stem from their willingness to be challenged and the fact that they occasionally are challenged, even among citizens that themselves do not exercise their right to put forth such a challenge. Much in the same way that expert authority is legitimate only if it allows itself to undergo scrutiny and criticism (indeed, the legitimacy of expert authority depends on creating and protecting a context of scrutiny), political authority may augment its legitimacy by publicly engaging in discussion with organized citizens. "Trust in authority is generated by a background context of critical scrutiny, and deference depends on the knowledge that there is a circle of attentive individuals who are capable of challenge and who can make their judgments widely known" (Warren 1996, 56).

The extent to which authorities respond to queries and worries from the public, invite the public to partake of information and offer input on decision alternatives, and generally make themselves accessible and visible, may generate a perceived willingness to provide justification, irrespective of whether citizens demand such justifications. It is this

willingness that may constitute the affirmation to citizens of their standing with respect to the authority. Even the existence of actively involved pressure groups can enhance trust for political institutions, because they contribute to a context of public criticism and carry out the vigilant monitoring that less interested citizens do not care to carry out.

The preceding discussion has introduced the two dimensions of fairness examined in this study, and expounded upon the mechanisms that may link perceived procedural fairness to consent. In doing so, it has provided the theoretical backdrop for the first and second research questions that will be examined in chapters five and six respectively. Before we can turn to the empirical analyses, however, a consideration of the two indicators of consent is in order. Both institutional trust and decision acceptance capture a central element of political consent, yet neither provides an unproblematic equivalent of consent.

### **Dissecting consent**

“Men being, by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own *Consent*” (Locke [1698] 1960, II § 95, italics in original). This oft-cited cornerstone of liberal democratic thought appears not only in political theory, but has also left an indelible mark on the founding documents of many liberal democratic states. How to define, recognize and interpret consent among real political subjects is, however, a rather controversial and problematic matter.

Locke and many after him have noted that few citizens, if any, have actually ever actively granted, or been offered an opportunity to grant or withhold, their consent to a liberal democratic government (Holmes 1995; Pateman 1979). Locke himself reasoned that individuals tacitly consent to and therefore oblige themselves to obey a political authority by enjoying the benefits provided by that authority, even if that benefit consists in owning property or an act as trivial as traveling on a highway (II § 119). Similarly, Rousseau argued that an absence of opposition from a body of subjects, provided that those subjects are free to register such opposition, signals consent (Rousseau 1762 [1983], 182).

Neither of these approaches offers a suitable base for an empirical study of consent in contemporary society. According to Locke’s conceptualization, it would be virtually impossible to avoid granting consent given the complexity and comprehensiveness of state services and regulatory protections. If utilizing the fruits of state actions indicates consent, albeit in a tacit form, then consent becomes a corollary of birth and therefore becomes a meaningless indicator of citizens’ approval of or reticence toward a given political regime, actor or institution. It is this conceptualization that leads Carole Pateman, most known for her contributions on participatory democracy and feminist theory, to reject altogether the idea of consent, as these definitions render us all ‘child-

bride' citizens, automatically consenting to our state of citizenship unless we actively dissent (Pateman 1979, 82). In order to serve as a meaningful indicator of the justifiability of the authority, citizens must have the possibility to withhold their consent, and actively demonstrate dissent.

Rousseau's argument, if taken as a point of departure for empirical investigations, introduces another sort of problem in recognizing and measuring consent. If, as he argues, universal silence implies the consent of the people, how then do we distinguish between a political community in which members lack insight into the workings of the political system (which could result from political alienation, total exclusion from political life, or deprivation), and a system in which informed and aware citizens abstain from protest because they feel satisfied with the workings of the political system? Taking these two issues into consideration, I define consent as *a willing acquiescence to the power of an authority that derives from favorable assessments of the principles, practices or effects of that authority*.<sup>33</sup> Consent according to this definition is the result of a choice, and is not synonymous with a belief never reflected upon and acquired perhaps entirely by socialization. Nor is it something that an individual grants inadvertently and completely independent of his or her assessments of the authority.

This definition of consent introduces a necessary component for an empirical investigation, namely that it allows for the possibility that consent can vary. As defined here, however, consent is complex and difficult to reduce to simple indicators. Consent may be *evident* in acquiescence to political authority, but it is not synonymous with acquiescence to power, since the definition stipulates that consent is *willing* acquiescence that results from knowledge of and approval of key aspects of the political system. This study employs two indicators of consent to authority, *political trust* and *compliance*. Because both of these may derive from sources other than assessments of the principles, practices or effects of the authority, neither can be treated as a straightforward indicator of consent. The remainder of this chapter therefore considers the theoretical and empirical research on each of these two phenomena in order to establish a more sound base for the empirical analyses to come.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This definition encompasses the preliminary definition advanced in the first chapter, where I argued that consent might build on any one of three types of assessments: procedural fairness, distributive justice and the implications of political decisions for individual self-interest.

<sup>34</sup> The literatures dealing with compliance and with political trust are each fairly extensive. This chapter considers selected findings of those research fields; the empirical chapters present more detailed explorations of the findings as they relate to each of the four research questions.

### *Consent as political trust*

Political trust, both conceptually and as an empirical phenomenon, is somewhat more complex than political consent. Beginning with trust more generically, theoretical treatments have tended to converge around a skeletal definition that emphasizes its relational nature and role in collaborative efforts. Trust is an expectation that another individual or group, whose actions affect one's own interests or well-being, will behave in a manner considered appropriate in a given situation as determined by convention, tacit agreement, or stated intent (e.g. Gambetta 1988, 217; Misztal 1996, 9-10; Offe 1999, 47; Rothstein 2000, 486-488). Reliance on the future actions of others entails an element of uncertainty; it is the free will of those upon whom we depend that necessitates trust (Dasgupta 1988). Reliance on others entails accepting some degree of vulnerability, and trust serves to mitigate this sense of vulnerability (Warren 1999, 1).

Vulnerability in collaborative efforts, and therefore the need for trust, is a function of the value of the one person's behavior for another, but also of the existence of assurances that the other will behave according to expectation. The need for trust decreases as the presence and reliability of assurances increases. These assurances may be internal to the particular relationship, as when one has the means to monitor the other's behavior, or external to the relationship in the form of an independent third party. Absent such assurances, trust becomes essential to any collaborative efforts. Trust is therefore inversely related to the need to monitor the behavior of collaborating partners (Ostrom 1990, 1998). As trust among actors increases, the need for monitoring decreases. When trust is lacking, collaborative efforts become cumbersome and costly, as they require continuous vigilance among collaborating parties (Dasgupta 1988). More often than not, assurances are external to the relationship in the form of an incentive structure and an independent third party that imposes sanctions in the event that the expected behavior is not fulfilled. Generally speaking, external assurances consist in contracts based in a legal structure and enforced by specific aspects of the state apparatus such as regulators, law enforcement, and the judicial system.

Whereas vulnerability and assurances are all inversely related to a need for trust, the role of knowledge in trust is more complex. Just as if it were possible to control how others behave, if we had full knowledge about others' incentive structures and how others thought, felt and behaved, then trust would become superfluous (c.f. Hardin 1998; 1999). Successful collaboration would then simply be a matter of finding collaborative partners with a high probability of behaving according to expectation. Perfect information is therefore analytically incompatible with trust. Trust with *no* knowledge about a potential collaborating person or party also falls outside the generally accepted definition of trust and instead is considered hope or blind faith (Gambetta 1988). In

collaborative efforts among individuals, expectations of how others will behave generally build on experiences from previous collaborations, knowledge provided by other trusted individuals, or social and affective signals.

This definition of trust largely applies to political trust as well. Despite the power gradient inherent to the relationship between a citizen and the state, the same dynamics are at work in citizens' trust for the state as in trust more generally. That citizens trust political institutions implies that citizens feel certain that those institutions are fulfilling their obligations. Like trust more generally, political trust builds both on evaluations of how political institutions operate and what they accomplish (knowledge), but also on experiences and sentiments extraneous to the political institution itself. The ambiguous role of knowledge in trust sentiments is precisely what sets political trust apart from political consent. Political trust describes a sentiment that builds on myriad sources both cognitive and affective, conscious and unconscious. Only a portion of this sentiment, the portion that builds on knowledge and positive assessments of the political system or a particular political institution, can be considered political consent. Political trust cannot, therefore, be treated as an unambiguous indicator of political consent.

That political trust to some extent represents consent has been shown in the growing body of empirical research on the sources of political trust. This research lends some evidence that the sources theorized as the bases of political consent do foster political trust. Aspects of political institutions theorized to be important sources of political consent were, to reiterate, how political institutions make decisions, as well as the output of the political process and whether this output satisfies citizens' expectations in terms of distributive fairness and individual entitlements.

Empirical research has demonstrated that political trust is associated with assessments of political outcomes, and that ideological sympathies also foster political trust. Respondents who express satisfaction with public welfare services (Kumlin 2002), and perceptions of the health of the economy also correlate with political trust (McAllister 1999; Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn 2000). Similarly, citizens have greater trust for governments that they themselves helped to vote into office (Anderson and LoTempio 2002), and also have greater confidence in parties ideologically closer to themselves (Holmberg and Weibull 2002, 48; Hetherington 1998, 801). Finally, citizens' trust for political institutions may derive from the perceived fairness of the processes by which political decisions are reached. The empirical evidence regarding the connection between procedural fairness and political trust is more tenuous, as the discussion in chapter five seeks to demonstrate.

The preceding discussion has sought to establish the analytical connection between political consent and political trust, and to defend the use of political trust as an indicator of political consent, a practice that is

often done without explicit consideration of the merits and problems with the approach. Empirical research suggests that political trust at least to some extent builds on the types of assessments considered as the bases of political consent. To the extent that political trust builds on assessments of political institutions and their effects, political trust is a good indicator of political consent. The reason that political trust cannot be taken at face value as an indicator of political consent is, however, that it may also reflect factors other than assessments of the political institutions themselves. A brief discussion of these is necessary to be able to lay the foundation for a critique of the existing research on the link between perceived procedural fairness and political trust.

#### *Alternative sources of political trust*

As an empirical phenomenon, political trust is quite messy. In order to determine whether procedural fairness matters for political consent, and using political trust as an indicator of consent, we must take into consideration other possible sources of political trust, even those that are exogenous to the political relationship being studied. Failing to take these into account leaves room for misinterpretations of empirical relationships. For example, if trust for political institutions derives in part from psychological disposition, then an observed relationship between political trust and the perceived fairness of political decision making may not be substantively meaningful. Both trust for the institution and perceived procedural fairness may simply reflect citizens' psychological disposition and reveal little about the implications of citizens' assessments of how the institution makes decisions or for that matter does anything else.

Determining the extent to which political orientations result from socialization is no simple task. Early studies of political socialization attempted to demonstrate that the seeds of our political orientations are sewn in childhood by showing that children have some form of precursive attitudes toward authority and the political system (Easton and Dennis 1969). Skeptics have since pointed out that the presence of political thinking in children and young adults does not prove that the attitudes we have as adults were learned when we were children (Nieminen and Hepburn 1995; Sapiro 2004).

That political trust might be learned early in life through socialization only poses a problem for research of attitudes among adults, to the extent that these sentiments are stable into and during adulthood. Because examining long term attitudinal change and stability is methodologically difficult and costly, empirical research on this issue remains sparse. Kent Jennings and colleagues (Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2001) offer one impressive exception, however. A longitudinal study that consists of four rounds of surveys in 1965, 1973, 1982 and 1997 follows 935 individuals in the United States from the age of 18 to the age of 50 tracking various opinions and more diffuse political orientations

and attitudes, among them political trust.<sup>35</sup> Though political trust is considerably less stable than, for example, church attendance and party identification, it still demonstrates a considerable stability after young adulthood (between the ages of 26 and 50).<sup>36</sup> The findings of the Jennings study indicate that the socialization hypothesis must be taken seriously in empirical investigations of political trust.

Trust for a specific political institution may also derive from a person's overall sentiment to the political community in the form of patriotism (Easton 1965, 274), or from assessments of or experiences with more familiar political institutions. The clearest indication that trust for political actors and institutions build to some extent on national pride is visible in the rapid, if temporary, increase in trust for the president and Congress in the United States in the wake of the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (Dalton 2004, 49-52). Perceived threats to national security strongly affect political trust, independent of assessments of how the incumbent president handles that threat (Chanley 2002).

Citizens who trust national political assemblies may be more inclined to give other political and administrative institutions the benefit of the doubt, especially if information about and experience with the institution are lacking. In this sense, trust for the national decision-making bodies acts as a heuristic when assessing the trustworthiness of administrative, or local or regional institutions. Hetherington (1998, 796-798) demonstrates that overall trust and approval of the federal government in the United States can shape assessments of the incumbent president. While it is perhaps more likely that trust and distrust will travel from higher (national level and with larger jurisdictions) political institutions to lower ones, the reverse has also shown to be true. Negative experiences with, and information about, administrative or local government institutions also affect citizens' confidence in national and decision-making assemblies (Kumlin 2002, 254-255).

Finally, people's expressions of political trust when presented with a survey questionnaire may reflect a larger societal discourse as much as individual insights and experience with the political institutions under investigation. It is, in other words, possible that "...mistrusting or cynical responses may constitute the repetition of familiar clichés or low-level grouching rather than the expression of genuine discontent" (Citrin

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<sup>35</sup> The study also included surveys of the individuals' parents, and in the last round of surveys even their children. The study measured political trust with the five standard National Election Study items relating to trust for the federal government.

<sup>36</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficient for each of these age intervals is approximately 0.34. The mean of four Pearson correlation coefficients is presented here. The authors report the correlation between the 1973 and 1982 surveys separately from the 1982 and 1997, but they also divide the sample into two groups by proximity of the respondents' attitudes to those of their parents in the first round of surveys. For political trust, these four coefficients differ only slightly from one another, ranging from 0.30 to 0.38 (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2001, 38).

and Muste 1999, 479; see Möller 1998 for a similar argument.)<sup>37</sup> Ronald Inglehart (1997; 1999) has detected an overall decline in willingness to support authority, and a growing disenchantment with more hierarchical societal institutions such as the military and police. These broad attitudinal shifts may also partly account for declining political trust in many countries, without having a strong relationship to the operations and internal structuring of the political institutions themselves.

The preceding discussion has delineated a number of possible sources of political trust that do not relate directly to the political institutions themselves. Trust for a political institution may derive from a person's psychological disposition and socialization, or from his or her sentiments toward other political institutions and other levels of the political system. Expressions of political trust may also be a manifestation of a dominant discourse rather than actual approval of or skepticism toward political institutions.

Most empirical studies that explore the roots and implication of political trust do not acknowledge or take these (in a contract theory perspective) exogenous sources of trust into account. The kinds of factors mentioned here, all of which have the support of empirical research, are quite difficult to control for in cross-sectional data. The single largest advantage with panel data is that controlling for earlier values of the dependent variable means that all explanatory factors that have remained stable between the first and second are included in the analytical model. To the extent that psychological disposition affects political trust at the time of the second survey, it also affected political trust at the time of the first survey, and is therefore accounted for in the analysis.

#### *Compliance as an indicator of consent*

Decision acceptance, the second indicator of consent, presents the same analytical problems, and therefore methodological challenges, as political trust. People obey laws and acquiesce to political decisions for myriad more or less conscious reasons. In terms of the stability of the political system in the short term, decision acceptance represents a more relevant indicator of consent. Some theoretical discussions advance voluntary compliance as the only relevant indicator of the legitimacy of a political authority or system (Barker 1990). The following section considers briefly what decision acceptance means in various political issues, and what factors may motivate citizens to comply with political decisions.

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<sup>37</sup> Empirical investigators have attempted to address this issue by measuring government approval or trust with a battery of questions regarding the honesty of politicians, government efficiency, and even the flow of policy outcomes. This approach to measurement does not necessarily solve the problem, as non-political factors may inform responses to all of component questions, especial in the absence of knowledge of political processes and issues.

Previous discussions of ways to measure consent empirically have emphasized two characteristics: that in order to be meaningful, citizens' actions must be voluntary rather than a product of state coercion, and take the form of action, rather than inaction. Suggestions for behavioral indicators of consent include voting (Manin 1997, 83; Beetham 1991, 151-152), volunteering for military service (Levi 1997; Easton 1965, 159), and paying taxes (e.g. Levi 1988; Lieberman 2002). In line with the reasoning advanced several centuries ago by Rousseau, I argue that even inaction *can* indicate consent, though unlike Rousseau I do not think it automatically does. In addition to the fact that many political decisions require citizens to abstain from certain behaviors (everything from littering to armed assault), all political decisions, especially those that imply the distribution of goods and resources in society, are potential targets for citizen protest and formal appeals. Decision acceptance (here also at times referred to as compliance, or acquiescence or deference to decisions) therefore implies obeying laws but also abstaining from contesting political decisions, which, depending on the nature of the decision, may imply action or *in*action.

In sum, compliance means following rules and accepting rulings put forth by political authority. 'Rulings' refers to decisions regarding the distribution of resources and burdens in society, including both the provision of goods and services but also taxation and the siting of unwanted facilities. Citizens may either accept these rulings, or use the means available to them to contest, protest or sabotage them. 'Rules' are political decisions that require citizens (or organizations) to behave in certain ways, or abstain from behaving in other ways—in short: laws and ordinances. Compliance in these cases means following the rules, and non-compliance means breaking or circumventing them. Rules may, of course, also be contested in the same way as rulings.<sup>38</sup>

As discussed with regard to political trust, however, compliance cannot be taken at face value as an indicator of consent; whether decision acceptance signifies consent depends on the motivational drive, or absence thereof, behind the behavior. In delineating the various motivating forces behind consent, Levi (1997) provides a useful schematic for understanding the sources of compliance and more specifically the relationship between compliance and consent. As Levi notes, compliance *may* "reflect citizen authorization of government action," but may just as well "simply be a response to incentives" (Levi 1997, 18). Whether or not contestation of a decision or evasion of a law suggests a

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<sup>38</sup> One might argue that there is, at least if viewed in the light of certain normative theories of democracy, a qualitative gulf separating the two categories of behavior mentioned above: breaking rules, on the one hand, and contesting political decisions on the other. With respect to the relationship to consent, however, I argue that the distinction is irrelevant. Violating a rule may indicate a withdrawal of political consent, if that behavior is driven by the perception that political institutions have deviated from norms of fair decision making.

withdrawal of consent depends on whether the behavior results from: 1) habit, 2) ideological orientation or identity, 3) self-interest, and 4) assessments of political outcomes, institutions and processes (Levi 1997, 23-28). Levi argues that only compliance motivated by ideological agreement and positive assessments of political institutions constitutes consent.

Table 2.1 presents Levi's (1997, 19) typology of compliant behavior with a few modifications to accommodate for the definition of compliance used here. The table summarizes the possible behavioral reactions of an individual faced with a decision outcome that conflicts with personal interests. As presented here, the typology highlights that *inaction* may also indicate consent, provided that it is motivated by assessments of the political institution responsible for the decision.

Table 2.1 *Typology of motivations for acquiescing to unfavorable political decisions (adapted from Levi 1997, 19)*

Contestation or disobedience	Nature of behavior			
	Habitual	Ideological or identity based	Opportunistic	Contingent
No	Conformity	Ideological or affective deference	Fear of retribution or insufficient resources	Consent to political institutions
Yes	Routine obstinacy	Ideological or affective protest	'Nimby' or shirking rules	Conscientious dissent

The four main types of motivating forces indicated in the columns can both result in action or inaction. Compliance or deference as a form of *habitual behavior* may reflect psychological disposition and/or socialization. Socialization might have a direct effect in the sense that our generic citizen has a certain default mode when it comes to rules and rulings, either to always accept and comply, or to contest and shirk. Socialization can also affect the extent to which a citizen trusts fellow citizens (Uslaner 2002), which in turn can have implications for willingness to acquiesce to an undesirable rule or ruling. Several studies have found that trust for one's fellow citizens increases a person's inclination to pay taxes and required fees (Lieberman 2002; Scholz and Lubell 1998a).<sup>39</sup> The main point here is that an individual's behavior when

<sup>39</sup> It is important to clarify that what is being argued here is that trust for one's fellow tax payers may to some extent be a product of socialization, and that this trust may contribute to habitual compliance. What is *not* being argued is that all social trust is learned early in life, or that compliance that results from trusting others is irrational. Theoretical work on

faced with an unfavorable decision may not build upon reflection and assessment, but rather stem from personality attributes and convention, maintained merely by routine.

As in the case of trust, deference and compliance may derive from *ideology or identity*. Even if a decision is contrary to his own interests, an individual may find it ideologically justifiable in terms of his own principles and beliefs and therefore feel compelled to comply. As an example, I may not appreciate the installation of wind power turbines cluttering my view of the ocean from my home, but if I consider wind power to be an important political project, I may elect not to wage a protest. A strong sense of collective identity may play a similar role. A study of compliance with certain economic obligations to the state in South Africa finds that citizens who sympathize with the project to define a 'new South Africa' initiated by the state, are more inclined to voluntarily pay income taxes, television license fees, and other local government fees (Lieberman 2002, 54).<sup>40</sup> In contrast, a decision that offends a person's ideological sensibilities may prompt contestation or non-compliant behavior, regardless of whether the decision implies personal costs or benefits to an individual.

The *opportunism* factor may shape acquiescence to a rule or decision in several different ways. With respect to compliance with rules, the anticipation of the punishment and the costs that this punishment entails undoubtedly induces many to conform to rules, especially if the chances of detection are high. Compliant behavior undoubtedly depends on the effectiveness of the state's ability to monitor behavior, and citizens' calculations regarding the probability and consequences of getting caught. Research on compliance with taxation laws confirms that opportunism is a relevant factor in shaping compliance. Noncompliance is, for example, more common among people with occupations which leave room for evasion, and fear of getting caught does act as a deterrent for evasion (Scholz 1998; Scholz and Lubell 1998a). These factors do not, however, provide very powerful explanations for why people do or do not cheat on their taxes. A sense of duty, trust in the government, and trust in other citizens all prove to enhance compliance considerably (Scholz 1998; Scholz and Lubell 1998a). In addition, as many have pointed out before, the state can never enforce all laws and regulations

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the connection between social trust and compliance with state requirements demonstrates that trust for others is a decisive component in a rational decision to comply or not (see Rothstein 2003 for a discussion and illustration of this argument).

<sup>40</sup> The study measures identification with the 'new South Africa' by asking respondents whether it is desirable or plausible that South Africa will become a united country in spite of historical antagonism and oppression. Inclination to comply with state demands was self-reported.

all of the time. Even in societies in with fairly extensive monitoring of tax compliance, there is almost always room to fudge.<sup>41</sup>

With respect to contesting a ruling or rule that already exists or is under consideration, the protest itself requires resources that may outstrip the expected gains, or quite simply exceed the resource capacity of those who would like to protest. All forms of contestation, whether individual or collective, demand resources. Individual efforts such as writing a letter to the editor may not entail a large investment of resources; appealing a finalized decision may be a demanding and time consuming affair.<sup>42</sup> Effective protest generally requires mobilization, and mobilization requires collaboration with others. Collective efforts always entail an additional set of costs and challenges. As with any collaborative effort, mobilization must overcome the dilemma of collective action. Open contestation of state policies may benefit a group of citizens that share a common interest, but it requires that a critical mass of those citizens become actively engaged, and this engagement entails costs for the individual in the form of time and possibly retaliation (Lichbach 1995; Olson 1965). If a group of individuals can solve the dilemma of collective action, and choose to risk other deterrents of mobilization, organized contestation may materialize.

Table 2.1 refers to contestation or non-compliance driven by a desire to protect one's interests, whether collective or individual, simply as 'Nimby', though it denotes efforts even in issues other than land use policy.<sup>43</sup> Citizens or firms motivated by self-interest may organize to demand lower taxes, or more lenient environmental regulations, and many other policy decisions.

Finally, decision acceptance may be contingent upon *assessments of the political institution* and how well it measures up to criteria of fair and proper behavior and performance. In short, a citizen may acquiesce to a decision if she consents to the decision processes leading up to the decision outcome, or to the institution itself that takes the decision. To reiterate, consenting to a political institution or to an isolated decision process builds on assessments that the decision processes meet expectations of procedural fairness, that the outcome of a decision process or long-term political outcomes imply a just distribution of benefits and

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<sup>41</sup> James C. Scott (1985; 1990) presents an illuminating discussion of the forms that people have found to resist even the most repressive regimes.

<sup>42</sup> Scott (1976) identifies risks that deter protest or rebellion among groups that are held subservient by social and economic institutions such as share-cropping or patron client relations. Contestation may inflict damage the social bonds that both reinforce the oppressive situation but also define the obligations of the dominant group toward the subordinate group. Protest may leave oppressed groups worse off than under the previous social order.

<sup>43</sup> In many renditions, the term 'Nimby' is used to exemplify the kind of political involvement we do not want: myopic, oblivious to the needs of the collective, and, more often than not, rabid. Mindful of these connotations, I use the term because it succinctly conveys the idea that protest and non-compliance can be motivated by self-interest considerations.

burdens, or that the institution entrusted to implement the decision has the capacity to do so.

As in the case with the relationship between political trust and consent, compliance indicates consent to the extent that it derives from such assessments of the decision process or the institution making the decision, or from ideological agreement with the decision. In terms of the capacity of the political authority to solve collective problems and maintain order, voluntary compliance for any reason is beneficial. Even compliance invoked by threat of force or nationalistic demagoguery is a political resource for a state. In terms of the liberal democratic ideal, however, compliance deriving from consent is certainly preferable.

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The theory attributing popular consent to authority to perceived procedural fairness in decision making has received increasing attention among empirical researchers in recent years. The findings of these studies will be discussed in detail in Chapter five. The preceding discussion has provided the foundation for identifying potential oversights in this research and for advancing more reliable empirical analyses. In order to demonstrate that perceptions of procedural fairness affect political trust and compliance, the empirical models must take other possible explanatory factors into account. Before turning to those analyses, however, Chapters three and four present the necessary background discussions on the case itself and on the data used throughout.

## 3 Seven Communities and One Railway

The expansion of the West Coast Line, the railway link between Lund and Göteborg, was originally slated for completion and inauguration in conjunction with the inauguration of the Öresund Bridge in the summer of 2000. At the time of writing, approximately 30 percent of the West Coast Line remains incomplete; several sections remain in the planning stages and construction work on some segments will not commence until 2010.<sup>44</sup> The objective of the project is in part to upgrade the existing track, straightening certain segments and banking remaining curves to allow for higher velocities. More significantly, the expansion project entails adding a second set of tracks to the single set built at the end of the nineteenth century, a measure which exponentially increases the capacity of the line. With only a single set of tracks, north and south bound traffic can only meet at designated meeting points, which means that delays often compound one another. The expansion plans also entail some changes in the routing of the track to accommodate for local geographical conditions, as well as the demands of politicians and officials in municipalities along the line.

Since the original track passed directly through the center of many of the towns along the route, the plans for the new railway entailed in some cases rather substantial ramifications for the urban landscape and for small communities contiguous to the tracks. In some local settings, the reconstruction plans call for adding the second track alongside the one already in existence, and the construction of over and underpasses to avoid dangerous crossings. In other instances, the expansion project has meant rerouting the tracks altogether and even relocating stations. The railway project received unanimous support from all of the thirteen municipalities, as well as from the governments of both county administrative boards (Skåne and Halland) affected by the project.

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<sup>44</sup> According to the information on the Rail Administration's website of 27 July 2004, the segments between Helsingborg and Ängelholm, and the tunnel under the town of Varberg are those farthest behind schedule ([http://www.banverket.se/templates/StandardTtH\\_\\_\\_\\_2567.asp](http://www.banverket.se/templates/StandardTtH____2567.asp)).

Seven communities along the route provide the empirical base for this study: Åsa, Frillesås, Varberg, Falkenberg, Båstad, Glumslöv and Lund. The cases have two main attributes in common. Firstly, the railway issue was a current issue at the time of the first mail survey in the spring of 2000 (the surveys will be introduced in the next chapter).<sup>45</sup> In Åsa and Frillesås, the Rail Administration had reached a final decision regarding the routing of the railway, but details were still under negotiation and construction had not yet begun. In Glumslöv, the community in which the project had come the farthest, construction neared completion; the segment was inaugurated in January of 2001. The remaining four communities, Varberg, Falkenberg, Båstad and Lund were in some phase of the planning process, with Varberg the farthest behind schedule.<sup>46</sup>

The second main attribute that the communities share is that the local response to the railway expansion project has been decidedly mixed in all of these communities. Controversies have arisen in all seven communities, and the debate on the issue in the local print media reveals that the various alternatives proposed by the Rail Administration have met with both criticism and praise (though more of the former) from local residents. If the occurrence of controversy had been the primary dependent variable, this commonality would have been unfortunate, since controversy has arisen in all of the communities studied here. The present study focuses, however, on the reactions to the issue of local residents, and it is therefore important to examine settings in which there *is* evidence of mixed responses to the proposed decision alternatives. Controversy surrounding the issue does not mean that all of the local residents oppose the new rail or the proposed routing, a fact that has been confirmed by several rounds of opinion surveys.<sup>47</sup> Instead, the existence of an active local debate increases the

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<sup>45</sup> The railway project was a current and on-going issue at the time of the second round of surveys (2002) in all of the communities except Glumslöv, where construction had reached completion and service was operational.

<sup>46</sup> In retrospect, the timing of the surveys was not optimal for the purposes of this study. The first round of surveys would ideally have followed the first phase of the planning process, when the local community had some knowledge of the issue and experience with the Rail Administration, and when several routing alternatives were still under consideration. This would have provided a measure of respondents' preferences with respect to decision outcomes, as well as assessments of the Rail Administration before respondents had any knowledge of whether their preferred alternative would be chosen. The second round of surveys would have followed the announcement of the selected routing alternative in order to determine whether assessments of the decision process increased the likelihood of accepting an unfavorable decision outcome. Because the two surveys do not represent an optimal before and after design, the analyses presented here use only the survey data from 2002.

<sup>47</sup> A series of surveys has shown that a majority of local residents in the seven communities favor the Rail Administration's proposed routing alternative, a finding which has proven to be quite stable over time (Grimes 2000b, 120; Grimes 2001, 11; Strandberg 2003, 41).

salience of the issue and the likelihood of variation in individual reactions to the Rail Administration and to the expansion project.

An overview of each of these communities will provide the necessary base for the comparative analysis of them presented in Chapter seven, and help to put some flesh on the somewhat bare bones of the statistical models used in most of the empirical analyses. This chapter will first present a brief sketch of what the railway expansion entails for each community. Against this background, I outline the planning processes in each community in more detail in an endeavor to identify similarities and differences along three dimensions: opportunities for public involvement, information provided by the Rail Administration to the public, and evidence that the Rail Administration has accommodated local demands.

### **When the Rail Administration comes to town**

Åsa and Frillesås are demographically and geographically similar to one another. Both are small communities within commuting distance of Göteborg and together have only four thousand residents (2800 in Åsa and 1070 in Frillesås). The local routing solutions for the new railway differed substantially in these two communities, however. Prior to the expansion project, the railway passed directly through the center of both Åsa and Frillesås, though neither had a stop or station and therefore enjoyed no direct benefit from the railway. For Åsa, the expansion effort implies that the tracks be routed east of the community and the old tracks removed altogether, freeing the community of the hundred year old tracks through the center of the community. The new route passes through a 1.8 kilometer tunnel through a ridge. The local community has not objected to the tracks being moved east of town, but concerns have arisen regarding risks associated with the tunnel construction. On the top of the ridge there are two environmentally protected bogs and a nine meter deep lake (Binde 2000b, 43). The controversy in Åsa has focused on the effects of the tunnel excavation for these wetlands, as well as the risk that vibrations from high-speed train traffic may crack the tunnel lining, potentially resulting in a catastrophic accident if the tunnels fill with water. The Rail Administration addressed these concerns by agreeing to include two short rescue tunnels in the final construction plan.

In Frillesås, in contrast, the Rail Administration opted to lay the second set of tracks alongside the original set, straight through the middle of the community. Local concerns have centered on the increased barrier effect of the railway, but also the perceived risks associated with the increased volume and velocity of train traffic. The Rail Administration has responded that the new rail would instead *reduce* the risk of accidents, since double tracks eliminate the risk of head on collisions. Split level crossings also eliminate the risk of collisions

between trains and motor vehicles, and help to link the two halves of the community.

Continuing southward, the West Coast Line passes through Varberg (population 26,000). The old railway route follows the coastline and separates the city center from the town's two main tourist attractions, a coastal fortress dating from the thirteenth century, and a century old bathhouse. The Rail Administration originally proposed three main routing alternatives: expand the original route through the city center, move the tracks and station farther inland and out of the city center, or move the tracks underground through a tunnel. Largely at the behest of the municipality of Varberg, the almost finalized plans call for the construction of a 3.1 kilometer tunnel under downtown Varberg, including the construction of a new underground, centrally located station. The Rail Administration conceded to the municipality's preference under the stipulation that the municipality cover a portion of the expenses, as the cost of the tunnel alternative far outstripped the cost of the other two alternatives. The strain on municipal coffers has been one of the main points of contention in Varberg, along with concerns of damages and disturbances resulting from the tunnel construction.

In Falkenberg, a somewhat smaller city 35 kilometers south of Varberg, the Rail Administration initially proposed a similar set of alternatives as in Varberg: either expand the railway along the original route through town, or move the tracks and station farther to the east and through more sparsely populated areas. The second alternative entails constructing two shorter tunnels through low hills. Unlike in Varberg, the Rail Administration in consultation with the municipality settled on relocating the tracks and the station a few kilometers east of the Falkenberg city center. Local residents have strongly protested against this decision, claiming that moving the railway out of town would undermine commercial activity in the city center, reduce the utility of the railway system for the local community, and impose considerable disruptions on the neighborhoods contiguous to the proposed sites for the new tracks and station.

Båstad, by far the most well-known and well-documented segment of the West Coast Line expansion project, distinguishes itself from the other case study communities in several respects. Båstad is nestled against an approximately 200 meter high ridge known as Hallandsåsen, that stretches far inland to the east and juts out into the sea to form the Bjäre Peninsula. The existing tracks snake over the ridge through scenic farmland and natural surroundings. Sharp curves and the steep incline limit the speed of train travel, and considerable delays are common especially during the fall and winter as a result of ice and fallen leaves on the tracks. Early discussions considered the possibility of rerouting the line so that it would follow the recently built four-lane highway over the ridge, but the municipality of Båstad objected to this alternative as it entailed moving the station farther away from the town of Båstad.

This segment was the first among the seven case study communities in terms of a final decision being reached and construction getting under way. The new routing of the line, decided in 1992, consisted of drilling an 8.6 kilometer tunnel through the ridge, a horst comprised of fissured rock, sand, clay and a huge reservoir of groundwater. Construction began in 1994. The subcontractors in charge of digging the tunnels encountered poorer rock quality than estimated by sampling and simulations; as the excavation work progressed, albeit slowly, massive amounts of groundwater drained into the excavated tunnel caverns.<sup>48</sup> This drainage of groundwater tables left many residents on top of the ridge with empty wells (their sole source of water), and even caused springs and streams to dry out. The subcontractor attempted to stem the flow of groundwater by injecting a chemical sealant into the tunnel walls, but the high water pressure forced some of the sealant back into the tunnel caverns and was then pumped out into local streams. This unfortunate sequence of events culminated in October 1997 in what has been regarded as one of the largest engineering and environmental scandals in modern Swedish history. The chemical sealant contained large amounts of acrylamide, a chemical compound known to cause neural damage in humans and other animals. Dead fish and paralyzed cows atop the ridge prompted officials to test local streams and wells for contaminants; the discovery of acrylamide in both wells and streams led to an immediate and indefinite termination of the drilling work.<sup>49</sup> Roughly a third of the tunnel had been excavated when the excavation work came to a halt. In 2003, after extensive consultation with experts, authorities, and members of the local public, as well as new rounds of data collection, analyses, and evaluation, the Rail Administration attained all of the necessary permits to allow construction work to recommence.

Returning to the six less dramatic case study communities, we continue to Glumslöv, situated between the medium sized cities Landskrona and Helsingborg. Glumslöv, unlike the other cases, did not lie along the original West Coast Line before the reconstruction project. This small community (population 1700) is situated on rolling hills overlooking the Kattegat Sound. Not surprisingly, local concerns centered primarily on the disruption of the picturesque landscape, as well as on the risks and disturbances that the construction of a double-tracked railway line may impose on the local community. The expansion plans included the construction of a station and today the town has access to the regional commuter services. The segment and new station were inaugurated in January of 2001.

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<sup>48</sup> The conditions were in fact so poor that the technology initially selected to dig the tunnels was abandoned and the original subcontractor forced into bankruptcy. The second contract was awarded to the construction company Skanska in 1996.

<sup>49</sup> Researchers from several disciplines have investigated the Hallandsås tunnel from various perspectives. See Sjölander-Lindqvist (2005) for an overview of this research.

In Lund, the final case study community, the issue has generated less public interest and debate on the city level than in the other communities. Lund is a much larger community (population 67,000) and the railway reconstruction affects the northwest quarter of the city but not the city center. The residents of the neighborhoods affected by the railway project have, however, waged an intense and perseverant battle against the Rail Administration's handling of the issue. The Rail Administration developed two routing alternatives and in 1997, and in consultation with the municipality, elected to expand the line along its original route, which passed through a residential neighborhood and in close proximity to two schools. Residents along the route appealed the decision, but did not succeed in overturning the Rail Administration's selection of the route. In February of 2003, the Swedish government ruled in favor of the Rail Administration and inauguration of the new tracks took place in August of 2005.

### **Testing the procedural fairness hypothesis in the West Coast Line case**

The specific attributes of facility siting issues in general, and the case of the West Coast Line in particular, offer important methodological advantages for a study of this kind. The theoretical contention under investigation involves numerous concepts that are otherwise difficult to explore in real political relationships, which explains why much of the research on the procedural fairness hypothesis builds on experimental studies.<sup>50</sup> Most political institutions, even local governing bodies, make innumerable decisions on a rolling basis, making it difficult to isolate and measure citizens' evaluations of a specific decision process that leads to a single decision outcome. And if it were possible to measure assessments of a single decision process reliably, it would be difficult for the social scientist to locate a sufficiently large number of citizens who would have reason to know about the same decision and decision process. The expansion of the West Coast Line offers two major advantages: the issue is locally salient, and the primary authority in the issue handles only this issue.

In the communities along the West Coast Line, the expansion issue has attracted considerable attention from the media, and pressure groups have mobilized in many communities. The results of a telephone survey conducted in 1999 showed that residents in three of the case study communities considered the railway expansion among the most

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<sup>50</sup> By real political relationships, I mean interactions between citizens and the political sector that occur in everyday life. Much of the existing research that seeks to determine whether assessments of decision processes shape the perceived legitimacy of the outcome and political institutions relies on the power of experimental research, which affords the researcher control over information provided to an individual about an authority or decision process. Chapter five presents an overview of this research.

important issues affecting their community (Grimes 2000b:112).<sup>51</sup> Because the issue affects a specific geographic area, it is possible to identify people who have reason to know and care about the issue. Furthermore, both the National Rail Administration and the business of building railways are relatively new phenomena in Sweden, which means that citizens do not have prior experiences with the Rail Administration that color their assessments of the decision processes in this issue.

In addition, the Rail Administration's handling of the planning and decision-making process varies among the seven case study communities. The Rail Administration received its first assignments with few administrative directives in place regarding public involvement and relations. The absence of such guidelines, combined with a project-driven organizational structure (decentralized and adaptable to local conditions) has led to community level variation in interactions with municipal governments and local publics. This contextual variation is instrumental in exploring which approaches to decision making lead to more critical or laudatory assessments of procedural fairness.

Despite the fact that the case eliminates some of the problems in examining procedural fairness assessments in a real political setting, two main sources of complications still exist. The first is that the communities differ from one another not only with respect to the planning and decision-making process, but also with respect to the concrete implications of the expansion in the seven communities. Furthermore, demographic, economic and political differences exist as well. Beginning with the political, Varberg, Falkenberg, Båstad and Lund are all the home of the municipal government, while Åsa, Frillesås and Glumslöv are not. Åsa and Frillesås belong both to the municipality of Kungsbacka, and Glumslöv belongs to the municipality of Landskrona. Economically, Falkenberg distinguishes itself from the other communities with its steady economic decline during the last decade. Several major companies have recently left the area, and unemployment is above the national average (Binde 2000b, 50). This decline has had demographic consequences as well. The population of Falkenberg declined for three consecutive years beginning in 1998 (HN 010220). Lund distinguishes itself in a different regard demographically. Sweden's third largest university is situated in Lund, and the city has a much higher average level of education than the other six communities.

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<sup>51</sup> Telephone interviewers opened the interview by asking the respondents to name the three most important issues in the respondent's community; no mention of the topic of the survey preceded the question. The percent of respondents who spontaneously mentioned the railway expansion in each community was: 12 (Åsa), 33 (Frillesås), 18 (Varberg), 7 (Falkenberg), 52 (Båstad), 38 (Glumslöv) and 2 (Lund). Though few in Lund mentioned the issue, this may in part be due to the fact that the sample for the telephone survey was drawn from the population of Lund residents at large.

All of these factors may have a similar sort of effect on the analyses presented in the following chapters. Factors such as economic decline and a shrinking population may have an adverse affect on citizens' trust for local authorities, and may even affect confidence in political officials and authorities more generally. Similarly, education tends to correlate positively with trust for political institutions (Holmberg and Weibull 2002, 47), and residing in a small town outside the municipal seat may be associated with lower trust for political institutions. As discussed in Chapter seven, all of these variations will, however, be dealt with on the individual level.

The second set of factors that complicate the analyses relate to the fact that the Swedish legislative framework regarding decision-making in a public works project of this magnitude are, to understate the issue, Byzantine. Major public works projects fall under the jurisdiction of multiple laws and a number of different offices at various levels of government.<sup>52</sup> While the Rail Administration has formal authority over making decisions regarding the routing of new railway lines, many other authorities have a say in the matter. The cast of characters includes various offices within the municipal government, and depending on the extent of the environmental impacts and whether any portion of a plan is appealed, may also include the Environmental Court (formerly the Water Court), the Government (*regeringen*, the executive branch of the central government), the county administrative boards (*länsstyrelsen*, the regional branch of the central government), and various other administrative and judicial bodies.<sup>53</sup> A detailed description of the legislative obstacle course (see Binde 2000a for an overview of the formal process) will not be presented here, as the primary focus lies on how the Rail Administration has handled the issue. The role that other political (including administrative and judicial) bodies have played will only be considered to the extent that they may have affected public attitudes in the issue more generally. In addition, the aim is not to determine whether the decision-making process adhered to the prevailing legislative framework, but rather to examine how the actual decision processes were received and judged by the local community.

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<sup>52</sup> The main laws regulating the planning and construction of railways are: *Lag (1995:1649) om byggande av järnväg* (Law concerning construction of railways); *Förordningar (1995:1652) om byggande av järnvägar* (Ordinance concerning the construction of railways); *Förordningar (1989:67) om plan för stomjärnvägar* (Ordinance concerning the planning of trunk lines); *Miljöbalken* (Environmental Code); *Anläggningslagen (1973:1149)*; and *Plan- och bygglagen (1987:10)*. The last two regulate proposed construction projects more generally.

<sup>53</sup> Depending on the specific aspect being contested, an appeal may go to the Government, the Environmental Court, the Environmental Court of Appeals, the Administrative Court, or the Administrative Court of Appeals.

### **The decision process in seven contexts**

The main aim of the descriptions to follow is to lay the groundwork for the analyses in Chapter seven, which seek to determine the contextual factors that explain assessments of the two aspects of procedural fairness discussed in the previous chapter: public justification, and effective influence. The case descriptions therefore focus on features of the actual decision processes that relate to these two aspects. In an ideal decision process with respect to public justification, the Rail Administration would provide comprehensive information regarding the various routing alternatives, and respond to all queries and challenges publicly, so that the broader community would have the requisite knowledge to evaluate the issue and, if desired, participate in the discussion. Responding publicly to questions and challenges, even if those questions and challenges were not posed publicly, would also allow the public to assess whether the Rail Administration's responses were reasonable and acceptable from their own point of view. In terms of effective influence, the ideal decision process would simply be one which granted each individual the influence that he or she desires.

The case descriptions that follow focus on three aspects of the decision process that it is reasonable to expect might shape community residents' assessments of public justification and effective influence: 1) the extent of information exchange and dialogue between the Rail Administration and local community, 2) the occurrence of formal opportunities to participate and contribute input in the decision process, and 3) instances (if any) in which the Rail Administration altered project plans to incorporate local demands. The first of these aspects, *information and dialogue*, refers to the flow of printed information distributed to the local community, but also meetings held to provide information, address concerns and receive comments. The second aspect, *influence opportunities*, refers to whether or not the Rail Administration has arranged any opportunities expressly intended to grant local residents an opportunity to exert influence regarding the local routing of the rail. The final aspect, *accommodation of local demands*, means simply that the Rail Administration has amended plans to honor demands from citizens or from the municipality. Table 3.1 presents a summary of the accounts to follow.

The events in each community are traced from the early 1990s, when the local routing began to attract medial attention, through September of 2002, when the final mail survey was sent out. The descriptions build primarily on reporting in local newspapers and the Rail Administration's own information. While this method invariably brings forth only one of many versions of the course of events, it is the version that most of the survey respondents have been exposed to. The media study will be discussed in the following chapter along with the other empirical materials; the full references for the newspaper articles are listed in

Appendix B. This material has been supplemented with interviews with Rail Administration officials as well as attendance at many of the information and consultation meetings mentioned below.

## Åsa

### *Chronology*

The overall decision to drill a tunnel through a small ridge and reroute the railway line farther to the east of the town of Åsa was made in January of 1993.<sup>54</sup> The absence of reports of critical reactions to the plan suggests that the local response to the proposed routing was largely positive. Throughout the mid-1990s, however, local residents expressed growing concerns regarding the risk that the wetlands atop the small ridge would drain into the tunnel.<sup>55</sup> These concerns were shared by the municipal office of rescue services (*räddningstjänsten*) of Kungsbacka, which convinced the municipal government to withhold the needed building permits until the Rail Administration could present suitable safety measures to address the perceived risks (GP 961203).

Safety concerns regarding the tunnel intensified considerably in the wake of the problems encountered in drilling the tunnel near Båstad. In October of 1997, when the issue of the rescue tunnel was being decided, the head of the Kungsbacka city council, together with a lawyer representing 60 homeowners in Åsa, wrote a letter to the Government demanding that the tunnel decision be reconsidered in light of the events in Båstad (GP 971024). Shortly thereafter, the Rail Administration conceded to municipal demands and modified plans to include the construction of an additional rescue tunnel. With these safety measures in place, the municipality granted the necessary building permits in the spring of 1998 (GP 980306). Four Åsa residents later appealed the municipality's decision, but the county administrative board overruled the appeal and supported the municipality's decision to grant building permits for the tunnel (GP 980515).

Once building permits had been granted, the only hurdle that remained was approval from the Environmental Court. The Court gave the go ahead in October of 2000, and local residents abstained from filing an appeal to the Environmental Court of Appeals (GP 001115). Construction work began in August of 2002 (though preparatory work began in December 2001). The tunnel was inaugurated and became fully operational in November of 2004 (GP 041104).

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<sup>54</sup> *Banverket bygger Västkustbanan*, The Rail Administration's newsletter about the West Coast Line, April 1993)

<sup>55</sup> Information provided by Göran Martinsson, project leader from 1998 onwards. Interview conducted on 2 November 2004.

### *Information and dialogue*

Information efforts in Åsa have consisted primarily of three rounds of public meetings. The first round took place in the early planning stage in 1992, when the Rail Administration arranged three meetings intended both to inform the community but also to consult with local residents regarding the various routing alternatives.<sup>56</sup> A second round of meetings of a more strictly informational character took place in late 1997 in the wake of the events in Båstad to address renewed concerns regarding the possible environmental implications of constructing the tunnel near Åsa (*Ny Teknik* 971106). As the construction work drew near, the Rail Administration again increased informational efforts and arranged a number of meetings and distributed news letters regarding the tunnel excavation work and its possible consequences.

These later efforts were directed toward those residents most affected by the construction work. The Rail Administration also orchestrated two community wide informational efforts, one newsletter sent to 800 households along the construction corridor, and one informational meeting held in June of 2002 and attended by approximately 160 local residents. Finally, in the middle of the survey period, on 5 October 2002, the Finnish construction company contracted to carry out the tunnel excavation also arranged an open house event at which local residents were invited to enter the newly begun tunnel, partake of information, and have a hotdog and a cup of coffee. Though not the Rail Administration's initiative, Rail Administration officials were present and available to answer questions at the open house event.<sup>57</sup>

### *Influence opportunities*

The Rail Administration arranged three consultation meetings regarding the local routing in Åsa in 1992 and 1993, during the early planning phase. According to Rail Administration officials, interest was considerable and the meetings were well-attended.<sup>58</sup>

### *Accommodation of local demands*

Åsa is the community where the Rail Administration has made the single largest (i.e. the most costly) concession to local demands. This concession consisted in agreeing to construct a rescue and evacuation tunnel alongside the two tunnel cylinders. The concession was, however, not a response to demands made by the local community itself. Local residents raised concerns regarding the implications for the wetlands atop the ridge, but it was the municipal government that raised

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<sup>56</sup> Information provided by Per Rosquist, Rail Administration principal technical evaluator. Interview conducted on 8 December 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Information regarding number in attendances at informational meetings was documented in the Rail Administration's records. Information regarding the open house event builds on field notes from my own observations.

<sup>58</sup> Information provided by Per Rosquist, Rail Administration principal technical evaluator. Interview conducted on 8 December 2004.

concerns about the safety of future train traffic through the planned tunnels. It was also the municipal government that refused to grant building permits until the Rail Administration had modified the plan.

The Rail Administration's modification of construction plans to include rescue and evacuation tunnels may, in other words, have been perceived as a standoff between the Rail Administration and the municipality in which the municipality, with its jurisdiction over construction permits in the local territory, won. On the other hand, Åsa residents may also have perceived the event as evidence of responsiveness on behalf of the Rail Administration, or simply the incorporation of new information and good arguments. Reporting in the regional newspaper allows for both interpretations. The head of the municipal council publicly accused the Rail Administration of making technically and morally dubious decisions, and of using various tactics to ensure that it could control the decision outcome (GP 971030). On the other hand, the media made known that the Rail Administration incorporated the municipality's demands, and also that local residents in the end elected *not* to challenge the ruling of the Environmental Court (GP 001115). The latter item may have signaled to other members of the local community that the citizens who had initially objected to the plan now felt satisfied with the outcome.

## Frillesås

### *Chronology*

The decision regarding the routing of the West Coast Line through Frillesås was made at the same time as the routing was decided in Åsa, in January of 1993. Unlike in Åsa, however, it did not take a few years for the decision to provoke dissenting voices in Frillesås. In 1994, a local resident filed a complaint with the Parliamentary Ombudsman,<sup>59</sup> claiming that the Rail Administration had secured "voluntary" expropriations by making covert threats and falsely claiming that the Government had already approved forceful expropriations (GP 940708). The same citizen later also filed a similar complaint against both Kungsbacka and Varberg municipalities, and collected 1,009 signatures from local residents in support of his protest against the selected routing alternative and the way that it had come about (GP 941030).<sup>60</sup> Protest

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<sup>59</sup> The Parliamentary Ombudsman (*Justitieombudsmannen*) is an office to which any resident of Sweden regardless of age or citizenship status may file a complaint regarding perceived misconduct by a public official or civil servant. The Parliamentary Ombudsman investigates and makes a ruling in the case, which may lead to a reprimand of or even charges being raised against the civil servant.

<sup>60</sup> In the early negotiations regarding routing alternatives, the contiguous municipalities of Kungsbacka and Varberg had not been able to agree on the most optimal route. Kungsbacka preferred that the tracks be moved to the east of Frillesås, Varberg preferred that the tracks follow the original routing. The impasse was settled by the head of the central office of the Rail Administration selecting a routing alternative.

efforts continued in the form of a formal appeal of the county administrative board's expropriation permits. The Government finally reached a decision in January of 1996 to deny the citizens' appeal, putting an end to local hopes of a complete revision of the local routing plan (GP 960126).

This does not mean, however, that the issue was put to rest. Two new issues became the source of considerable controversy and negotiation: measures to dampen the noise of train traffic, and whether or not to build a commuter station in Frillesås. On the issue of noise containment, the municipal government required improvements in the Rail Administration's detailed plan and required the expropriation of an additional home (GP 990121). The issue of whether or not to build a commuter station was a more prolonged discussion, prompting a second major attempt from local residents to sway the outcome. Local residents submitted a petition to the municipal government with 1,600 signatures in an attempt to impetrate municipal funding for a commuter station (GP 000905). This effort, unlike the first petition that sought to have the tracks moved out of town altogether, met with success. In January of 2001, the municipality decided to contribute funding for a commuter station (HN 010126; GP 010126). January 2001 also marked the beginning of the construction period, and by the spring of 2002 the new rail was complete and fully operative.

#### *Information and dialogue*

The three meetings held in 1992 and 1993 in conjunction with the selection of the routing alternative between Varberg and Göteborg were open to residents of both Frillesås and Åsa. Aside from these early efforts, the flow of information seems to have been rather light until the construction phase was near at hand. In November of 2000, 1050 households received invitations to an informational meeting, and in 2001 the Rail Administration sent a newsletter to 625 households informing residents about and apologizing for possible disturbances associated with the construction work. The second of these newsletters also informed the community that the Rail Administration would have a temporary on site office during the construction work, and provided contact information for and brief introductions of the project managers.

#### *Influence*

As in the case of Åsa, neither the Rail Administration nor the municipal government formally invited local residents to express their opinions and voice concerns regarding the local routing and construction specifications through Frillesås. Nonetheless, the local community on two occasions mobilized and attempted to amend local routing plans.

#### *Accommodation of local demands*

As in the case of Åsa, the Rail Administration does not appear to have made any direct concessions in construction plans as a result of citizen

pressure. The municipal government did, in contrast, demonstrate some willingness to meet with citizens' demands in their decision to allocate funding for a local commuter station. On the decision regarding the routing of the rail through Frillesås, both the municipality and the Rail Administration were impervious to local demands. Citizens attempted by various means to persuade the Rail Administration and the municipal government to reconsider the decision to build the double-tracked railway directly through Frillesås, but these objections were all to no avail.

## **Varberg**

### *Chronology*

The planning process has been considerably more prolonged, complicated, and conflict ridden in Varberg than in Åsa and Frillesås. Whereas much of the conflict in Åsa and Frillesås took place between local citizens and the Rail Administration, and between the municipal government and the Rail Administration, the expansion of the railway through Varberg has prompted prolonged disagreement among local residents, between local residents and the municipality, between local residents and the Rail Administration, and even among political parties represented in the municipal council.

Unlike in the two preceding communities where the Rail Administration had narrowed the selection to one preferred routing alternative by 1993, in Varberg the story begins with the Rail Administration presenting five possible routing alternatives. The Rail Administration intended to gather feedback on these five alternatives from the municipality and other relevant actors under a six month period and then make its final decision.

Of those five alternatives, the discussion came to center on primarily three: 1) Build the second set of tracks alongside the existing set. While this alternative was the least expensive, municipal politicians and officials found it the least attractive because of the increased barrier effect and disturbances in the city center. 2) Move the tracks and station outside of the city center. Many regarded this alternative as the best way of freeing the city center of the railroad tracks at a reasonable cost; others felt that the station would become less accessible to the residents of Varberg and that the local utility of the railway system would therefore drastically decline. 3) Build a 3.1 km tunnel under the city center. This alternative seemed to be a way for the city to have its cake and eat it too. The city center would be free of the tracks and train traffic, and the station would remain in its present location in the center of town. Because this alternative entailed a much greater cost than the other two, however, the Rail Administration declared that the municipality would have to cover the extra cost if it selected this third alternative. Two main critiques of the tunnel alternative have arisen: that the construction

phase itself could entail considerable risks and disturbances to local businesses and residents, possibly affecting groundwater tables and damaging buildings of historical value; and that the cost of the tunnel would be so exorbitant that it could bankrupt the municipality, or at the very least that the opportunity costs outweighed the potential benefits.

Despite the efforts of an active pressure group advocating the second alternative to move the station and tracks out of the city center, the municipal government voted in the spring of 1995 for the third alternative, the tunnel option (GP 950315). The pressure group supporting the second alternative submitted a petition with 3,100 signatures in an attempt to bring about a local referendum on the issue. The city council chairman justified the municipality's refusal of the petition request by stating that the issue had been a central focus in the previous city council elections, and that the electorate had therefore already had its say in the matter (GP 950315).

It did not take long for the pressure group to react. In February of 1996 the group submitted a formal complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman (*JO*), claiming that the Rail Administration had intentionally manipulated the decision process by exaggerating the costs of the second decision alternative (GP 960203). Meanwhile, the municipality and the Rail Administration were at an impasse regarding who should contribute how much to finance the construction of the tunnel alternative. By the end of 1996, however, a divided city council reached a decision to allocate 90 million SEK (\$13 million USD), about ten percent of the total expected costs, to construct a tunnel under Varberg (GP 961113). With this decision, the municipality and the Rail Administration considered the matter settled.<sup>61</sup> What remained was to secure funding from the Government and a few other sources, formulate the detailed plan, and complete of the environmental impact assessment.

The pressure group made several more attempts to convince the city council to rescind, first by filing a formal appeal, which the county administrative court rejected (GP 970929), and then by making a third attempt to impetrate a referendum (the first time had been in 1993, the second in 1995), which the city council rejected (GP 980430). The three representatives of the Swedish Party for Retired Persons (*Sveriges pensionärers intresseparti*) holding seats in the municipal council supported their call and attempted on several occasions to bring about a referendum (GP 990420). These motions were not heeded by the majority, and no referendum took place.

The pressure group had its first breakthrough as 1998 neared its end, though not through any device of its own. In January of 1999, a new and

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<sup>61</sup> The Rail Administration's newsletter (*Banverket bygger Väst kustbanan*, No 10, p. 13) on the West Coast Line project proclaimed optimistically in May of 1997: "The municipality and the Rail Administration have now agreed to build a tunnel under the city. The risk that the Varberg segment will delay the entire double-track project is therefore wiped out."

tougher Environmental Code came into force. Since the Environmental Impact Assessment of the tunnel alternative remained incomplete, the Varberg project could not, like most of the other case study communities, be grandfathered in under the requirements of the old Code. In a sense, the change in legislation sent the Varberg project back to square one. All three of the main decision alternatives were once again on the table and had to be evaluated in terms of costs, feasibility, and benefits.

This second round of calculations, deliberations and public consultation arrived at the same conclusion as the first: that the tunnel alternative represented the best choice (HN 000219). Unsurprisingly, the pressure group continued to protest the decision by filing an appeal, which was denied by the county administrative board (HN 000429).

The conflict continued in more or less the same way for the rest of the period under examination here. The local newspaper (*Hallands nyheter*) printed a steady stream of letters to the editor, most critical of the central tunnel and in favor of the easterly route, but some critical of the easterly routing and even of the pressure group fighting for the easterly route.<sup>62</sup> The pressure group attempted to convince various national and EU departments to intervene and force a revision of the decision (HN 020413). When the Rail Administration arranged an exhibit in the public library in October of 2001, the pressure group arranged a parallel exhibit showing its own plan and arguments. Nonetheless, in September of 2002, the planning had progressed smoothly (under the circumstances). Due to a lack of funding, however, construction has been postponed and is currently projected to begin in 2010.

#### *Information and dialogue*

On two occasions, once in the mid-1990s and the second time in 2000, the Rail Administration distributed brochures containing comprehensive explanations of the expansion plans; these brochures were sent to virtually all households (25,000 copies were printed and distributed) in the municipality of Varberg (Dufva 2000, 12-16). In addition, the Rail Administration arranged two meetings in 1998, and a third in October of 1999 (Dufva 2000, 13). Closer to the time of the second survey, the Rail Administration arranged two separate informational exhibits at the local public library, the first in September of 2001 and the second in May of 2002. These exhibits were both announced in the local newspaper. Several of these meetings and exhibits were intended as opportunities for public comment and input, and are therefore described in more detail below.

In addition, the Rail Administration also attended several public meetings arranged by the pressure group. One such meeting held on 2 February 2000, consisted of presentations by members of the pressure

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<sup>62</sup> Of the 35 letters to the editor appearing between May 2000 and September 2002, 16 criticized the tunnel alternative, while 6 criticized the easterly route or the pressure group.

group expounding on the advantages of the easterly routing, but also presentations by experts called in by the pressure group with evidence in support of their preferred alternative. A representative of the Rail Administration explained the progression of the various stages of the planning process and then stated that he and a colleague were there to listen and would take all input into consideration.

### *Influence*

One of the main changes between the Environmental Code of 1999 and its predecessor regarded the scope of public consultation; the revised code required consultation with affected members of the public both in the early planning stages and in the preparation of the environmental impact assessment (Environmental Code Ch 6, § 4 and 5). In compliance with these stipulations, the Rail Administration held a number of public consultation meetings in 1999 in conjunction with the (re)evaluation of the three alternatives so that the city council could formulate its preference. Although each of these meetings drew a sizable crowd, apparently few took the opportunity to submit comments and suggestions (Dufva 2000, 14-15). One citizen did submit a written suggestion for an alternative possible routing of the line, and the Rail Administration subsequently added this alternative for the city council to consider (HN 991222). This fourth alternative does not, however, seem to have attracted much attention in the subsequent debate.

A second round of formal opportunities for Varberg residents to voice their opinions occurred in October of 2001. Rather than arranging another round of meetings, the Rail Administration set up an exhibit at the local public library which provided information on the prevailing plan and invited comments. The exhibit was manned for seventeen hours (evenings and on the weekend) during the first week and considerably less during the third and fourth weeks. The Rail Administration invited public input via two announcements in the local newspaper. A second exhibit with a similar format and aim but with more detailed information about expansion plans was arranged in May of 2002. According to Rail Administration officials, Public interest for these two exhibits was moderate, and each resulted in approximately 15 written comments and questions, mostly from property owners inquiring about the implications of the construction work for their local environment.<sup>63</sup>

### *Accommodation of local demands*

The description of the decision process suggests that both the Rail Administration and the municipality have indiscriminately ignored public demands for over a decade in Varberg. The local pressure group made three attempts to impetrate a referendum, and a minority political party

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<sup>63</sup> Information provided by Per Rosquist, Rail Administration principal technical evaluator. Interview conducted on 8 December 2004.

motioned for the same end, all without success. Representatives of the pressure group have repeatedly made public accusations that the Rail Administration has ignored and railroaded the local community (HN 000524 as an example). Furthermore, while the Rail Administration may have incorporated input culled during the two rounds of public consultation, only one instance of such an accommodation (when the Rail Administration incorporated a fourth routing alternative in its evaluations) attained the attention of the local newspaper, (HN 991222).

The Rail Administration accommodated local demands in another sense as well. As mentioned above, the Rail Administration participated in several public meetings to discuss the prevailing routing alternatives and explain the rationale for not choosing the easterly route.

The Varberg case reminds us, however, that the theoretical concepts such as 'local demands' and 'public opinion' have no simple, homogenous counterparts in society. The pressure group in Varberg sought to sway the selection of the local routing alternative, whereas in both Åsa and Frillesås the local demands that met with success regarded more specific aspects of the issue decision (safety measures or whether or not to build a commuter station). While the group demanding that the tracks be moved out of the city center in Varberg was more visible and audible than those who preferred the other two alternatives, they did not necessarily represent a local majority. The pressure group conducted an opinion poll in 2001 showing that support for the three main routing alternatives was fairly evenly distributed: 22 percent preferred the first alternative, 33 preferred moving the tracks east of town, and 29 percent preferred the tunnel alternative (HN 011128). It is therefore possible that some residents of Varberg felt that the Rail Administration *was* accommodating local demands by not rescinding its decision.<sup>64</sup> If the Rail Administration had decided to move the tracks and station out of the center and east of town, a similar pressure group may well have arisen to protest that option as well. And that is exactly what happened in Falkenberg.

## **Falkenberg**

### *Chronology*

As in Åsa and Frillesås, the municipality and Rail Administration came to an agreement as early as 1993 regarding the routing of the new rail through Falkenberg. And as in the case of Frillesås, local residents contested this decision through a variety of channels and procedures. The first attempt came early in 1994 when a resident of the neighborhood through which the planned new rail would pass petitioned the Rail Administration with 800 signatures to request that the tracks be

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<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that the municipality's repeated refusal to arrange a referendum could have done anything but harm citizens' perceptions of the responsiveness of the municipal government.

laid even farther to the east. The municipality attempted to discredit the petition and stated that many of those who had signed had not understood the implications of the petition (GP 940120). That question quickly became moot as one month later a member of city council representing a minority party (*Aktiv politik*) motioned to arrange a referendum, and supported the motion with a list of 4000 signatures, well above the required five percent of the municipality's population to make such a demand (GP 940224).

In December of 1995, a pressure group made another attempt, collecting 3000 signatures to file a formal demand for a referendum on the issue (GP 951205), a demand that was denied in January of the following year (GP 960128). None of these petitions succeeded in convincing the municipality to arrange a local referendum. A fourth wave of signatures hit the city council's desk later in the same year, this one again from the residents (900 of them) of the affected neighborhood who felt the local implications were much more severe than any benefits to Falkenberg at large (GP 960917).

Protests continued throughout the mid-1990s, with perhaps the strongest blow coming in the form of the local newspaper reporting the results of its own opinion poll that showed that 93 percent of Falkenberg residents thought that the station should remain in the city center (GP 961209).<sup>65</sup> During this time, however, the Rail Administration remained largely absent from the discussion in Falkenberg, waiting instead for a response to their 1995 application to the Government for permission to expropriate. In October of 1997, the Government finally issued the permits, what many thought was one of the final hurdles in the planning process (GP 971003); building permits from the municipality and approval from the Environmental Court were pending. The Rail Administration considered the issue decided and the construction phase near at hand (GP 971003). The local newspaper reports that at an informational meeting in 1998 that attracted 400 Falkenberg residents, Rail Administration officials had to remind meeting attendees that the topic of discussion regarded the implementation phase, and *not* the issue of where the line should be routed (HN 980326).

This optimism proved somewhat premature. Building permits were appealed, all the way up to the Government (GP 980218; HN 990916), and the Environmental Court rejected the Rail Administration's application regarding one of the tunnels, reprimanding the Administration for submitting incomplete documentation (GP 991026; HN 991026). Additional delays resulted from the discovery that the environmental impact of one of the tunnels would be much larger than originally

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<sup>65</sup> This opinion poll may or may not have produced a reliable depiction of the actual distribution of opinions of Falkenberg residents. Regardless of the reliability of the survey, however, the reporting of the results can certainly *shape* local residents' assessments of the responsiveness of decision-making authorities.

estimated (HN 000308). The application to the Environmental Court was not resubmitted until September of 2001 (HN 010908). Letters to the editor demanding that the decision be rescinded and reevaluated were a fairly regular feature in the local newspaper (e.g. HN 000302; HN 010105).

In the summer of 2002, the improbable became reality. The Rail Administration itself began entertaining the possibility of reappraising the option of keeping the tracks and station in the city center (HN 020615). This reversal resulted from the fact that the Environmental Court's demands on minimizing the environmental impacts of one of the tunnels drastically increased the cost of the easterly routing. At the time of the survey, in other words, the decade old decision seemed to be in the process of unraveling.<sup>66</sup>

#### *Information and dialogue*

The primary channel of information in Falkenberg throughout the planning of the controversial routing alternative seems to have been occasional informational meetings. According to Rail Administration officials, written information in the form of newsletters or brochures were not used on a broad scale in Falkenberg.<sup>67</sup> As in Varberg, the Rail Administration was not always the initiative taker in calling these meetings. A group of four local business men convened a meeting shortly before the second mail survey was sent out. The meeting, held on 9 September 2002, drew a crowd of several hundred Falkenberg residents and consisted of a panel discussion involving members of the municipal council and representatives of the Rail Administration.<sup>68</sup>

#### *Influence*

The issue of opportunities for the public to exert influence of the local routing in Falkenberg is somewhat dual. The Rail Administration has at several stages of the planning process met with affected residents to discuss implications for specific local settings. These meetings dealt with, for example, measures for noise containment, safety measures to prevent environmental disturbances, and the routing of local roads. After 1997, when permission to expropriate had been granted, the scope for modifying expansion plans was more limited.<sup>69</sup> One portion of the Falkenberg project had not received the necessary permits before the new Environmental Code came into effect, however, and therefore required an environmental impact assessment. Thus, even as late as June 2001 the Rail Administration invited 78 property owners to a meet-

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<sup>66</sup> The decision did not unravel. The Environmental Court granted approval and construction began in November of 2004.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Rail Administration principal technical evaluator Per Rosquist, 8 December 2004, and with public relations manager Eva Dufva 25 October 2004.

<sup>68</sup> Marcia Grimes' field notes from the meetings.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Per Rosquist, Rail Administration principal technical evaluator, 8 December 2004.

ing and 25 people attended.<sup>70</sup> These meetings were neither announced nor mentioned in local print media coverage of the issue.

Parallel to this more detailed planning, the discussion regarding the overall routing—moving the tracks out of town versus keeping a centrally located station—raged on at the community wide level. In this overall selection of routing alternatives, the public does not seem to have had any formal opportunities to exert influence. Furthermore, as indicated in the description above, the attempts made by local residents to impetrate a referendum were categorically denied by the municipal government. As mentioned with regard to information, the Rail Administration did arrange several meetings throughout the mid-1990s. Though these were not formal opportunities to exert influence, they may have conveyed to community residents a willingness to listen and explain the decision alternatives and implications.

#### *Accommodation of local demands*

Just as in the case of Varberg, the municipality throughout the process stuck to its early agreement with the Rail Administration, despite considerable pressure from individual and collective local actors. The local newspaper did report one incident in which the municipality had withheld construction permits until the Rail Administration agreed to improve noise containment measures and safety features (HN 980424). On the main issue of where the tracks should be routed, however, the municipality has steadfastly supported the Rail Administration. Also similar to the Varberg case, however, the Rail Administration did comply with the demands of local pressure groups to attend public meetings in order to discuss the routing alternatives.

## **Båstad**

### *Chronology*

The expansion of the West Coast Line in Båstad was decided much earlier than in the other six communities, and construction began as early as 1994. The decision process leading up to the original decision as to whether or not to build a tunnel will not be covered here. That process has been analyzed in considerable detail (Falkemark 1998; Hydén and Baier 1998), and in terms of understanding public opinion, the events of October 1997 and what followed must reasonably overshadow the details of the original decision process.

The period immediately following the discovery of toxic chemicals in ground and surface water consisted entirely of crisis management: testing and monitoring of ground and surface water, blood tests of local residents, copious information to the general public, and efforts to

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<sup>70</sup> This information was provided by the Rail Administration's Falkenberg project manager, Rolf Jädersten, in a telephone interview on 7 August 2003 and in a follow-up electronic mail received on 8 August 2003.

remove all remaining toxic chemicals from the ground water reservoir. Crisis management was then followed by questions of responsibility and a snowball fight of accusations and disclaimers between the Rail Administration, the subcontractor (Skanska), the company that produced the sealant (Rhone Poulenc), the municipality, and myriad other public authorities and citizens groups (Dérans, Ryghammar and Sträng 1998).

Since the events of October 1997, the discussions, debates and reporting have focused primarily, though by no means exclusively, on four main issues. First and foremost, the debate has centered on whether or not the tunnel excavation should continue and at what economic cost and risk to the environment. Alongside this larger debate, local concerns have focused on the water supply problem. Farms and households whose water supply disappeared as groundwater tables drained into the tunnel caverns received water delivered by tank trucks for a period of several years. In addition to the inconveniences associated with this system, the solution proved not altogether sanitary. Residents atop the ridge have issued a steady stream of criticism of the Rail Administration's handling of the water issue, and many have demanded that the Rail Administration finance an extension of the municipal system. The third theme in the local discourse had dealt with the technical alternatives for completing the tunnel work at the lowest cost and with acceptable environmental consequences. Finally, the fourth theme, which gradually diminished over time, dealt with the compensatory measures taken (and not taken) to repair the damages caused during the three years of excavation work.

In May of 1999, the government commissioned the Rail Administration to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) investigating the feasibility and environmental consequences of completing the tunnels through the ridge (Swedish National Rail Administration 2000). In addition to test drilling, simulations and other forms of geological analyses, preparation of the EIA entailed fairly extensive consultation with the general public. The Rail Administration arranged five public consultation meetings between January and September 2000 intended to grant local residents the opportunity to provide input, raise questions and express concerns regarding possible future tunnel work. These meetings were announced in local media and 750 owners of property on top of the ridge also received written notification of upcoming meetings via mail. The first two meetings also received follow-up coverage in the local newspaper (NST 000118; NST 000323).

In June of 2000, the Rail Administration submitted a preliminary report to the municipality and to the County Administrative Board that estimated environmental implications of continued excavation. The report indicated that continued drilling could affect future farming yields (GP 000617; GP 000714). A few months later, a local pressure group submitted a formal letter of protest to the Government demanding that the

1992 ruling of the Water Court (the precursor to the Environmental Court) be enforced in the event that drilling be allowed to continue. The group also urged the government to approve continuation of the project only if it entailed no additional adverse effects for local agriculture (GP 000813). Only weeks later, the municipality of Båstad issued its formal statement on the preliminary EIA: a seething critique of the Rail Administration's descriptions of possible technological solutions. The municipality's head of environmental affairs called the evaluation of possible methods incomplete, and vehemently opposed the proposals to prepare the ridge by injecting sealants or freezing large sections of earth before drilling (GP 000830).

Nonetheless, in November of 2000, the Rail Administration submitted the Environmental Impact Assessment to the government, which sent the document to all officially defined stakeholders for consideration. In addition, the assessment was available for a period of several weeks for public examination and comment at both the public library and the Rail Administration's local branch office. Contrary to expectation, the public response was almost non-existent, and only four local residents bothered to submit written comments on the EIA. A member of the Government chose to take the less than enthusiastic public involvement as an indication that those who had questions and concerns had already had sufficient opportunities to express them. A local lawyer, who did submit a written comment on the behalf of 30 affected property owners, presented an alternative interpretation: that a feeling of resignation had infiltrated the local public psyche regarding participation in the tunnel decision process (GP 010224). In his words, "My input is like flea spit in the Mississippi - it's not going to make any difference" (GP 010224).

In the summer of 2001, the government granted its formal stamp of approval to continuation of the tunnel project. Three political and judicial hurdles remained: the necessary building permits from the municipality, approval from the Environmental Court, and funding from the *Riksdag*. While all three of these were to fall into place eventually, none of them did so before the second mail survey conducted in September of 2002. The Environmental Court of Appeals approved the necessary permits in October of 2003, and Båstad municipality granted building permits before 2003 came to an end. Construction work resumed in March of 2004.

#### *Information and dialogue*

From the time of the crisis linked to the detection of toxic chemicals in ground and surface waters (October 1997), both the Rail Administration and the municipal government have issued voluminous information in many different forms to area residents. Directly after the spill became known, a series of public meetings were arranged to assure that all potentially affected individuals received the necessary medical attention,

and to reassure the general public of the relatively limited scope of the damage. As the Rail Administration once again turned its attention to the possibility of continuing excavation work, informational efforts became more institutionalized and proactive. The local office issued two regular newsletters, one printed four times annually directed toward the general community, and the second printed weekly and directed toward everyone who owns property within the so called 'area of influence' (the area determined most likely to be affected by future construction work).

In addition to these two regular mailers, several other sources of information are available that require initiative on the part of the citizen. The Rail Administration runs an exhibit at their local office providing information regarding the status of the project and illustrating the possible techniques to be used. Detailed documentation about the planning process, including announcements of upcoming meetings and minutes from all previous meetings are posted both on the municipality's website as well as the Rail Administration's own website for the Hallandås project. Finally, the Rail Administration has arranged innumerable meetings on various aspects of the tunnel project, some open to the broader public and others restricted to residents of specific areas.

#### *Influence*

As with the flow of information, opportunities to participate in the decision process were much more ample in Båstad than any of the other communities. The Rail Administration arranged five meetings in conjunction with the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The objective of these meetings was expressly to encourage the general public to influence the decision outcome by contributing information, posing questions, and commenting on various aspects of the tunnel project. As mentioned above, the completed EIA was also available for public perusal and scrutiny for several weeks in the beginning of 2001. After the completion of the EIA, the Rail Administration continued to arrange approximately three meetings every year that were open to the general public. While these later meetings bore a similar name to the first set of meetings held in 2000 ('Consultation forum Hallandsås'), the stated objective of the later meetings was to disseminate information and encourage dialogue.

While the shift from 'influence' to 'dialogue' seemingly represents a move away from the ideals of participatory democracy, in other respects the meetings came to approximate this ideal more closely. The most important modification had to do with setting the agenda. For the meetings held in 2000 and 2001, the Rail Administration themselves decided which issues would be covered during the first hour of the meeting. (The second hour was reserved for questions and comments from the floor.) Beginning in 2002, however, the Rail Administration invited representatives of several organized stakeholder groups to participate

in deciding which issues should be covered.<sup>71</sup> Attendance at the first meetings was around 125 while later meetings attracted a scant twenty.

In addition to these consultation meetings announced and open to the general public, the Rail Administration also held meetings with residents of the most affected areas atop the ridge. In terms of more formal channels of influence, residents also had the opportunity to voice criticism and concerns at the proceedings of the Environmental Court. As a part of the review of the Rail Administration's application regarding the handling of the ground water in continued excavation work, the Court held hearings en situ during April of 2002; these proceedings were open to the public and public input was allowed via legal representatives.

#### *Accommodation of local demands*

Though efforts to prevent the continuation of the tunnel excavation have been fruitless, the Rail Administration has made a number of concessions regarding the planning process itself and how the work should proceed. Perhaps the largest such concession came in the Rail Administration's agreement in 2001 to finance an expansion of the municipal water system should construction work continue (GP 010913). Expanding the municipal water system eliminated the residents' dependence on well water and therefore groundwater. The Rail Administration made good on its promise and work began in December of 2002, after the second survey (GP 021210). In addition, the Rail Administration decided to lead the water that drained into the tunnels directly out into the ocean rather than into local streams (HD 010109). This decision was partially in response to demands from a local fishing club, who feared that the Ph levels of the water from the tunnels might harm fish life in the streams. A few other decisions that resulted from local demands included noise containment measures at the northern tunnel opening, and the arrangement of extra meetings to discuss specific issues relating to the tunnel project.<sup>72</sup>

## **Glumslöv**

### *Chronology*

As in the other communities, the decision alternatives regarding the routing of the new rail through Glumslöv were outlined and narrowed down in the early part of the 1990s. During this phase, the Rail Administration initiated contact with the municipality of Landskrona

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<sup>71</sup> Minutes from the meeting held 27 February 2002 indicate that the following parties were invited to these preparatory meetings: the local pressure group, local branches of the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF) and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (Naturskyddsföreningen), the municipality, the Environmental Assessment team (Miljögranskningsgruppen), and the Rail Administration (MGG PM 254, p. 4).

<sup>72</sup> Information provided via electronic mail correspondence with Linda Haddemo, Rail Administration public relations officer for the Hallandsås project, 17 December 2004.

and with potentially affected property owners to inform them of the assessment and evaluation work underway. According to the Rail Administration's own account, Administration officials employed a new approach in the local project which consisted in facilitating the formation of local reference groups to comment on various decision alternatives. The Rail Administration hoped that this early involvement would preempt and deter citizen attempts to influence decision alternatives at later stages when such intervention might imply additional costs and new feasibility studies (Rail Administration Newsletter, December 1994). The Rail Administration also invited public input by displaying the detailed plan for the routing of the rail past Glumslöv at the Glumslöv library in November of 1996, and arranging a series of meetings with affected homeowners (Rail Administration newsletter, November 1996).

The participatory approach appears to have been only partially successful. In January of 1997, residents of Glumslöv were threatening to take the case to the European Court in the hope of forcing a repeal of the decision and a rerouting of the line farther east and not contiguous to the town (AN 970129). By February of the same year, around 60 formal appeals had been lodged against the detailed plan, delaying the beginning of construction (AN 970222). In September of 1997, a group of Glumslöv residents filed a formal appeal against the detailed plan first to the county administrative board, which ruled in favor of the prevailing plan, and then to the Supreme Administrative Court (*Regeringsrätten*, AN 970709). The latter also ruled in favor of the Rail Administration's plan. After years of conflict, the ground breaking ceremony took place in January of 1998 (AN 980110), marking the beginning of a three-year period of large scale construction work in the small community of Glumslöv. The segment was inaugurated on 6 January 2001.

#### *Information and dialogue*

The most intense periods of active information dissemination were during the mid-1990s, when an average of four newsletters per year were sent to virtually all the households in Glumslöv.<sup>73</sup> According to the Rail Administration's own opinion survey, 80 percent of a sample of 300 people who received these newsletters remembered having received information about the railway expansion (Rail Administration Newsletter, May 1997).

Beginning with the construction phase in 1998, the Rail Administration arranged a small exhibit with scaled models of the completed railway and detailed information regarding construction techniques. Furthermore, the Rail Administration invited the public to visit the construction site itself on two occasions in October of 1998 and again in October of 1999 (AN 981026; AN 991016). According to both the media

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Rail Administration project manager, Jan Källqvist, on 14 August 2003.

and the Rail Administration's project manager for the Glumslöv segment, both of these events drew several hundred visitors (AN 991018 reports around a thousand visitors). The exhibit itself attracted considerably less interest, drawing only a few hundred visitors per year.<sup>74</sup>

Little information was disseminated actively in Glumslöv from 2000 onwards, and the exhibit mentioned above was dismantled in September of 2001.

#### *Influence*

The Rail Administration anticipated protests and controversy in Glumslöv. For this reason, extra efforts were made to encourage input in the early planning stages in part to preempt conflict. In 1997, the detailed plan of the local routing was made available for public perusal and comment through an exhibit at the Glumslöv library. As mentioned above, the local community took advantage of this opportunity to exert influence, submitting approximately 60 formal objections to the plans.<sup>75</sup>

#### *Accommodation of local demands*

Coverage of the issue in local newspapers and the Rail Administration's own information does not make any mention of instances of the Rail Administration accommodating local demands. One home owner successfully lobbied the municipality and the Rail Administration to have his property expropriated.<sup>76</sup>

## **Lund**

#### *Chronology*

The Rail Administration presented the municipality of Lund with four routing alternatives in the fall of 1993, indicating a preference for the option to lay the second set of tracks alongside the existing set. In large part due to a conflict between the municipality and the Rail Administration regarding the routing of a track for cargo traffic, the municipality did not make a formal decision regarding its preference of routing alternatives until January of 1997. During this interim period, a local pressure group made several attempts to persuade the Rail Administration to make one of two adjustments to their routing plan. They wanted the Rail Administration either to expand the expropriation zone from the legally required 15 meters from the planned track to 40 meters, or for the Rail Administration to change its position altogether and select an alternative that would imply moving the line farther to the east (AN

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<sup>74</sup> Information regarding the number of visitors at the exhibit was attained in an interview with project manager Jan Källqvist on 14 August 2003.

<sup>75</sup> According to Birger Löqvist, the Rail Administration's head planner of the routing through Glumslöv, these 60 complaints actually were one and the same, signed and submitted by 60 different home owners. These homeowners objected to the routing of the railway through Glumslöv altogether. Interview conducted on 18 April 2005.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Birger Löqvist, head planner of the routing through Glumslöv, 18 April 2005.

970124). Both of these demands were justified with reference to the noise, risks (potential accidents and electromagnetic fields), and the negative impact on property values that the new rail would imply for the people residing along the old route. The day before the city council meeting in which the issue was put to a vote, representatives of the council attended a hearing arranged by the pressure group to discuss the issue (AN 970130). Despite the hearing, council members voted overwhelmingly (60 to 4) to endorse the Rail Administration's detailed plan to build the second set of tracks next to the existing set (AN 970131).

A pressure group from the affected neighborhood did not delay in appealing the decision. Within two months, a total of 160 letters and documents had been sent to the county administrative board, most objecting to the fact that the municipality had not sufficiently evaluated all the alternatives (AN 970308). By the end of the year, the county administrative board of Skåne had made its decision, ruling in favor of the city council's decision. The pressure group, who in the wake of the problems with the Hallandsås tunnel now accused the Rail Administration of intentionally miscalculating the cost of the Administration's preferred routing (AN 971013), posted a letter on their website in which 728 residents protested the Rail Administration's decision.<sup>77</sup> Before the end of 1997, sixty home owners affected by the railway expansion lodged a formal appeal of the county administrative board's ruling, and the matter began its extended sojourn through the halls of the Government (AN 971113). Five and a half years and two elections later, the Government ruled in favor of the Rail Administration's plan in Lund. The announcement of this decision came in February of 2003, well after the survey period.

Despite the fact that the matter formally was out of the hands of both the Rail Administration and the municipality, the pressure group continued to exert pressure primarily via their own website but also by attracting the attention of local newspapers. The two main issues continued to be noise control, and that the pressure group's suggested route would be better and cheaper. Several important actors weighed in on the side of the pressure group on the matter of noise. Both the National Housing Board (*Boverket*) and the National Franchise Board for Environment Protection (*Koncessionsnämnden för miljöskydd*) stated that the Rail Administration had underestimated the noise level and that the actual level would exceed the legal limit (AN 980304; AN 981221). On the other hand, the National Environmental Protection Agency (*Naturvårdsverket*) made the opposite assessment, stating that noise levels with the Rail Administration's plan would be acceptable (AN 990420). The

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<sup>77</sup> The letter was posted in October 1997 at <http://aquaria.rydnet.lysator.liu.se/index.html> and the pressure group was called *Banbrytarna* (literally 'Track breakers,' but also meaning 'Pioneers').

Rail Administration conceded to the assessments of the former, and agreed to expropriate another eight properties (AN 990510). With these minor changes in place, the Government ruled in favor of the Rail Administration, and construction began in the summer of 2003.

#### *Information and dialogue*

The Rail Administration arranged meetings to invite public input during the preliminary planning phase in the early 1990s, and a second set of meetings with a more informational aim when the detailed plan was made public in 1996. After the detailed plan had been appealed in late 1996, however, the Rail Administration had no regular information efforts in Lund.

#### *Influence*

The property owners most directly affected by the project created an opportunity for exerting influence by appealing the detailed plan. In addition, in June 1998 the property owners were given the opportunity to respond to the written statements of administrative entities such as the Housing Board and the Environmental Protection Agency. Almost forty property owners took advantage of this opportunity and submitted written statements (Regeringsbeslut F98-1995). This event was not, however, mentioned in local newspapers. The municipality also had the opportunity to respond to the statements issued by these administrative bodies. The issue was therefore temporarily back on the city council's table in the spring of 2000. During this time, the affected home owners twice issued a demand via the local newspaper that the city council offer an opportunity for the public to comment on the issue before making its response to the Government (AN 000127; AN 000310). No reports of any such public consultation ever occurring appeared in the newspaper.

#### *Accommodation of local demands*

As in many of the other case study communities, the prolonged and dogged efforts of the local pressure group to overturn the municipality's and the Rail Administration's selection of routing alternatives were to no avail. The Rail Administration did, however, concede to residents' demands regarding better measures to reduce noise pollution, and agreed to expropriate more properties than initially decided. These concessions were mentioned in local and regional news reporting. As in several of the other cases, these concessions resulted less from the Rail Administration's responsive approach to planning and decision-making, and more from direct pressure from other government entities involved in the case.

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Table 3.1 presents a summary of the decision processes in the seven case study communities. This table provides the foundation for the more structured comparison of the Rail Administration's handling of the decision-making processes in these seven communities presented in Chapter seven. Chapter seven builds on this summary and reduces the qualitative data in order to rank the communities with respect to actual opportunities for citizen influence, and the quantity of information and dialogue in each decision process. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 present the next two steps in this reduction, which then allows for a more analytical comparison of the seven decision processes. The fourth column in Table 3.1 presents the main turns of events not related to the Rail Administration's handling of the decision process which may conceivably affect procedural assessments. These will be taken into account in the community level comparisons presented in Chapter seven.

As the descriptions have revealed, numerous other institutions, actors and organizations have also had a hand in determining the course of the decision processes. This state of affairs is today much more the rule than the exception when political decisions are taken and implemented, and state institutions increasingly rely on the services of consultants and local organizations as formal and informal partners in the decision process (Pierre 2000). The comparative analyses presented in Chapter seven focus on the Rail Administration's own efforts and actions. This focus is more in line with the theoretical underpinnings of this study, which center around the claim that consent to a political institution builds on how that institution wields its authority.

Table 3.1 The decision processes in seven communities

	Information and dialogue	Opportunities for influence	Accommodation of local demands	Other
Åsa	Three community wide efforts: one newsletter, one meeting and one open house. Several large meetings in 1993 and 1997	Three meetings in 1992 and 1993 in conjunction with selection of routing alternative	Concession to municipal government to construct a rescue tunnel. Refusal to allocate funds for commuter station.	Construction work began December 2001 and was completed in 2004 (after the second survey).
Frillesås	One large public meeting and one community wide mailer near the survey. On site office.	Three meetings in 1992 and 1993 in conjunction with selection of routing alternative	Citizens attempted on several occasions to reverse the routing decision but to no avail.	Municipal government agreed to fund commuter station. Construction work began January 2001.
Varberg	Two community wide mailers (the 2 <sup>nd</sup> in 2000). Two exhibits attracting moderate interest in late 2001 and early 2002.	One consultation meeting in 1999. Two consultation exhibits (2001 and 2002) inviting public commentary on expansion plans.	Formal evaluation of a routing alternative suggested by a citizen attending consultation meeting in 1999.	Repeated refusals from municipality to hold referendum regarding routing. Construction projected to begin 2010.
Falkenberg	Occasional meetings, some arranged by parties other than the Rail Administration; the last held shortly before the survey.	Several smaller meetings in mid-1990s. Larger meetings on routing alternatives but with limited possibilities for influence.	One minor concession to the municipality regarding noise control measures.	Repeated refusal from municipality to hold referendum regarding routing of rail. Construction began in 2004.
Båstad	Extensive informational efforts.	Extensive public consultation efforts (meetings with property owners and the general public.)	Expansion of the municipal water system.	The tunnel. Construction work resumed in March 2004.
Glumslöv	Two open house events in 1998 and 1999. Many mailers in mid-1990s. Exhibit at site office.	Detailed plan made available for public examination and commentary in 1996.	Expropriation of one more property than planned.	Construction work completed in January of 2001.
Lund	From 1997 onwards, none.	Chance to make statements during Government's consideration of appealed detailed plan.	Improved measures to reduce noise pollution and expropriation of 8 more properties than planned.	Several public offices supported local citizens' concerns about noise pollution. Construction began 2003.

Sources: See case descriptions in this chapter and discussion of materials in Chapter four.

# 4 Data and Measurement

As this study purports to examine the individual level implications of institutional variations, in this case approaches to decision formation, it requires both macro and micro level data. The preceding chapter already presented the background descriptions of the institutional factors; the selection and use of sources for that analysis will be discussed here. In addition, this study seeks to explore the direction of causality in relationships between various attitudes, which also places specific requirements on the data. Panel attitudinal data, collected in two mail surveys administered approximately two years apart, provides the base for the exploration of the implications of procedural fairness assessments for consent. This chapter discusses the practicalities of these various rounds and forms of data collection. This chapter also defines and details the way in which the surveys measured the components of procedural fairness and consent delineated in the theoretical discussions in Chapter two.

## **The surveys**

The bulk of the empirical analyses build upon opinion data collected in two mail surveys. Each of those surveys, administered in April 2000 and September 2002, were sent to 500 individuals in each of the seven case study communities. All of those individuals who responded to the survey in 2000 and who resided at the same address in 2002 also received the second survey in 2002. The resulting panel data set provides the opportunity to track changes in attitudes over time, and also enables a more rigorous examination of causality in the relationship between procedural fairness assessments and indicators of consent.

The two survey questionnaires were identical with the exception of minor corrections and additions. In addition to questions regarding procedural fairness and consent, the questionnaires asked respondents to assess the implications of the railway expansion for themselves personally and for their community of residence. Furthermore, the survey included questions regarding interest in politics in general, perceived

ability to exert influence in political issues, and respondents' interest in participating more actively in political decision making. The items included in these two mail surveys, in particular those relating to the anticipated implications of the railway project, were to a large extent distilled from the results of a telephone survey conducted in 1999, also directed at the residents of the same seven case study communities. The telephone survey included numerous open-ended questions regarding the Rail Administration and the expected implications of the expansion project, and the answers to these questions provided the basis for formulating the mail survey questionnaire (Boholm 2000a analyzes and describes this telephone survey).

The first of the two mail surveys, conducted in 2000, was sent to 500 randomly selected individuals in each of the seven case study communities, resulting in a sample total of 3,500. In all of the communities except Lund, the sample was drawn from among those individuals who had the community as their postal address (i.e. not from the municipality of Varberg, only from those who resided in the city of Varberg). In Lund, in contrast, the sample was drawn from a relatively small proportion of Lund's residents, in particular from nine postal codes (ca 9,200 residents) that cover the northwest quadrant of the city, the area affected by the railway expansion project. The decision to draw the Lund sample from only a portion of the population built on the results of the 1999 telephone survey. In that survey, the sample was drawn in the same way as in the other communities, and the results indicated that a full fifth of the Lund respondents reported having little or no knowledge of the issue (Grimes 2000b, 116).

After four written reminders, the 2000 mail survey attained an overall response rate of 50 percent. Men and women responded evenly, though the smaller communities (Åsa, Frillesås, and Glumslöv) were slightly overrepresented and the others somewhat underrepresented. In terms of age, people between 50 and 64 were overrepresented, and those between 15 and 29 were underrepresented. Aside from these two discrepancies, respondents were representative of the population in terms of age distribution (Grimes 2001).

Though difficult to verify, respondents are in all likelihood more interested in, knowledgeable of, and perhaps more affected by the railway expansion than those who did not respond. Those who returned the survey may also be those who feel more critical of the decision process and outcome. Aggregate level descriptive statistics reflected in the survey material may therefore not be entirely representative of the population at large. However, considerable variation exists on all of the attitudes include in the analyses in subsequent chapters, and given that it is the variation in and relationships among attitudes that are under examination, the representativeness of descriptive statistics poses less of a problem.

The sample for the survey in 2002 consisted of both repeat respondents and randomly selected individuals. The 1,575 individuals who had responded to the 2000 survey and who still lived at the same address received the 2002 survey as well; an additional 1,925 randomly selected individuals were added to the repeat respondents so that the total sample in 2002 also reached 3,500, evenly distributed over the seven communities. Table 3.2 shows the response and retention rates for these two surveys.

*Table 4.1 Response rates for 2000 and 2002 mail surveys*

	Sample	Responses	Response rate	Adjusted retention rate
2000 Survey	3,500	1,725	50%	
2002 Panel respondents	1,575	1,218	35% (of 2000 sample)	80%
2002 'New' respondents	1,925	1,111	60%	
2002 Total	3,500	2,329	69%	

Note: The adjusted retention rate is the percentage of people who responded in 2000 and received a survey in 2002, and who also responded in 2002.

While it was not possible to determine whether those who answered the 2000 survey were representative of the population at large in their attitudes toward the railway issue, it is possible to assess whether those who abstained from answering a second time in 2002 differed systematically from those who did answer a second time. In other words, was attrition among panel respondents completely random, or did respondents holding certain opinions or with certain characteristics tend to respond the second time more than others? Fortunately, attrition seems to be largely at random. Repeat respondents do not differ from those who opted not to respond the second time on any background characteristics such as gender, education, or interest in politics. More importantly, the two groups are identical with respect to assessments of the planning process and of the substance of the issue. The only point on which they differ with respect to attitudes toward the West Coast Rail, is that repeat respondents expressed a somewhat higher level of interest in the issue, though the difference was substantively small (0.2 on a 5 point scale). Repeat respondents were also somewhat younger than the respondents who did not respond a second time.

### **Macro level empirical materials**

The descriptive analyses of the decision processes offered in Chapter three employed primarily two types of sources: the local print media,

and documents and information provided by the Rail Administration. These contextual descriptions provide the basis for the analyses presented in Chapter seven, which explore the attitudinal implications of the various approaches to decision formation seen in the seven case study communities. The depictions of the issue attained from these two sources are invariably fragmentary and perhaps even partial. Some local residents have extensive first-hand experience with the Rail Administration and inevitably see the planning and decision-making process in entirely different terms than those delineated in the previous chapter. The local print media and the Rail Administration's own informational materials are, however, the main sources of information for most of the respondents themselves.<sup>78</sup> The survey data indicate local newspapers have been the single most important source of information regarding the railway expansion in all of the communities; approximately three-fourths of all respondents indicate that local newspapers constitute the most important source of information regarding the issue. Four out of ten respondents indicated having received information from the Rail Administration, and twenty percent reported having attained information at an informational exhibit arranged by the Rail Administration. Appendix B contains a complete list of all of the newspaper articles and informational materials referred to in the previous chapter.

The newspapers included in the media review vary among the communities and somewhat over time (see Table 4.2). The media review encompassed a larger number of newspapers later in the period studied due to the availability of electronically searchable archives, and one newspaper (*Arbetet Nyheterna*) was discontinued in September of 2000. *Norra Halland*, not available electronically at all, is only included from May of 2000 and onwards. *Hallands Nyheter*, the main newspaper for both Varberg and Falkenberg, is included in the review from 1998 onwards. The description of the issue in Varberg and Falkenberg during the period before 1998 relies on *Göteborgs-Posten*, which has provided coverage on the main events in both of these communities.

The events in Båstad have been chronicled using a somewhat different approach due to the dual circumstances of a considerable volume of reporting on the issue, combined with the fact that the main local newspaper, *Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar*, is not available electronically. The description of the events that have transpired in Båstad have therefore built on a review of the reporting in *Göteborgs-Posten*, on existing social science research on the issue, on the Rail Administration's own information, and on knowledge of the issue attained through attend-

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<sup>78</sup> Generally speaking, the Rail Administration's archives and informational material, as well as interviews with Rail Administration officials provide the basis of the description of the decision process. The media analysis was used to flesh out this description, to determine the likelihood that local residents might have been aware of participatory opportunities and the like, and to identify alternative explanations for community level variations.

ance at several of the consultation meetings that have been open to the public. As indicated in Table 4.2, *Göteborgs-Posten* does not have any subscribers in Båstad. It has, however, reported on the main turns of events in the issue and allowed for a reasonable, if somewhat coarsely grained, depiction of the matter. This depiction then provided a means of conducting a more surgical examination of how the local newspaper covered the main events. Previous research has indicated that the local newspaper has kept a fairly neutral tone in its reporting on the issue. The analysis examined the local newspaper coverage during the period immediately following the chemicals spill and concluded that reporting in the local newspaper was quite even-handed, neither overtly critical nor supportive of the tunnel project or of particular parties involved (Håkansson 2000). To the extent that this holds true over time, reviewing *Göteborgs-Posten* rather than the local newspaper does not, therefore, mean missing a particular local framing of the issue.

Table 4.2 Newspapers included in the media review and percentage of households in each community who subscribe to each paper

	Period reviewed	Åsa	Frill	Varb	Falk	Båst	Glum	Lund
Göteborgs-Posten	1994-2002	71	38	9	4			
Norra Halland	5/00-9/02	33	31					
Hallands Nyheter	1998-2002	6	30	72	74			
Nordvästra Skånes Tid.	1997-2002					64	59	
Arbetet Nyheterna*	1996-2000						12	14
Helsingborgs Dagbladet	1997-2002						24	
Sydsvenska Dagbladet	1997-2002						10	58

Sources: *Tidnings Statistik 2002* and *Tidnings Statistik 1999*

\*The newspaper *Arbetet Nyheterna* went bankrupt in 2000; the last issue was published on 30 September 2000.

Rail Administration informational material provides the second source for the account of the Rail Administration handling of the planning and decision process in the seven communities. As the descriptions in Chapter three indicated, the Rail Administration distributed information in various forms and on various time frames in the seven case study communities. Rail Administration archives especially regarding information and consultation during the early planning phase were incomplete and in some cases simply nonexistent. Descriptions of the event history in the early 1990s therefore build predominantly on interviews with Rail Administration officials. Correspondence via electronic

mail and interviews with Rail Administration officials has helped to flesh out the picture when necessary. While this approach introduces an element of uncertainty into the accounts, it provides the only cost effective means of fleshing out the event history, and is sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this study.<sup>79</sup> Since the analyses in Chapter seven seek to explain community level differences in assessments of the decision processes in the year 2002, some degree of inaccuracy regarding the planning phase in the early 1990s can be tolerated.

### Concepts and Measurements

Before turning to the empirical analyses, one final practical matter must be addressed. Chapter two introduced the main concepts involved in this study. This section further elucidates how these concepts are measured at the most concrete level: the survey questionnaires. The two indicators of consent were, to reiterate: 1) an overall trust for and approval of the authority, and 2) an inclination to accept the authority's decisions and rulings (Table 4.3 presents a summary of concepts; Appendix A also lists the survey questions in full in both Swedish and English).

Considerable ambiguity surrounds the concept of political trust, which has led to noted variation in approaches to measurement. Citrin and Muste (1993) trace the concept through 30 years of research, finding that empirical measurement of political trust has often included hypothesized sources of trust, including both approval of the output of the political process, as well as propriety in decision making. While including multiple items increases the reliability of empirical analyses, it renders it impossible to discern which attitudes and assessments contribute to or erode confidence in political institutions. A more scaled down measurement is therefore used here. Institutional trust builds on two questions, one which simply asks to what extent the respondent trusts the Rail Administration, and the other which asks respondents to gauge how well the Rail Administration has handled the railway expansion in their community.

The question regarding trust for the Rail Administration appeared in a battery of questions regarding trust for various political and societal institutions and read, "How much do you trust the following authorities or corporations?" In addition to the Rail Administration, the list included the Road Administration, local and national politicians, the Environmental Court, and the construction company Skanska. The response alternatives ranged from "no trust" (zero) to "a great deal of trust" (six). The second question included in the institutional trust index presented respondents with the following: "Several authorities have been involved in the new West Coast line. How well do you think the

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<sup>79</sup> As mentioned above, electronically searchable archives for most of the newspapers included in this review are not available for the initial years of the planning phase.

following have handled the expansion project in your own community?" The response scale ranged from "very badly" (zero) to "very well" (four). Responses to this second question were converted to a zero to six scale before computing the mean index. The two items were fairly strongly correlated with one another ( $r=0.63$  for both 2000 and 2002) and the index shows good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.76 for both rounds).

*Table 4.3 Operationalizations of procedural fairness and consent*

<b>Procedural fairness</b>	
Effective influence	Perceived ability to influence the decision outcome relative to desired level of influence.
Public justification	Assessments of the overseeing authority's behavior in processing the local decision. Aspects measured: receptivity, consideration, and information.
<b>Consent</b>	
Institutional trust	Overall confidence in the overseeing authority. Aspects measured: trust, and assessment of how the issue has been handled overall.
Decision acceptance	Agreement with the decision outcome.

As mentioned in Chapter two, most theoretical discussions of political consent advance voluntary compliance with political decisions as the most apt indicator of consent. What deference to a political decision entails depends of course on the power entrusted in the authority and the nature of the decision in question. Decision acceptance with respect to the police (Tyler 1990) or the U.S. Congress (Tyler 1994) may entail obeying laws, while in relation to the courts it may entail accepting a ruling (Tyler, Casper and Fisher 1989). Many political decisions, however, do not imply a direct punishment or constraint on individual behavior. Instead, compliance may mean accepting decision outcomes even if those outcomes clash with one's own preferences or interests.

Few of the existing studies that have sought to explain citizens' willingness to defer to political decisions have had the luxury of examining variation in actual behavior at the individual level. Scholz and Lubell (1998a), who analyze attitudinal data linked to actual tax returns, offer one notable exception. Levi's (1997) study of voluntary conscription also examines a behavioral indicator of consent, but at the aggregate level (with countries at various times of armed conflict being the unit of analysis). Most other studies have instead asked respondents to report their *inclination* to honor future political decisions (both rules and rulings) in general, and therefore introduce a hypothetical element in the investigation. For example, Tyler (1990) asks respondents to assess

their own likelihood of obeying certain laws in the future, or complying with water rations (Tyler 1997), and May (2004) uses the same approach with respect to building contractors' predictions regarding their own future compliance with building codes. Other studies use an operationalization that is even more tenuously linked to actual behavior, namely willingness to accept an unfavorable outcome in a hypothetical issue (Tyler 1994).

This study operationalizes compliance as a person's willingness to accept the selected local routing of the rebuilt West Coast Line through their local community. The survey question addressing this willingness simply asked whether the respondent supported or opposed the planned local routing of the new rail: "Are you for or against the railway expansion through your community as it is planned?" Response alternatives ranged "very much against" (zero) to "very much for" (four). While this question may seem somewhat of a blunt instrument to measure willingness to defer to a decision outcome, it offers the significant advantage that it measures a person's position to a real (i.e. not hypothetical), current, and quite salient issue.

Turning to the perceived procedural fairness variables, assessments are captured in two distinct dimensions already discussed in Chapter two: effective influence and public justification. The first dimension of the procedural judgments, *effective influence*, captures satisfaction with perceived ability to exert influence on the planning of the railway expansion in the respondent's own community. This aspect approximates Dahl's (1979) criterion of effective participation, which states that a member of a group must have adequate opportunity to advance his or her preferences, including also the opportunity to place items on the agenda. The significance of the perceived ability to participate and exert influence depends, however, on whether such influence was sought or desired. The perceived opportunity and ability to participate and influence may be more important for the legitimacy of a political process than actual participation and perceived influence (Warren 1996, Dahl 2000). Citizens who feel they have had no say in an issue would probably not feel that the legitimacy of the political process was compromised if they did not desire such influence in the first place.

This reasoning suggests that a qualified measure of perceived influence is more suitable than a simple and straight-forward question regarding perceived influence. Such a qualified measure of influence is especially appropriate in this study since the population from which the sample was drawn included all residents of affected communities and was not restricted to identified stakeholders or active citizens. Effective influence therefore comprises two items (see Table 4.3): perceived ability to influence, and desired level of influence. Respondents who felt they held no sway but felt that opportunities for citizen input were sufficient (even if they were small) would therefore have a higher value on the effective influence measure than a respondent who desired or

even sought to influence the decision outcome and felt that opportunities to do so were insufficient, or that their efforts to sway the decision outcome were to no avail.

Very concretely, the two items making up the effective influence variable were: "Do you feel that you have been able to influence the planning of the railway expansion in your community?" and "Do you wish that you had had greater opportunities to influence the planning of the railway expansion in your community?" Both response sets consisted of a scale from "no, not at all" (zero) to "yes, definitely" (four). The effective influence variable is simply the first minus the second, and this scale was then also converted to a zero to six scale. Higher values indicate greater satisfaction with the self-assessed influence.

The second dimension of procedural fairness, *public justification*, deals with assessments of how authorities have behaved in interacting with the general public. To reiterate, the public justification aspect touches upon a theme in deliberative democracy theory, namely that more, and more rational, discussion in issues of public and political relevance produces more refined decision outcomes, and generates greater understanding of and hence support for political decisions (Cohen 1997 [1989], 145; Benhabib 1996). Such understanding enhances the democratic legitimacy of a political system, as political decisions concur with public opinion, which by extension reduces the need for coercion in implementing political decisions (Dryzek 2000, 85).

Public justification comprises three components that deal with how authorities interact with the residents of the affected communities. 1) Receptivity refers to the perception that the Rail Administration has listened to citizen input. While receptivity may seem to lie conceptually near effective influence, effective influence relates directly to the person's own desired and experienced ability to exert influence. Receptivity refers instead to whether the Rail Administration is seen as receptive to citizens' concerns more generally. In each case study community, residents have made attempts to influence the local alternatives for the railway expansion; it is conceivable that respondents have followed the efforts of active individual citizens or pressure groups through media reporting. Assessments of these efforts and the Rail Administration's response may shape assessments of the authority's receptivity. 2) An essential component in successful public debate and even more so in meaningful participation is the open exchange of information, without which non-expert citizens may have difficulty in understanding how an issue affects them and lack the means to participate in the debate (Bohman 1996, 16). Local residents' assessments of the information (exhibits, meetings, and mailers) provided by the Rail Administration constitutes the second component of public justification. 3) Respondents' perceptions of whether the Rail administration has shown consideration for the local community is the third component of public justification.

The survey items pertaining to public justification all followed the same format. Respondents were presented with the following text: "With respect to the railway expansion project in your community, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Rail Administration? a) The Rail Administration listens to local citizens; b) The Rail Administration does a good job providing information about the railway expansion; c) The Rail Administration does not show consideration for the local community." Response alternative ranged from "Disagree completely" (zero) to "Agree completely" (six). The negative phrasing of the third statement avoids the problem of an acquiescent response set, and responses were reversed before creating the index. Factor analysis shows that these three components comprise one factor with satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.55 in the 2000 data and 0.51 in the 2002 data).

### **Eliminating the competition: alternative hypotheses and control variables**

As indicated in the discussion of political trust and compliance presented in Chapter two, existing research suggests two main competing explanations that must be accounted for in order to advance a more credible analysis of the implications of perceived procedural fairness. The first relates to assessments of the substance of a decision. This explanation encompasses two aspects known to play a role in reactions to decisions: how well a given outcome serves a person's own well-being (Bok 1997; McAllister 1999) or how well a given outcome conforms to a person's sense of distributive justice (Kumlin 2002). Previous research has indicated that self-interest considerations tend to play a relatively large role in shaping opinions in issues that are highly salient and in which the implications are relatively clear (Green 1988; Sears and Funk 1990). Land use issues certainly fit the description. The second factor that may color all of the attitudes examined here—both perceived procedural fairness and indicators of consent—relates to a person's overall orientation toward political institutions. Each of these can be addressed empirically in various ways, and the operationalization must be tailored to the empirical case.

The parallel issues of defining and measuring the two concepts self-interest and distributive justice have each spawned considerable literatures. Self-interest can and has been defined narrowly to include only short-term material losses or gains, or broadly to encompass virtually anything that an individual might hold of value (Eriksson 2005). Even with a more circumscribed definition of self-interest, it may still be multifaceted in any given issue. In the expansion of the West Coast Line, short-term material gains and losses may include changes in property values for those residing near the track, in access to the railway system, in transportation costs and time gained or lost for

commuters, or possible job opportunities arising from local economic growth or decline. Citizens who expect no direct benefit or losses from the new railway may feel that the opportunity costs imply a loss for themselves—a foregone capital investment means funding for other public projects. With a somewhat broader definition, however, self-interest may be considered to include reactions to noise pollution, disturbances arising from the construction work, expropriations of property imbued with personal memories and meaning, changes in views of a cherished landscape, improved safety, barrier effects, risks to health and the local environment, and cleaner air from the reductions in road traffic on a nearby highway. Concerns regarding all of these factors were detected in a telephone survey conducted in the seven case study communities in 1999 (Boholm 2000b).

Land use issues may also include dimensions of conflict that relate to distributive justice. Citizens might oppose a facility not because it poses risks or annoyances, but because they feel that a particular area already hosts a disproportionately large share of the burdens of society's resources. With respect a railway construction project, distributive justice considerations might arise if people feel that their local community has become a corridor for all manner of transport and energy infrastructure. While forming such corridors may offer logistical benefits in terms of maintenance of the various systems, it also results in a skewed distribution of benefits and burdens (Kunreuther, Slovic and MacGregor 1996; Vari 1996). And unlike a road or a power grid, some small communities along a railway enjoy no direct benefit at all from the railway, as they have local station.

With some noteworthy exceptions, few distributive justice types of concerns have arisen at public meetings, in letters to the editor, and in local media reporting. However, the controversy in both Åsa and Frillesås centered heavily on whether or not those two towns would receive stations for commuter trains. Similarly, funding for the tunnel in Varberg has been a main point of contention in that local debate. Recall that the Rail Administration agreed to the municipality's preference under the stipulation that the municipality cover the additional costs incurred in constructing the three kilometer tunnel under the city center. These disputes do relate to the distribution of benefits and burdens at the city or regional level, and may certainly have contributed to shaping attitudes toward the issue and toward the Rail Administration.

The ways in which the railway expansion might affect residents' interests and sense of distributive justice are therefore numerous, vary from community to community and certainly vary from individual to individual. In order to ensure that all of these various considerations are accounted for in subsequent analyses of the role of procedural considerations in shaping attitudes toward the Rail Administration and its decisions, I use a rather broad measure of reactions to the substance of the issue.

*Utility*, the variable used to capture respondents' assessments of the substance of the issue, builds on a set of four questions, two regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the new rail for the respondent personally, and two regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the new rail for the respondent's community of residence (see Appendix A for the exact wordings). The utility index therefore casts a wide net. It captures self-interest considerations, as two of the questions expressly deal with implications of the planned new rail for themselves, both in the form of benefits and drawbacks. The questions regarding the community level advantages and disadvantages also capture assessments of the local implications more broadly defined, including those that may relate to distributive justice. It seems reasonable to assume that a person who finds it unfair, for example, that his or her community must endure the disturbances of a railway line without the benefits of having a local station would answer that the local disadvantages of the railway expansion outweigh the advantages.

The utility variable admittedly blurs the distinction between distributive justice and self-interest considerations. This distinction does not seem very pronounced in respondents' minds either, however. Assessments of the negative implications of the railway project for the community correlate fairly strongly with assessments of the negative implications for respondents' personally (Pearson's  $r=0.44$ ), and expected community benefits correspond closely with expected personal benefits (Pearson's  $r=0.57$ ). The index combining all four questions forms a reliable index (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.72$ ).

In addition, a factor analysis including these four questions and the three questions that make up the public justification index shows that the four utility items form one factor and the three procedural items form a second factor. This result indicates that assessments of the outcome are empirically distinct from assessments of the decision process. Previous studies have indicated that perceptions of the fairness of a decision process tend to correlate strongly with assessments of the fairness of the outcomes (Kumlin 2002, 275). While the two do correlate with one another in these data (Pearson's  $r=0.30$ ), they do seem to measure distinct attitudes.

This approach to measuring reactions to the substance of the issue follows the practice of empirical studies that examine self-interest subjectively rather than objectively defined. Research on the role of self-interest in political attitudes and orientations offers examples of both of these approaches. Those studies that use an objective measure of self-interest use attributes of a person's living situation that may indicate a likelihood of being affected positively or negatively by a policy proposal. In a review of the research on the role of self-interest in shaping public opinion, Sears and Funk (1990) provide numerous examples of these two approaches. In terms of objective measures of self-interest, examples include: not having health insurance as indicating an interest

in national health insurance programs (Sears et al 1980), having a relative in Vietnam service indicates having an interest in decisions to continue the United States' military effort in Vietnam (Lau, Brown, and Sears 1978), and public sector employment represents having an interest in public sector spending (Sears and Citrin 1985). Subjective measures instead simply ask respondents to assess whether they will benefit or incur losses from various policy proposals. Sears and Funk (1990, 167) survey those studies which employ both measures and conclude that results do not differ greatly when different measures are used. Other studies have found that subjective measures cannot necessarily be considered a reliable measure of the extent to which someone is likely to benefit from a specific policy proposal (Kumlin 2002, 196).

Objective and subjective measures of self-interest each have advantages and disadvantages. Subjective measures offer the advantage that they capture a person's own understanding of how an issue may affect them. The researcher may have difficulty anticipating the many variegated ways a decision might affect citizens' interests. Moreover, citizens themselves may have difficulty anticipating how an issue may affect their material interests, and a subjective measure taps into the respondents' own perception of the implications of a decision rather than the researcher's. Subjective measures may also capture many other things, however, as they may be colored by ideology, identity issues (symbolic politics) and even perceived procedural fairness. Objective measures more surgically target the self-interest aspect of an attitude, and reduce the problem of determining the direction of causality in an empirical relationship (Sears and Funk 1990, 166). Because the case examined here precludes a simple delineation of how the railway expansion will affect people's self-interest, and because the availability of panel data assists in drawing causal inferences, a subjective measure is used here. In some instances, I will present complementary analyses to ensure that using an objective measure does not affect the estimated effect of perceived procedural fairness.

As indicated in the discussion in Chapter two, existing theoretical (Easton 1965) and empirical (Hetherington 1998) work suggests that diffuse support for political actors and institutions in general might affect responses to the Rail Administration and its endeavors, and therefore produce misleading results if not taken into account. While including a person's trust for the Rail Administration at a previous point in time controls for these effects to a certain degree, it does not entirely eliminate the need to take diffuse political attitudes into account. Revisions in assessments of more familiar national level political institutions may effect change in sentiments toward lower level political institutions, a change which could interfere with the analyses of the effects of perceived procedural fairness in this case. In order to account for this possibility, the analyses include a measure of trust for national and municipal politicians. This variable, referred to as *political trust*, builds on two

questions, one regarding trust for politicians in the two main national political institutions in Sweden, the parliament (the *riksdag*) and the Government (*regeringen*), and the second regarding trust for the politicians in the respondent's own municipality. While these questions deal with trust for politicians and not the political institutions per se, the index will act as a proxy measure for trust for political institutions more generally. The analyses presented in Chapter five include a few additional control variables, but these will be discussed in conjunction with those models.

With all of these tools in hand, we now turn to the first research question. The analyses presented in the next chapter explore whether perceived procedural fairness effects change in institutional trust and decision acceptance.

## 5 The Implications of Perceived Procedural Fairness for Consent\*

The role of perceived procedural fairness in shaping consent is by no means virgin territory for empirical researchers. A growing body of social psychological research investigates the contention that we not only care about how big a slice of the pie we get (or conversely how severe a punishment we receive) but also how the size of the slice was decided upon. This research, with social psychologist Tom R. Tyler as one of the most prolific contributors, has investigated the theory both experimentally and in survey data.<sup>80</sup> The findings of this research constitute our current understanding of the role that perceived procedural fairness has in shaping consent. Tyler (1990) provides, for example, convincing evidence that perceived fairness in face-to-face encounters with criminal justice authorities can play a substantial and instrumental role in fostering willingness to accept decisions (sentence rulings) as well as a sense of obligation to obey laws. Similarly, citizens who deem as fair the decision making of more remote political institutions such as the United States Congress or Supreme Court also tend to regard such institutions as more legitimate. As the following review attempts to demonstrate, however, the issue of causality has not satisfactorily been resolved in consent to these types of political institutions. Previous research has not produced convincing evidence that procedural assessments shape consent to institutions with which citizens have not interacted in a manner that entails face-to-face contact.

The analyses in this chapter address this gap in the literature. While some of the residents of the communities along the West Coast Line have had interpersonal contact with the Rail Administration via, for example, information and consultation meetings, the majority have not. Most of the citizens surveyed in this study have, like most citizens with

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\*An earlier version of this chapter has been accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the *European Journal of Political Research*.

<sup>80</sup> Tyler and Lind (1988; 1992) and Miller (2001) present a detailed discussion of the theory of the implications and mechanisms of procedural justice. The seminal work in the field, *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis*, was written in 1975 by Thibaut and Walker.

respect to most political decision-making processes, observed the decision process from afar, and in this sense more closely resemble citizens' relationship to political institutions more generally. The analyses build on panel data to demonstrate that perceived procedural fairness does, at least in this political setting, foster consent.

### **Perceived procedural fairness and consent: the troubling question of causality**

Several studies have demonstrated that political trust and compliance are more strongly associated with procedural assessments than with assessments of the output of the political system, but these studies have been unable to elucidate whether perceptions of procedural fairness give rise to consent, or whether consent instead colors perceptions of procedural fairness. People who perceive that the Supreme Court conforms to certain standards of procedural fairness also tend, for example, to profess a higher willingness to accept the Court's rulings (Tyler, Degoey and Smith 1996, 924).<sup>81</sup> In a study focusing on the California Public Utility Commission, respondents were asked to anticipate the treatment they would receive if they went before the Commission to influence water consumption regulations. Respondents who anticipated that the Commission would be polite, considerate and fair in decision-making also felt more a somewhat stronger obligation to comply with the Commission's rulings on restricted water consumption (Tyler 1997, 327). Similarly, people who feel that the government is neutral, cares what people think, and that politicians pay attention to the people that elected them also tend to profess higher levels of political trust (Ulbig 2002, 798-799; Miller and Listhaug 1999, 214); and people who feel they can influence political decisions at the municipal level tend to be more trusting of municipal politicians (Norén-Bretzer 2005, 154). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001, 151) find a similar relationship in assessments of, and willingness to defer to, the authority of the United States Congress. People who feel that the decision practices of Congress more closely approximate their own process preferences are also more likely to approve of the government as a whole, and to profess a stronger sense of obligation to obey laws.<sup>82</sup>

Research on regulation and taxation has also in recent years begun considering the importance of procedural fairness and trust for

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<sup>81</sup> Tyler, Degoey and Smith (1996) define procedural fairness as that the Supreme Court gives equal consideration to different groups in society; that they acquire the relevant and necessary information; that channels exist for average citizens to present their views before the Court; and that the Court attempts to protect the rights of average citizens.

<sup>82</sup> Process preferences as defined in the Hibbing and Theiss-Morse study entails position on a scale from direct democrat to 'institutional democrat,' which refers to a more Burkean ideal in which elected representatives make decisions without consulting constituents between elections.

regulators in attempting to explain why individuals and firms comply with rules and regulations. Peter May (2004) notes that regulatory scholars increasingly question the previously popular notions of deterrence theory, which posits that fear of detection and punishment are the primary motivations in compliance with regulatory policies. May examines home builders' compliance with building codes and finds that the perception that inspectors are fair, helpful and knowledgeable correlates with a sense of obligation to comply with codes.

Similarly, studies of compliance with taxation laws reveal that fear of detection and punishment only partially explain why taxpayers choose to declare difficult to detect sources of income (Scholz 1998; Scholz and Lubell 1998a; Scholz and Lubell 1998b). Murphy (2004) shows that compliance with taxation laws in Australia correlates strongly with trust for tax authorities, which in turn correlates with perceptions that those tax authorities exercise impartiality in enforcement, show respect for the rights of citizens, actively seek citizen input in improving the system, and show consideration for the average citizen (Murphy 2004, 200).

While these studies directly address the link between procedural fairness and the legitimacy of political institutions with decision-making power, they cannot—and most do not purport to—demonstrate that perceived procedural fairness is a *determinant of* compliance and institutional trust. Several authors have explicitly draw attention to the issue that existing empirical evidence does not shed light on the causal impact of perceived fairness on political support (Weatherford 1992; Miller and Listhaug 1999; Levi and Stoker 2000).

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001, 151) attempt to solve the matter with the theoretical argument that it is more plausible that perceived procedural fairness fosters compliance, than that compliance should foster perceived procedural fairness. The authors point out that to argue that the direction of causality was the reverse would imply that reluctance to comply with laws gave rise to dissatisfaction with the procedures by which the U. S. Congress reached decisions. Their case seems plausible. However, what the Hibbing and Theiss-Morse study, as well as the other studies cited thus far, have difficulty demonstrating is that the observed attitudinal relationships are not spurious. Chapter two mentions research findings on the stability of political trust during the life cycle. Though the research in the area is for logistical reasons quite scant, one study suggests the need to interpret observed relationships between political trust and other assessments with caution (Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2001). It is possible that political trust, and very plausibly also a perceived obligation to obey the law, are in part learned early in life, and that these orientations shape political trust and obligation to comply throughout life, but also shape approval or disapproval of authorities' approaches to decision making. In other words, citizens may acquire an overall disposition toward political authority,

and this disposition may also color their assessments of more specific aspects of political institutions and how they operate.

Studies using experimental and longitudinal designs have attempted to remedy this problem in order to determine whether procedural fairness assessments actually have the power to foster or erode citizens' consent. A series of studies analyzing a panel data set produced a rather mixed set of results. James Gibson (1989) conducted a first round of analyses on a panel study of attitudes toward the U. S. Supreme Court and concluded that the perceived legitimacy of the Court did in fact have bearing on willingness to honor its rulings, even when deference to the Court's decisions at an earlier point in time were taken into consideration. Gibson also found, however, that the perceived fairness of the Court's approach to decision making *did not* have any bearing on compliance. Tom Tyler and Kenneth Rasinski (1991) used the same data set to demonstrate that procedural fairness assessments affected compliance indirectly by shaping institutional legitimacy assessments, which in turn affected compliance. Gibson (1991) responded to these findings, arguing that the data could not reliably reveal whether process assessments shaped legitimacy or the other way around. Gibson suggested that the workings of the Supreme Court were too remote from the sphere of attention of ordinary citizens, and that the perceived legitimacy of the Court more likely derived from socialization and "fundamental political values as well as accumulated satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the institution's policy output" (Gibson 1991, 633).

The results from experimental research have also been mixed. One study indicates that the legitimacy of the Supreme Court is high and fairly impervious to experimental manipulation. Even respondents told that the Court uses unfair decision procedures do not lose trust for the Court (Mondak 1993), thereby making it impossible to determine what might effect a change in the Court's legitimacy. Tyler (1994) answered Mondak's study with an experimental study of attitudes toward the U.S. Congress, which provided respondents with strategically varied descriptions of a specific (hypothetical) decision process. Respondents who were told that the Congressmen had demonstrated impartiality and openness in making the hypothetical decision were more willing to accept the decision outcome (Tyler 1994).<sup>83</sup>

In sum, while the perceived fairness of decision processes had a well-documented and fairly robust relationship with indicators of consent, the results of empirical research seeking to determine the direction of causality in that relationship have been ambiguous and contradictory. In contrast, several studies examining citizens' assessments of

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<sup>83</sup> The incongruity between Mondak's (1993) findings and those presented by Tyler (1994) may stem from the fact that they deal with two very different authorities. The otherwise high esteem held for the Supreme Court may explain the difficulty in conducting experimental research on the Court's legitimacy; manipulations simply have difficulty altering attitudes.

face-to-face interactions with authorities, have produced more convincing support for the procedural justice thesis (see Lind and Tyler 1988 for a detailed review of the earlier research).

### **Procedural fairness in face-to-face encounters with authorities**

Two studies build on panel data investigating assessments of authorities both before and after some form of face-to-face interactions with the police (Tyler 1990) or the judicial system (Tyler, Casper and Fisher 1989). Both studies asked people to assess the authority and respond to the indicators of legitimacy both before and after contact with authorities. Both studies found that perceived procedural fairness plays a decisive role in the legitimacy of authorities, which in turn enhanced respondents' willingness to accept court rulings and obey laws. These effects prevailed even once prior attitudes and the substantive outcomes of the contact had been taken into account.

Studies of interactions with welfare state institutions have yielded similar results. Among citizens who avail themselves of public services, those who feel that they were able to affect how those services were carried out, and who also felt that civil servants paid attention and listened to their concerns, expressed higher levels of trust for elected representatives at the national level (Kumlin 2002, 254). The effect holds even when assessments of the services themselves are taken into account. This finding indicates that perceived procedural fairness in face-to-face encounters may have rather far-reaching consequences in terms of attitudes toward the political system.

Experimental research (Esaiasson 2005) on encounters with civil servants yields similar results. Esaiasson conducts a scenario based study in which participants watch one of several filmed interactions between a civil servant at the unemployment office and an individual seeking unemployment aid. The scenarios vary with respect to the civil servant's demeanor in interacting with the aid seeker, but always end in the aid seeker being denied continued unemployment insurance. The study finds that rule abiding and responsive civil servants foster positive assessments of the decision process as well as of the decision outcome, thereby confirming the results of the non-experimental research (Esaiasson 2005, 14).

These studies provide solid ground for claims that perceived fairness in face-to-face interactions with decision makers can affect people's willingness to defer to an authority and its decisions.<sup>84</sup> Yet most of our interactions with political authority do not involve such intimacy. In most

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<sup>84</sup> Though a few steps removed from the main issue examined here, research on collective action dilemmas provides additional evidence for the link between fairness in procedures and both the perceived legitimacy of and willingness to consent to rules and the distribution of goods (see Ostrom 1998; Ostrom 1990; Sally 1995).

instances, the relationship between citizens and elected and appointed officials consist of citizens' consumption of mediated information, and an occasional exposure to a decision outcome, either at the time the decision is made, or far down the line in the policy implementation process. Evidence in the question of whether procedural fairness fosters consent to political institutions that are more removed from citizens' lives, is scarce.

### **Solving the issue of causality**

The literature review indicates that our knowledge of the role of procedural fairness in fostering consent remains incomplete, and that the gaps are both considerable and central to understanding citizens' reactions to political institutions and political decisions. In particular, existing studies fail to demonstrate convincingly that citizens' assessments of decision processes actually do give rise to consent, even in political relationships that do not involve on face-to-face interactions.

In order to address this issue, it is necessary to demonstrate that the direction of causality is not the reverse of what the theory of procedural fairness suggests, and that the relationship between perceived procedural fairness and consent is not the result of a common source, such as diffuse support for (or criticism of) political institutions in general. This study offers two methods for isolating and determining the direction of causality between perceived procedural fairness and consent. First, the use of panel data allows us to take into account all background factors (even those that are not measured, such as socialization, identity, ideology) that may shape both procedural assessments and consent. Since all factors that contribute to shaping an individual's consent to political institutions in a long-term fashion shaped consent at the first time of measurement, they are included in the models by including earlier values of consent. The availability of panel data provides the opportunity to explore which factors effect change in consent at the individual level rather than explaining differences in consent among individuals at a given point in time (Finkel 1995).

The second methodological advantage with these data in terms of precluding alternative explanations of consent relates to the fact that the decision authority in this case, the Rail Administration, is *not* the most established and well-known political institution in the eyes of the respondents. How might this be an advantage? Including earlier values of the dependent variable allows us to control for all determinants of consent that are stable over time. It does not, however, eliminate the possibility that both perceived procedural fairness and consent may be expressions of a more general common source, in this case perhaps trust for national political institutions, and that a change in this common source might effect a change in both the dependent and independent variables examined in the analysis (Finkel 1995, 70-71). If, for example, a

scandal in the Swedish Riksdag in the period between the first and second surveys prompted a decline in trust for national political institutions, then this shift may also color assessments of both the fairness of the decision process and trust for the Rail Administration and create the false appearance of an empirical relationship.<sup>85</sup> The models take such possibilities into account by controlling for trust for more well-known political institutions.

Table 5.1 provides the means and standard deviations of the principal variables used in this analysis. As the table shows, changes at the aggregate level between the first and second time of measurement are modest. Aggregate assessments on all four of the principal variables (institutional trust, decision acceptance, public justification, and effective influence) show a slight tendency toward the positive end of the scale between the two times of measurement.

*Table 5.1 Aggregate level assessments in 2000 and 2002*

	Scale	Mean (and std deviation) in 2000	Mean (and std deviation) in 2002
Institutional trust	0 to 6	2.4 (1.5)	2.6 (1.5)
Decision acceptance	0 to 4	2.4 (1.4)	2.7 (1.3)
Public justification	0 to 6	2.6 (1.2)	2.7 (1.2)
Effective influence	0 to 6	2.1 (1.2)	2.2 (1.2)

Notes: see Table 4.3 for an explanation of each of the variables. The survey questions are presented in Appendix A.

Changes at the individual level were more substantial. In terms of institutional trust, approximately a sixth of respondents became up to one step more critical, whereas one fourth became up to one step more trusting. A fifth of respondents had the same level of trust in the two survey rounds, and the remaining respondents (forty percent) changed assessments by more than one step on the scale. In terms of decision acceptance, nearly half expressed the same point of view in 2000 and 2002. A third of the respondents were more willing to accept the decision in 2002 than in 2000, and the remaining respondents had become less willing to accept the decision outcome. In terms of public justification, one sixth made the same assessments at the two times of measurement, about one fourth had become more laudatory by up to one step on the 0 to 6 scale, about the same proportion had become more critical by the same amount, and about a third, in equal shares, had become more than one step more critical or more laudatory. Effective influence assessments were quite stable, with half expressing the same assessments at

<sup>85</sup> Rather than a sharp decline in political trust, national polling institutes in Sweden instead have documented an increase in trust for the Riksdag and Government between the period of 2000 and 2002 (Holmberg and Weibull 2003).

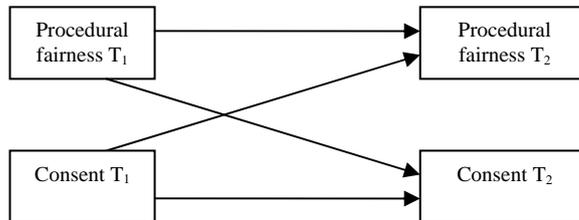
the two times of measurement. About one fifth had become more dissatisfied with the perceived ability to exert influence in the issue, while the remainder had become more positive.

### Testing the theory of procedural fairness

The review of the literature presented at the outset of this chapter mentioned a number of studies which document an empirical relationship between perceived procedural fairness and consent in cross-sectional survey data, but which are unable to determine whether procedural assessments actually build or erode consent. The authors of most of these studies acknowledge that the perceived legitimacy of a political institution may also give rise to, or at least significantly inform, assessments of the fairness of decision processes.

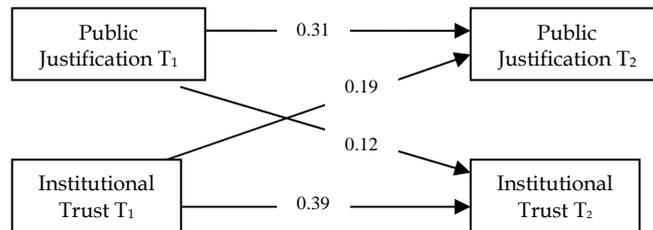
A cross-lagged model, which builds on two ordinary least squares regression analyses, provides a reliable test of causality using panel data (Finkel 1995). The model attempts to explain the dependent variable at time two in terms of the independent variable at time one, under control for earlier values of the dependent variable. Figure 5.1 depicts a cross-lagged model, where the subscripted numbers indicate times of measurement. The cross-lagged model also allows us to explore the extent to which assessments of decision processes are shaped by consent.

*Figure 5.1. Conceptual cross-lagged model of the relationship between procedural fairness and consent.*



Since consent at the time of the first wave of the survey is controlled for, the model tests whether procedural assessments at time one have any explanatory power on changes in consent between the two surveys. In order to demonstrate causality, the model must therefore also include any other perceptions that might have effected a change on institutional trust. The model in Figure 5.2 tests the effect of public justification on institutional trust, taking into account the perceived utility of the new rail, as well as trust for national and municipal politicians.

Figure 5.2. Cross-lagged model of the reciprocal relationship between public justification and institutional trust (OLS unstandardized coefficients).



Notes: The coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients (all significant at the 99 percent level) from two OLS regression models, one explaining each of the two dependent variables. The model explaining institutional trust (N=1002) includes four independent variables (public justification in 2000, institutional trust in 2000, utility assessments (b=0.18), and political trust (b=0.29)) and explains 45 percent of the variance in institutional trust in 2002. The model explaining public justification (N=1027) includes two independent variables (public justification in 2000 and institutional trust in 2000) and explains 24 percent of the variance in public justification in 2002. The coefficients in this latter model do not change if the utility variable is entered into the model. The survey questions are presented in Appendix A.

Prior assessments of public justification do affect subsequent levels of institutional trust but, unsurprisingly, the reverse is also true. That trust shapes procedural assessments does not negate or diminish the finding that procedural assessments also have a role in shaping institutional trust. Trust has been shown to function as a filter when interpreting and synthesizing new information into our existing knowledge and preferences (Cvetkovich et al 2002; Hetherington 1998). The same kinds of dynamics seem to be afoot in these data, confirming the description of political trust as a ‘reservoir of good will’ (Easton 1965, 273). Citizens who trust political institutions evaluate their performance more charitably than citizens who distrust them. The model suggests that the buffering function of trust (b=0.19) is stronger than the weight of procedural fairness assessments to build or break down trust (b=0.12). Institutional trust appears also to be more stable than assessments of public justification (b=0.39 versus that of procedural fairness: b=0.31) and therefore quite simply more difficult to alter. In spite of this stability, however, procedural fairness assessments effect change in the confidence held in the decision-making authority.

While the cross-lagged model provides a solid basis for conclusions about causality, it builds on an assumption that does not aptly describe the relationship between procedural fairness and institutional confidence. The model assumes that the time it takes for procedural assessments to effect a change in institutional trust is roughly the same as the length of time that has lapsed between the two measurements, in this case two and a half years. Though we have already noted the relatively

high stability of institutional trust, it does not seem reasonable to assume that assessments of procedures made today would take more than two years to affect trust for the institution. The effect on trust is more likely to be immediate rather than delayed.<sup>86</sup> Thus while the cross-lagged model indicates that institutional trust does indeed build on procedural fairness, the coefficient likely underestimates the strength of that effect. Hence, the remainder of the analyses employ OLS regression with lagged dependent and independent variables but controlling for the dependent variable at time one.

#### *Institutional trust*

In order to better understand the dynamics of the relationships examined, the results are presented in a series of increasingly comprehensive models. The initial model attempts to explain institutional trust only with public justification and effective influence, as well as with earlier levels of institutional trust. Again, including earlier levels of trust offers the tremendous advantage that all unmeasured factors that may affect institutional trust but that do not change between the surveys, are controlled for. To the extent that the dependent variable is stable over time, earlier values can explain much of the variation in the measurement.

The estimates for the initial model (Table 5.2, model 1) indicate that public justification has a strong relationship with institutional trust ( $b=0.51$ ) and also confirms that institutional trust is very stable over time ( $b=0.39$ ). Contrary to what normative theories advocating greater citizen influence in political issues might have led us to expect (e.g. Pateman 1970; SOU 1990:44), however, effective influence has only a moderate positive effect on institutional trust ( $b=0.09$ ).

Since the analysis aims to establish a credible argument for the weight of procedural assessments in shaping consent, the model must, as discussed above, take into account any factors that may have contributed to changes in expressed levels of institutional trust between the two surveys. Factors that may affect levels of trust and that also vary over time can cause trust assessments to change and ought therefore to be modeled. If, for example, a pressure group were to form in a small community and become active in attempting to sway public opinion, redefining the issue by emphasizing the potential detrimental effects of the proposed new route, (which is exactly what happened in Falkenberg shortly before the second survey round) then respondents may reassess the utility of the new rail. The perceived utility of the project may, according to theories connecting trust to self-interest and perceived distributive fairness, affect trust in the responsible authority.

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<sup>86</sup> Scholz and Lubell (1998b) provide evidence that changes in trust may occur instantaneously in response to a change in the conditions of a collaborative project. They show that a change in taxation laws can prompt change in people's confidence that others pay their taxes.

The effects of procedural judgments remain largely unchanged when the perceived utility of the new rail, both for the respondent personally and for the community as a whole, are taken into consideration (Table 5.2, model 2). The measure of anticipated benefits and disadvantages influences overall assessments of the trustworthiness of the Rail Administration ( $b=0.14$ ), but far less than public justification judgments, which remain essentially unchanged. The degree to which the policy proposal concurs with the perceived utility of the project does affect trust, but it does not explain the same portion of the variance in institutional trust as public justification.

Table 5.2 Determinants of institutional trust at  $T_2$

	Model 1: Weight of procedural assessments		2: Controlling for assessments of content		3: Controlling for political trust	
	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$
<b>Procedural assessments</b>						
Public Justification	0.51*** (0.03)	0.40	0.47*** (0.03)	0.37	0.33*** (0.03)	0.26
Effective influence	0.09* (0.03)	0.08	0.07*** (0.03)	0.06	0.05* (0.03)	0.04
<b>Control variables</b>						
Institutional Trust ( $T_1$ )	0.39*** (0.03)	0.39	0.36*** (0.03)	0.36	0.29*** (0.02)	0.29
Utility			0.14*** (0.02)	0.14	0.12*** (0.02)	0.12
Political trust					0.11** (0.03)	0.10
Trust for Road Administration					0.27*** (0.03)	0.24
Competence of Rail Administration					0.10*** (0.02)	0.10
N and $R^2_{adj}$	1053	0.48	1053	0.49	1005	0.58

Dependent variable: Institutional trust (wave 2). Standard error given in parentheses. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . See Appendix A for operationalization details.

The second alternative hypothesis discussed above states that both institutional trust and perceived procedural fairness in this case derive from a common source, and that changes in that source may effect changes in both the dependent and independent variable without the two actually having a meaningful connection. Two new control variables provide a means to test these possibilities. 'Political trust' is a mean index of trust for politicians in the respondent's municipality and politicians in the national government. The second is trust for the National Road Administration (*Vägverket*).<sup>87</sup> The observed relationship between procedural

<sup>87</sup> Not many years prior to the commencement of the railway expansion project, the Road Administration built a four-lane highway along exactly the same stretch connecting Malmö and Göteborg. While respondents may not have had any contact with the Rail Administration prior to the implementation of this particular policy, it is not implausible that the Road Administration serves as a source of inference.

fairness assessments and trust for the Rail Administration should disappear if both are extrapolated from attitudes toward or experiences with other political actors and institutions.<sup>88</sup>

The third model yields support for the theoretical contention that trust for different political actors and institutions has a common denominator; both trust for the Rail Administration and procedural judgments to a small degree seem to derive from trust for similar and perhaps more familiar political actors (Table 5.2, model 3). The influence of public justification judgments on institutional trust remains strong ( $b=0.33$ ), however, even when trust for national and local politicians, and trust for the Road Administration are included in the model. The effect of perceived public justification on institutional trust is only marginally smaller than that of trust assessments at the time of the first survey.<sup>89</sup>

The model therefore offers a credible case for the claim that citizens' consent to authority hinges in part upon perceived propriety in decision processes. Discounting citizens' assessments of the substance of the issue, and guarding against the danger that procedural judgments and institutional confidence are chimerical reflections of more diffuse political attitudes, assessments of the authority's willingness to engage in public discussion and justify its decisions explain a considerable portion of the variation in confidence in the Rail Administration. In order to argue at this point that the direction of causality were the opposite of what the procedural fairness thesis suggests it would be necessary to establish a plausible alternative source of institutional trust to those accounted for in the model.

In contrast, effective influence only weakly affects institutional trust. Once all control factors are included, those respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with their own ability to influence the decision outcome felt only slightly, albeit statistically significantly, less confidence in the decision-making institution than those who were satisfied with their perceived level of influence. An examination of bivariate relationships of the variables included in the model reveals that effective influence is

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<sup>88</sup> It is also conceivable that non-political experiences (including everything from changes in personal well-being to changes in mood) may effect a change in assessments of the Rail Administration. Such factors would in all likelihood also affect trust for other political institutions, and are therefore captured by the political trust variable.

<sup>89</sup> As discussed in Chapter four, the utility variable is a rather blunt tool that measures expected benefits both for the respondent personally and for the community. Research on self-interest suggests that subjective measures of self-interest might provide an inaccurate measure of self-interest considerations. In order to determine whether the estimated procedural effects depend on this choice of methodology, I ran a model including more objective measures of self-interest (such as how often a person travels by train, how close to the proposed new rail a person lives, see the Appendix A for details), as well as more specific questions about the community level implications. Controlling for assessments of the substance of the issue in this manner had no bearing on the public justification estimate, but the estimate of effective influence became even more uncertain ( $p=0.14$ ).

fairly strongly associated with the perceived utility of the planned new rail, indicating that desired influence may to some extent derive from dissatisfaction with the decision outcome itself. As the results of the first model indicate, however, the effect of effective influence is not overwhelmingly strong even when utility is not included in the model. Moreover, even if public justification is removed from the final model (the two dimensions correlate somewhat with one another, Pearson's  $r=0.27$ ), the effect of effective influence increases only slightly (from  $b=0.05$  to  $b=0.08$ ).

Two final checks of the robustness of the procedural fairness thesis are in order. First, it is necessary to ensure that assessments of other attributes of the Rail Administration itself do not shape both trust and perceived procedural fairness. The discussion presented in Chapter two regarding sources of trust mentioned the plausible (though to my knowledge untested) hypothesis that trust builds on the belief that the trustee has the capacity to fulfill the tasks expected of it (Levi and Stoker 2000). The survey included one question along these lines regarding the competence of the Rail Administration. The public justification and effective influence estimates remain unchanged when perceived competence is included in the model (Table 5.2, model 3).

Finally, the primary issue under investigation is whether the perceived fairness of *decision* (rather than implementation) processes affects consent even when citizens have *not* had direct face-to-face contact with decision-making authorities. These data are a bit ambiguous on both of these points in the sense that some of the communities surveyed were well on their way into the implementation phase of the issue in 2002, and that some of the respondents ( $N=262$ ) in fact have had face-to-face contact with Rail Administration officials. If we exclude respondents from Åsa, Frillesås, and Glumslöv (those communities where construction had commenced by 2002) the effects of perceived procedural fairness do not change notably. Nor does excluding respondents who have had interpersonal contact with Rail Administration officials affect the results in any fashion.

#### *Decision Acceptance*

As discussed earlier, consent has often been conceptualized as constituents' willingness to accept decision outcomes irrespective of the individual favorability of those outcomes. Resources are never unlimited and a stable system for problem solving must be able to govern the distribution of goods and resources in a way that does not recurrently lead to new problems rather than agreeable solutions. This second set of analyses examines the extent to which perceptions of the fairness of the planning and decision-making process affect inclinations to accept the proposed local routing (Table 5.3).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> The dependent variable is measured on a 5-point scale, perhaps stretching the limits of the interval scale assumption of OLS. A multinomial logistic regression model confirms

Table 5.3 Determinants of decision acceptance at  $T_2$

	Model 1: Weight of procedural assessments		Model 2: Controlling for assessments of issue content	
	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$
Procedural assessments				
Public Justification	0.14 *** (0.03)	0.12	0.06** (0.03)	0.06
Effective influence	0.09 *** (0.02)	0.09	0.08** (0.02)	0.08
Control variables				
Decision Acceptance ( $T_1$ )	0.52 *** (0.03)	0.56	0.37 *** (0.03)	0.40
Utility			0.30*** (0.02)	0.35
	N and $R^2_{adj}$	973    0.42	973    0.50	

Dependent variable: Decision acceptance (wave 2). Standard error given in parentheses.  
 \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . See Appendix A for operationalization details.

As in the case of institutional trust, the initial model confirms that decision acceptance is quite stable over time. If entered alone, willingness to accept the proposed route at the first time of survey explains forty percent of the variation in reactions to the decision during the second wave. The index of the perceived utility of the new rail for the respondent personally and for the respondent's community also has, as one might expect, a strong influence on decision acceptance. It is, to reiterate, in issues such as land use policy that self-interest has been found to carry the greatest weight in determining preferences.<sup>91</sup> Once these two powerful explanatory factors are taken into account, however, both procedural fairness and effective influence each account for a portion of the variation in public reactions to such a concrete issue as land use policy (Table 5.3, model 2).<sup>92</sup>

The sizes of these effects are, however, not overwhelmingly strong. The two types of procedural considerations both exert a rather modest effect on decision acceptance. Entered stepwise, both types of procedu-

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that both assessments of public justification and effective influence significantly distinguish those who are the most critical of the decision outcome from those who are the most positive to the decision outcome. For a one unit increase (on the 7 point scale) in the procedural fairness index, the odds of being highly opposed to (compared to highly in favor of) the decision decrease by 34%, all other factors held constant ( $b = \ln 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). For a one unit increase in effective influence, the odds of being highly opposed to (compared to highly in favor of) the decision decrease by 28%, all other factors held constant ( $b = \ln 0.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

<sup>91</sup> A model using objective measures of self-interest instead of the utility variable yields the same estimates for both dimensions of procedural fairness as those reported for Model 2 in Table 5.3.

<sup>92</sup> The effective influence estimate becomes somewhat stronger ( $b = 0.16$ , not shown) if prior levels of decision acceptance are removed from the model. Level of satisfaction with perceived influence in this case therefore seems to some extent instrumental, as Thibaut and Walker (1975) suggested.

ral assessments do prove to entail a small but significant increase (two percent combined) in the explained variance in willingness to accept the decision. The nature of the policy issue (concrete and close to home) makes this a tough case for the procedural fairness thesis. The influences of procedural assessments on willingness to accept the decision outcomes are nonetheless robust. Even if additional control variables are introduced, such as the anticipated risks, an objective definition of self-interest including how far the respondent resides from the proposed track route, procedural assessments retain a significant relationship with willingness to accept the planned local route.

In contrast to the relationship between perceived procedural fairness and institutional trust, that between perceived procedural fairness and decision acceptance does appear to depend on the occurrence of face-to-face contact, as well as the stage in the policy process. Beginning with the latter, effective influence has a much stronger bearing in those communities in which construction had not begun in 2002 ( $b=0.15$ ). Public justification has, in contrast, no statistically significant bearing on decision acceptance in these communities. Nor is public justification a significant contributor to decision acceptance among those who have not had face-to-face contact with Rail Administration officials. Effective influence affects decision acceptance to about the same extent irrespective of the occurrence of contact with the Rail Administration ( $b=0.11$ ). The analyses in the next chapter consider these issues in more detail.

## **Discussion of results**

These analyses lend considerable support to the theoretical contention that public consent is indeed contingent upon how people perceive authorities' behavior in reaching decisions. I offer evidence that perceptions of procedural fairness have a significant and stable role both in building or eroding public confidence in the decision-making authority, and to a lesser extent in fostering willingness to accept the authority's decisions. While previous studies have demonstrated the causal role of perceived procedural fairness in institutional legitimacy in face-to-face interactions with decision-makers, the analyses offered here extend that finding to political institutions with authority to make decisions without face-to-face interaction with those affected. These results show that political institutions can augment their political capital by exhibiting a willingness to engage in public dialogue and discuss decision alternatives with citizens.

Satisfaction with the opportunities to influence the decision outcome is less crucial in forming institutional trust and willingness to accept decision outcomes. The finding that effective influence does not strongly affect indicators of legitimacy is not a unique empirical finding. Previous research has come to the same conclusion that personal ability to influence a decision outcome has less bearing on institutional legiti-

macy than assessments of other aspects of decision process (Kumlin 2002; Tyler 1994; Tyler 1997).<sup>93</sup>

It is important to note, however, the decision processes in the West Coast Line case have not predominantly been participatory. Though the Rail Administration did offer local residents occasional opportunities to react to decision plans, these efforts were relatively limited and in some of the communities many years before the time of the two surveys. The decision process consisted primarily in that the Rail Administration weighed arguments, consulted with relevant authorities and experts, and interacted with the public largely on an ad hoc basis. If, in contrast, authorities had designed a large-scale participatory process, offering an opportunity and above all creating an expectation for public influence in the final decision outcome, effective influence may have proven to be more important for consent. Dissatisfaction with one's ability to exert influence in an issue may exact a larger toll on the perceived legitimacy of political authorities if those authorities have promised opportunities for such influence without actually providing a meaningful channel for exerting influence. The relatively weak effect of effective influence on consent does, however, call into question whether greater citizen influence can enhance legitimacy within the present institutional arrangements and given widely held norms of fairness in political decision making.

Because of the timing of the surveys, the estimates for the effects of both public justification and for effective influence may fall short of capturing the full implications of process assessments for consent. An optimal design would have consisted in the first survey being sent out after the issue had become somewhat known in the communities, but before the planning process had begun in order to have a baseline measurement of trust for the Rail Administration and opinion in the issue. The second survey would then have revealed a more full impact of process assessments on indicators of consent. As it is, process assessments have already affected consent at the first measurement. The results presented here instead demonstrate that process assessments have the power to effect change in fairly stable indicators of consent. These results provide a solid foundation upon which to explore the remaining three research questions.

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<sup>93</sup> Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) also found that voice opportunities affected willingness to accept a decision outcome, though the observed differences were not statistically significant.

# 6

## When procedural fairness matters

The analyses in the preceding chapter offer considerable empirical support for the theory that procedural fairness fosters support for political institutions and political decisions. As the theoretical discussion in Chapter two suggests, however, there is reason to pursue the question further. Theoretical work regarding both trust and procedural fairness suggests that procedural fairness may matter more or less depending on a person's relationship to an issue and also depending on certain attributes of the individual. Under what circumstances might perceptions of a fair process play a more, or less, instrumental role in fostering consent? One way to approach this question would be to examine whether procedural assessments foster consent to varying degrees in different sorts of political issues. Such a study would require data that are not readily available. By defining certain analytical dimensions that may distinguish the West Coast Line expansion from other political issues and also attributes that distinguish citizens from one another, it is possible to sketch out a picture of when perceptions of procedural fairness may matter more and when they may take a back seat to other considerations.

This query takes us out into largely uncharted territory in empirical research on procedural fairness. Organizational justice researcher Joel Brockner and colleagues in a recent article note that ample evidence now attests to the importance of perceived procedural fairness in organizational settings and that "...an important next step in the development of justice theory is to delineate the conditions under which certain explanations are likely to be especially influential (Brockner et al 2005, 156). Though Brockner's own research attests to the fact that the question is not entirely new in the organizational justice literature, it is safe to assert that more research is needed on the contingencies of procedural fairness in political settings. This chapter adds to the incipient literature investigating the question of when procedural fairness matters.

The analyses in this chapter consider two types of so called moderating effects—conditions that may affect the strength of the relationship

between procedural fairness and consent. The first are situational and relate to a person's relationship to this particular issue, specifically whether the person has a stake in the issue, and has participated actively in some fashion in the decision process. As the discussion below will attempt to elucidate, having a stake in an issue could, for example, make procedural considerations assume a *more* pivotal role in a person's willingness to accept a decision outcome. Empirical research regarding the role of self-interest in public opinion suggests the opposite, however, that having a stake in an issue may instead *diminish* the importance of procedural assessments.

The second type of moderating effects examined in this chapter relate to attributes, or more precisely political dispositions, of citizens themselves. Citizens may differ from one another in terms of how they feel political decisions should be made; while some may feel that authorities should make policy decisions in consultation with those residents of local communities possibly affected by the decision, others may find it more appropriate that elected representatives weigh relevant information and select the most optimal site based on long-term social, economic and technical considerations. These procedural expectations may shape whether assessments of procedural fairness affect consent, but also *which* dimension of procedural fairness has the strongest bearing on consent. The analyses in Chapter five revealed that effective influence had only a modest effect on respondents' consent to the Rail Administration and its decisions. It is possible, however, that, citizens who *expect* decision makers to consult with and heed the opinions of the local community might react more strongly to effective influence. In other words, do citizens' own expectations of fairness in decision making determine the effect of procedural assessments on consent? And finally, does perceived procedural fairness foster consent to the same extent irrespective of a person's overall confidence in political institutions in general? The final contingency is, in other words, political trust itself. To what extent does political trust moderate the effect of perceived procedural fairness?

### **Previous findings**

A handful of studies expressly examine the issue in political settings, however. Esaiasson (1996) presents a longitudinal study conducted in conjunction with the 1994 EU referendum in Sweden which monitored attitudes toward the EU, assessments of the fairness of the referendum and preceding campaign, as well as attitudes toward various aspects of the political system, including trust for elected representatives. The study analyzed survey data from before and after the referendum to determine whether assessments of the referendum left a mark on attitudes toward other aspects of the democratic system and found indications that indeed they did. Those voters who opposed Sweden

joining the EU *and* felt that the referendum had failed to meet criteria of procedural fairness experienced a statistically and substantively significant loss of trust for elected representatives (Esaiasson 1996, 59). Procedural fairness seems in other words to have mattered among those dissatisfied with the outcome but not among those who won the referendum.

Similarly, another study (Möller 1996) explores the sources and dynamics of citizens' dissatisfaction with welfare state services in Sweden, focusing in particular on citizens' desire for and actual attempts to exert influence over two particular welfare programs (child care and elderly care). Building on analyses of extensive interviews with citizens, Möller (1996, 371) concludes that satisfaction with perceived influence has bearing on people's assessments of the political system as a whole when they simultaneously feel dissatisfied with the services they have received. Phrased in the terminology of this study, this finding suggests that effective influence should matter more for consent when citizens incur a loss in a decision process. A subsequent study (Kumlin 2002) uses survey data to reexamine Möller's finding and detects no such effect, however. Kumlin's (2002) analysis explores whether the effect of perceived influence on political trust is stronger among those who feel dissatisfied with welfare state services and shows that in fact it is not. Perceived influence had the same bearing on political trust regardless of a person's satisfaction with services received (Kumlin 2002, 263).

In addition to these studies, social psychology also offers a few investigations of the contingencies of the procedural fairness effect in political relationships. These studies are guided by an ambition to understand procedural fairness as a social and psychological phenomenon. Tyler and Lind (1988) posit that the way in which an individual is treated in a group negotiation or decision process affects a person's perceived standing, or value, within the group, which in turn has attitudinal and behavioral consequences for the individual's feelings toward the group. Tyler and Lind therefore predict that people who feel a stronger attachment to a group will react more strongly to procedural fairness from a group authority than those who feel a weaker identification with a group. This theoretical orientation has led to investigations of whether the strength of people's attachment to the political community (the equivalent of the group in the political setting) affects the strength of the procedural fairness effect. One study, for example, examines California residents' reactions to the California Public Utility Commission during a period of regulated water use (Tyler 1997). The study asks California residents how strongly they identify with their local community, and find that the perceived impartiality of authorities matters more for deference to the authority among those who identify strongly with their local community (Tyler 1997, 333). Tyler interprets this finding as an indication that procedural fairness signals a person's status within a group (in this case the local community), and that the

effect is therefore more pronounced among those who rely more heavily on the group for personal identity and affirmation. Tyler and Smith also find that White Americans who identify strongly with being 'an American' also react more strongly to the perception that U.S. Congress reaches decisions via fair procedures (Smith and Tyler 1996).

From a normative point of view, the findings of the social psychology literature are somewhat troubling. If procedural fairness indeed primarily fosters consent among those who identify strongly with the political community, whether local or national, then it provides a poor instrument for cultivating a base of political trust in a diverse citizenry. Similarly, if the analyses in this chapter show that perceived procedural fairness only fosters consent among those who already have a high level of trust for political institutions, then enhancing the perceived fairness of a process would not seem to provide a means of earning the consent of the most critical and skeptical of the legitimacy of the political system. Independent of these normative considerations, however, in order to better understand the dynamics of citizens' attitudes toward governing institutions, more research is needed on the conditions under which perceived procedural fairness matters more, or less, for consent.

#### **Four moderating conditions**

This analysis considers both situational and dispositional factors and how they condition the role of procedural fairness in shaping consent. Dispositional factors refer to an attribute of or attitudinal orientation of an individual, and situational factors refer to a person's role in or relationship to a specific situation. Two dispositional factors are examined here: a person's own expectations regarding how decisions in land use issues should be made and a person's level of trust for political institutions more generally.

In terms of the situational factors, the analyses compare the procedural fairness effect among individuals who do, and who do not, have a stake in the issue, and also compare the procedural fairness effect among those who have been directly involved in the issue with those who have not. Both situational factors therefore refer to a person's proximity to the issue. If procedural fairness only matters to those who have a stake in the issue, or have been directly involved in some form, then procedural fairness provides a means for comprehending and perhaps even resolving contentious political decisions. If, in contrast, perceived procedural fairness only fosters consent among those who follow an issue from afar and *not* among those directly affected by or involved in an issue, then the theory of procedural fairness may instead serve primarily as an explanation for long-term shifts in citizens' willingness to defer to authority.

The particulars of the four moderating conditions – stakeholder status, active involvement, procedural expectations, and political trust –

will be expounded upon each in turn below. An overview of the four conditions and their relationships to one another is in order before embarking on this more detailed discussion, however. It may seem at first glance that the overlap among them could be considerable. A person who has a stake in the issue is certainly more apt to become involved directly, and it is not impossible that being directly affected by the railway expansion issue may shape a person's procedural expectations and perhaps even political trust. Table 6.1 presents an overview of the proportion of respondents in each group, as well as to what extent the factors overlap with one another.

*Table 6.1 Four conditions that may affect the capacity of perceived procedural fairness to foster consent*

Condition (and specific group examined)	N	% of sample	Correlation (Pearson's r) with:			
			Negative -ly affected	Actively involved	Participa -tory democrat	Political distruster
Stakeholder status (Negatively affected)	748	32%	1			
Active involvement (Actively involved)	714	31%	0.20**	1		
Procedural expectations (Participatory democrat)	621	27%	0.09**	0.24**	1	
Political trust (Political distruster)	480	21%	0.12**	0.03	0.04	1

\* p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.001

Each of the conditions encompasses or describes between 21 and 32 percent of respondents. As the correlation coefficients in Table 6.1 indicate, the conditions do overlap somewhat with one another but not so much so as to preclude analyses of their independent moderating effects. The strongest relationship among the conditions exists between being a participatory democrat and having been actively involved in the railway issue (Pearson's  $r=0.24$ ). Among those whose procedural expectations tend more toward a participatory democratic model of decision making, almost exactly half have been actively involved in this case (compared to 31 percent in the sample at large). The two conditions 'negatively affected' and 'actively involved' overlap to a similar extent (Pearson's  $r=0.2$ ). Forty-five percent of those who experience (or expect to experience) negative consequences from the railway project have been actively involved in the issue. Other relationships among the conditions are relatively weak.

The following sections examine each of these conditions one at a time. Existing research provides guidance in predicting how the procedural fairness effect may vary among respondents under these four

different conditions. The following two sections, which explore situational moderating effects, reveal a remarkable stability in the effect of assessments of public justification. There is, however, a modest tendency for public justification to matter more among those closer to and more involved in the issue. The effect of effective influence is somewhat more variable, and in general seems to matter *less* among those more proximal to the issue. The analyses presented in the third and fourth sections focus on dispositional factors and show that, contrary to prediction, participatory democrats do not react more strongly to perceived effective influence, and perceived public justification proves to foster consent most effectively among those with little or no trust for political institutions.

### **Methodological note: cross-sectional versus panel data**

The analyses in this chapter build on the cross-sectional data collected in 2002. While the panel data provided a useful basis for establishing the causal order in the relationship between procedural fairness and consent, the nature of panel data limit their usefulness for these analyses. The analyses to follow all build on the use of interaction terms, and since interaction terms build on two other variables that must also be included in the model (e.g. Fox 1997, 149), problems of multicollinearity may arise. This problem of multicollinearity increases as the difference in size of the groups (e.g. those negatively affected versus those not negatively affected by the issue) increases. The condition of political distrust encompasses only twenty percent of the sample (Table 6.1) which means that eighty percent of the sample have the same value (zero) on both the main effect as well as the interaction term. If the main effect (and therefore the interaction term) also correlates with the dependent variable, then controlling for an earlier value of the dependent variable (as in panel data analyses) might render the interaction term effect undetectable.

If the panel data used here represented an ideal before and after design, in which respondents for example became actively involved between the two survey rounds, then including the earlier value of the dependent variable would allow for a test of whether perceived procedural fairness effected a larger change in consent among those who had been actively involved as compared to those who had not. The number of respondents who became actively involved between the two surveys is small (N=175) in comparison to the number who reported being involved at any point prior to the 2002 survey (N=714). Lastly, the cross-sectional data set from 2002 has nearly twice the number of respondents. Hence, these analyses build on the cross-sectional data set from 2002, as they allow for a more detailed and robust analysis of the conditions under examination.

## Situational moderating effects

### *Stake*

Most—if not all—studies on procedural fairness focus on empirical settings in which survey respondents are known to have a stake. Tyler (1990), for example, interviews a sample of Chicago residents before and after encounters with law enforcement officers. Regardless of the outcome of such an encounter, one can safely describe an individual in such a situation as having a stake in the issue. Tyler, Casper and Fisher (1989) study a group of individuals with an even larger stake in an issue, namely people who have been indicted for a crime before and after learning the verdict and sentence for the alleged infraction. Experimental studies have instead tended to coax respondents into a hypothetical exercise in which they are asked to imagine having a stake in an issue. For example, Tyler (1997, 326) reports a study in which respondents in a telephone survey are asked to imagine that they go before a California state commission seeking to influence water usage regulations.

Why is it interesting to find out whether procedural fairness matters among respondents who do not have a stake in an issue? Precisely because political issues are not isolated incidents, they do not exist in as a discrete sliver of reality independent of prior and future interactions between citizens and the political system. It may, at the end of the day, prove to be the case that perceived procedural fairness fosters support for political institutions among citizens who observe an issue from afar, but is less instrumental in building acceptance for a decision outcome among those expected to bear the brunt of the negative aspects of a particular project. If this proves to be the case, procedural fairness may provide a means of building a reservoir of good will (Easton 1965, 273) toward political institutions, a resource that may facilitate the resolution of conflicts in the long run.

The conceptually precise and widely shared understanding of ‘having a stake’ in an issue is that a person or party is in a position to suffer losses or enjoy gains in terms of short term material well-being.<sup>94</sup> Conceptualized in this way, having a stake in an issue means that the outcome of the issue affects a person’s self-interest, which Sears and Funk (1991, 16) define as “short to medium-term impact on the material well-being of the individual’s own personal life (or that of his or her family).” Sears and Funk review a considerable literature and present their own analyses which seek to determine the extent to which political

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<sup>94</sup> The overview presented in Table 6.1 and the analyses shown in Table 6.2 involve those respondents who have experienced or expect to experience some form of loss as a result of the railway expansion project. The operationalizations therefore correspond to a somewhat truncated version of the definition of stakeholder, since a stakeholder may also expect benefits from an issue. Further on I present the results of analyses that have considered the procedural fairness effects among those who expect to benefit from the railway expansion project.

opinions derive from self-interest considerations. The findings of this literature can help to generate more well-founded expectations regarding how having a stake may shape the role of procedural fairness in consent.

Research on self-interest indicates that self-interest considerations do not play a primary role in shaping public opinion and certainly do not uniformly inform public opinion irrespective of the kind of issue and a person's stake in the issue (Green 1988; Lehman and Crano 2002; Mansbridge 1990; Sears and Funk 1991). The conditions under which self-interest matters most for political attitudes and behavior are that a person has a stake in an issue, and that the implications of the issue are apparent and certain. Home owners tend, for example, to be more reluctant to support increases in property taxes, and public employees are in general more likely to oppose tax cuts (Sears and Funk 1991, 36, 49-51). Non-smokers tend to be much more enthusiastic about smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes than smokers, especially heavy smokers (Green and Gerken 1989), and gun owners are more inclined to oppose gun control than people who do not own guns (Wolpert and Gimpel 1998).

Having a stake in an issue does not, however, automatically lead to opinions and behavior aligning with self-interest concerns. In some instances, the implications of the issue may simply be too difficult for citizens to detect or assess. Experimental research has found that providing informational clues that make the implications of a particular decision more obvious (i.e. priming) does in fact increase the likelihood that survey respondents will adjust their preferences to concur with their own self-interest (Chong, Citrin and Conley 2001, 552-554). These findings suggest that perceived procedural fairness may have a tougher time fostering consent among stakeholders and hence that other considerations may have less explanatory power in stakeholders' reactions to an issue.

Theoretical work suggests that the opposite might be the case, that procedural fairness may instead play a *larger* role among stakeholders than among non-stakeholders. That self-interest concerns gain in importance does not, in other words, mean it is a foregone conclusion that procedural fairness diminishes in explanatory power among stakeholders. David Miller has argued that procedural fairness ought to matter the most when "...the good we are trying to allocate is indivisible and there is no compelling reason for giving it to one claimant rather than another. Since we have no grounds for judging one outcome as fairer than another in these circumstances, all the weight must fall on the method used for the allocation" (1999, 97). Miller's description of settings in which procedural fairness might matter most is somewhat of an ideal type since grounds for choosing one recipient of goods (or burdens) are seldom entirely absent in real political decisions. The issues which most aptly fit the description are arguably decisions regarding

finding a location for desirable or undesirable physical facilities since they are, with a few exceptions, indivisible.

Miller's argument provides the theoretical foundation for a prediction quite contrary to that extracted from the self-interest literature. Rather than playing a smaller role in fostering consent among those directly affected by an issue, there is reason to anticipate that procedural fairness might matter much *more* among those who are directly affected. In addition to Möller's (1996) study of welfare state services mentioned earlier, empirical support for this hypothesis has emerged from research on procedural fairness in organizational settings. Organizational justice research has produced considerable evidence indicating that procedural fairness matters more among those affected by an issue, and in particular among those who incur a loss in a given decision situation (Brockner, Ackerman and Fairchild 2001, 193; Brockner and Wiesenfeld 1996, 191).

To give an example, one experimental study designed a set of role play situations in which participants were defendants in a simulated legal proceeding (Lind and Lissak 1985). Half of the participants 'won' their cases while the other half lost. A second cross-cutting variation related to the relationship between the judge and the prosecuting lawyer. In half of the cases, the judge behaved in a friendly, familiar manner toward the lawyer for the opposing side, while in the other half the judge behaved impartially toward all parties involved. Across the board, participants who encountered the more neutral judge tended to express more positive assessments of the proceeding and the outcome than those who encountered the inappropriately friendly judge. The two main effects (procedural fairness and unfavorable outcomes) also interacted, however. Those who received an unfavorable ruling *and* encountered a partial judge expressed much more critical assessments of the process and the outcome (Lind and Lissak 1985).

Organizational justice researchers have advanced several different interpretations for the finding that procedural fairness seems to play such a decisive role for a person's response to a decision situation or organization when confronted with a negative outcome. One of these resembles the reasoning presented in Chapter two for why public justification might matter for decision acceptance: that fair procedures communicate that the outcome is justifiable and not the result of partiality or even arbitrariness in the decision process (Folger 1993). Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996, 193) concisely summarize this interpretation for why people react so strongly when confronted simultaneously with bad news and bad procedures. "When procedures are fair ... it is more difficult for them to imagine alternative outcomes that exceed the ones they received; that is, outcomes resulting from fair procedures are more likely seen as justified." In sum, research on personnel management suggests that the effect of perceived procedural fairness might be

stronger among those directly affected by the railway issue studied here.

The analysis initially considers whether procedural assessments matter more, or less, to those who have experienced or expect to experience negative ramifications of the railway expansion project. While many respondents also expect benefits from the new rail, it is, at the end of the day, those who bear the negative implications of an issue who are the least likely to grant their consent to a decision outcome. It is therefore of interest to find out whether procedural fairness fosters consent at all, or to a greater or lesser extent among these individuals. The category negative consequences includes respondents who report expecting or experiencing any of the following as a result of the expansion work or the chosen routing alternative: expropriation of property, reduced property values, disturbances due to the fact that they live within 100 meters of the proposed track routing, deterioration of commuter services for themselves, noise pollution, or severe negative implications for the local landscape, cityscape, or local environment (see Appendix A for exact operationalization). One third of the respondents (i.e. 748 individuals) had experienced or expected to experience negative consequences in one of these forms. This definition of negative consequences casts a wide net, capturing not only those who report direct negative implications for themselves personally but also those who see strong negative implications for the community. More nuanced categorizations will be considered and examined below.

The construction of interaction terms allows for a comparison of the effect of procedural fairness in the two groups, those expecting or experiencing negative consequences and those not. A positive and statistically significant interaction term (denoted as procedural fairness \*negative consequences) would indicate, in this case, that procedural fairness matters more among those negatively affected than among those not experiencing negative consequences. With the interaction term included in the model, the coefficient for the perceived procedural fairness (the main effect) indicates the effect of procedural fairness on those *not* expecting or experiencing negative consequences.

Table 6.2 reports that those who expect negative consequences are less prone to accept the decision outcome, though not less trusting of the Rail Administration (the main effects). Interestingly enough, however, the weight of procedural assessments among those negatively affected does not differ considerably from among those not negatively affected by the issue (interaction terms). With respect to public justification, those who report experiencing negative consequences do not react more or less strongly than do the other respondents. Public justification, in other words, has the same potential to shape both decision acceptance and institutional trust among those who experience negative consequences in the issue as among those who do not.

Table 6.2 The effects of perceived procedural fairness on decision acceptance and institutional trust among respondents who are, and are not, negatively affected by the railway issue

Dependent variable:	Decision Acceptance		Institutional Trust	
	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$
Public justification (PJ)	0.08 (.03)**	0.07	0.53 (.03)***	0.43
Effective influence (EI)	0.12 (.03)***	0.12	0.06 (.03)*	0.05
Utility	0.38 (.02)***	0.44	0.16 (.02)***	0.16
Negative consequence	-0.44 (0.14)***	-0.16	0.08 (0.15)	0.03
PJ*neg. cons.	0	0	0	0
EI*neg. cons.	0.09 (0.05)*	0.06	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.05
Political trust	0.05 (0.02)**	0.05	0.29 (0.02)***	0.26
Interested in the issue	0.19 (0.02)***	0.17	0.04 (0.03)	0.03
$R^2_{adj}$ and N	0.44	1634	0.44	1654

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Notes to Table 6.2: Excluding political trust and individual level of interest in the issue does not change the results of the model explaining decision acceptance, but does lead to a minor change in the model explaining institutional trust. The 'effective influence\*negative consequence' variable remains negative but becomes statistically significant ( $p=0.05$ ). The survey questions are presented in Appendix A.

These results are, from a normative point of view, encouraging. Though perceived process transparency does not have an overwhelmingly strong effect on decision acceptance, it is encouraging that even those who see negative consequences for themselves or for their local environment become more inclined to accept the decision when the process is perceived to be transparent and accessible to the local populous.

Effective influence does, in contrast, play a somewhat variable role depending on negative consequences felt. Satisfaction with ability to influence the decision process mattered *more* for decision acceptance among those experiencing negative consequences. This finding concurs with the organizational justice research that finds that voice opportunities can soften the blow of an unfavorable outcome in a decision process. The maximum effect of effective influence on decision acceptance (the change in decision acceptance that would result from a shift from the minimum to the maximum of effective influence) among those *not* experiencing negative consequences is estimated at .7 on a 0 to 5 scale, the maximum effect among those experiencing negative consequences is estimated at 1.3 on the same 0 to 5 scale.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Since effective influence is measured on a scale from 0 to 6, the maximum effect of effective influence on decision acceptance for those not experiencing negative consequences is 1.3 on a 0 to 6 scale.

The role of effective influence in shaping institutional trust does not, however, differ among those negatively affected. The data do not, in other words, confirm Esaiasson's (1996) and Möller's (1996) findings that procedural fairness assessments can erode political trust in particular among those who are dissatisfied with the substance of a decision. In line with Kumlin's findings (2002, 263), this analysis indicates that effective influence plays the same, modest role in shaping trust for the Rail Administration among those who anticipate negative consequences as among those who do not.

The apparently contradictory predictions extracted from the self-interest literatures and the organizational justice literatures were to some extent both correct, however. Running the model only including those respondents experiencing negative consequences reveals that utility considerations *also* play a larger role among this group. It is quite simply possible to explain more of the variation in attitudes of those negatively affected than attitudes of those not affected.<sup>96</sup>

*Subsidiary analyses: Winners and losers*

Having a stake in an issue does not only imply expecting *negative* consequences, however. A stakeholder may also expect to benefit in some way from a decision. Furthermore, it seems plausible to expect a person who faces expropriation to react differently from a person who expects the new rail to transform the urban environment in an un-desirable way. A set of subsidiary analyses therefore compared the procedural fairness effects among four groups of respondents: those who expected negative consequences for themselves personally, negative consequences for the local community more generally, positive consequences, or no particular consequences at all from the railway expansion project.<sup>97</sup> The predictions extracted from the self-interest and organizational justice research should, if anywhere, apply to the group experiencing direct and personal negative effects. Manifold subsidiary analyses failed to produce consistent support for any of these hypotheses. Public justification had the same effect on decision acceptance and on institutional trust irrespective of a person's stake in the issue. Even among the small number (144) of individuals directly and negatively affected, public justification seemed to have the same capacity to foster consent as among

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ces is attained with the following formula  $6 * 0.12 = 0.7$ . For those experiencing negative effects it is  $6 * (0.12 + 0.09) = 1.26$ .

<sup>96</sup> The model explaining decision acceptance explains 35 percent of the variation among those not experiencing negative consequences, and 40 percent among those experiencing negative consequences. The model explaining institutional trust explains 40 percent of the variation among those not experiencing negative consequences, and 43 percent among those experiencing negative consequences.

<sup>97</sup> The categories, direct negative effect (N=144), indirect negative effect (N=1003) and positive effect (N=321) were constructed to be mutually exclusive. Respondents who were in more than one category were assigned to the categories in the following order: direct negative effect, indirect negative effect, positive effects.

the larger sample, though it is difficult to reject the null hypothesis definitively with such a small number.<sup>98</sup>

Similar to the results of the analysis employing a broader definition of negative consequence presented in Table 6.2, effective influence did tend to matter differently for stakeholders. People who expected more diffuse negative consequences to the local environment became more inclined to accept the decision outcome if they felt satisfied with influence opportunities. In contrast, effective influence had no relationship at all to decision acceptance among those 144 individuals who are directly and negatively affected. Nor did it have any bearing on decision acceptance among those who expected benefits from the new rail. Only those affected negatively but indirectly, and those who had no stake at all seemed to react to effective influence.

#### *Active involvement*

Of the 2300 total respondents who answered the 2002 survey, approximately one-third reported having been actively involved in the railway issue in one way or another. As Table 6.1 indicates, some of those who became actively involved also reported experiencing negative implications of the expansion project. The two categories are nonetheless distinct, allowing for an examination of whether perceived procedural fairness affects consent differently among those who have been actively involved.

Of all of the studies that have contributed to our existing knowledge regarding the implications of perceived procedural fairness, none that I have reviewed have compared the procedural fairness effect among those who have involved themselves actively in a decision and those who have followed an issue from afar. The focus of social psychology research lies primarily on how individuals react to interpersonal interactions in small groups or with other individuals, and this theoretical priority has resulted in a detailed body of knowledge regarding the importance of procedural fairness in such interactions. As described with respect to having a stake, experimental research exploring the dynamics of support for the U.S. Supreme Court and Congress often asks respondents to imagine themselves going before the Court (or Congress) to argue an issue (Tyler 1997).<sup>99</sup> This theoretical focus has created

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<sup>98</sup> If the model is run only using those 144 individuals, neither effective influence nor public justification have a significant relationship with decision acceptance, and the perceived utility of the new rail has a stronger effect on decision acceptance in this small group. Public justification has the same relationship with institutional trust as among respondents in the other three groups ( $b=0.56$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

<sup>99</sup> Tyler (1994), a notable exception, uses manipulations that describe a fair process as one made by a Congressional committee in which many different viewpoints are represented (in the unfair process all committee members are 'mostly on one side of the issue'), and 'where everyone could present their views' (as opposed to making the decision 'behind closed doors'). Respondents are not encouraged to imagine that they themselves meet with the Congressional committee.

a blind spot in research on procedural fairness, namely whether the processes and mechanisms examined are equally strong even when citizens only observe a decision process from a distance.

The residents along the West Coast Line have become involved in the railway issue via an assortment of channels. Some of these forms of engagement represent attempts to influence the outcome of the issue (signing a petition, appealing a decision, being actively involved in a pressure group, participating in a demonstration) while others may or may not have been motivated by such an ambition (contacting the Rail Administration, sending a formal letter, writing a letter to the editor, or attending an informational meeting). The forms of involvement also differ in level of commitment from signing a petition to filing a formal appeal, in level of friendliness from attending an informational meeting to joining a demonstration, and in whether the involvement entailed face-to-face contact between citizens and Rail Administration officials. As a first step, however, respondents who have participated in the planning process in any of these forms are compared with those who have not.

Regardless of the specific aim and nature of the involvement, it seems reasonable to expect that assessments of both public justification and effective influence should matter more among those who have had direct contact with the planning process than among those who have not. Active involvement yields more detailed information about the authority and the decision process, and this first hand information might weigh more strongly into overall assessments of the decision and the decision authority. In addition, individuals who themselves have taken an initiative and expended the effort required for political action may have higher expectations regarding how the authority should respond, and therefore react more strongly to favorable or unfavorable impressions.

The negative main effects of active involvement indicate, perhaps unsurprisingly, that citizens who have in some form involved themselves in the railway issue tend to be less inclined to accept the decision outcome ( $b=-0.46$ ), and less trusting of the Rail Administration as an institution ( $b=-0.25$ ). The most plausible interpretation of this finding is that it is the more critical residents who become active in the first place. Among those who have been actively involved, however, perceived public justification plays a somewhat more pronounced role in shaping decision acceptance, and a much more pronounced role in shaping institutional trust than it does among those who have not been actively involved. The maximum effect of public justification on decision acceptance (a 0 to 5 scale) among those who have not been active is 0.4 (i.e.  $6 \cdot 0.06$ ), while among those who have been active it is estimated at 0.8 (i.e.  $6 \cdot (0.06 + 0.08)$ ). In terms of the role of public justification in shaping institutional trust, the difference is even more pronounced. While a shift from the lowest to the highest value in perceived public justification

would effect an estimated change of 2.7 (i.e.  $6 \times 0.47$ ) on the 0 to 6 institutional trust scale among those who have not been active, the same change among those who have been active is estimated at 3.7 (i.e.  $6 \times (0.47 + 0.15)$ ).

*Table 6.3 The effects of perceived procedural fairness on decision acceptance and institutional trust among respondents who have, and have not, been actively involved in the railway issue*

Dependent variable:	Decision Acceptance		Institutional Trust	
	B (S.E.)	$\beta$	B (S.E.)	$\beta$
Public justification (PJ)	0.06 (.03)*	0.05	0.47 (.03)***	0.38
Effective influence (EI)	0.14 (.03)***	0.14	0.07 (.03)**	0.06
Utility	0.41 (.02)***	0.47	0.16 (.02)***	0.17
Active involvement	-0.46 (0.14)***	-0.16	-0.25 (0.15)*	-0.08
PJ*active	0.08 (0.05)*	0.09	0.15 (0.05)***	0.15
EI*active	0.04 (0.05)	0.03	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.06
Political trust	0.05 (0.02)**	0.05	0.29 (0.02)***	0.26
Interested in the issue	0.20 (0.02)***	0.18	0.04 (0.03)	0.03
$R^2_{adj}$ and N	0.44	1634	0.44	1654

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . See Appendix A for operationalization details.

In contrast, and contrary to expectation, effective influence does not play a larger role in shaping consent among those who have been involved. Effective influence plays a consistent, if rather modest, role in shaping consent irrespective of whether a person has been actively involved in the issue. There is, however, a tendency for effective influence to matter more for decision acceptance, and less for institutional trust among those who have been actively involved, though it cannot be ruled out that these tendencies are the result of random, rather than systematic, variation.

As mentioned above, the forms of engagement undertaken by the residents along the West Coast Line have varied along numerous dimensions. Of all of these points of variation, there are two compelling reasons to examine whether procedural fairness has a stronger effect on consent among those who have interacted interpersonally with representatives of the Rail Administration. First, several decades of game theoretical research on the capacity of small groups to cooperate to solve collective problems show that face-to-face discussions markedly increase people's willingness to trust and cooperate with each other. David Sally's (1995) meta-analysis of experiments on "Conversation and Cooperation in Social Dilemmas" examines the findings of 130 studies examining the role of twenty-four possible determinants of successful

cooperation, and finds that the frequency of discussion among participants proved 'exceedingly meaningful' in determining the occurrence of cooperation (p. 78). Game theory researchers have assumed that the intimacy of face-to-face contact fosters a sense of empathy and trust among players, providing the needed foundation for cooperation.

Given the strong and robust effect of face-to-face contact in experimental settings, might interpersonal contact in real life political interactions have a similar effect? The only reasonable *a priori* answer would seem to be that it depends on the nature of that contact. Experimental research offers evidence that perceived procedural fairness is an important mediating factor between participation in planning a task and satisfaction with performing the task (Roberson, Moye and Locke 1999). Experiment participants who participated in planning a task were not significantly more positive about the task performed, but those who participated in the task planning *and* who perceived the participation as procedurally fair, were more satisfied with the task (Roberson, Moye and Locke 1999, 591).

The second reason to examine the procedural fairness effects separately among those who have had interpersonal contact with the Rail Administration is in order to relate the findings of this study to the social psychology research, which, as mentioned earlier, has primarily explored the procedural fairness theory in face-to-face interactions. If perceived procedural fairness is higher than among those who have not been active, it would lend support to the theory that social and psychological processes explain the procedural fairness effect.

Analyses of the West Coast Line data fail to produce consistent support for the theory that procedural fairness matters more in interpersonal interactions than it does in forms of interaction that do not entail interpersonal contact. A series of models compared the procedural fairness effects among respondents who have been involved in a manner which entails a high likelihood of face-to-face contact, and respondents who have been involved via channels that do not entail direct interpersonal contact with Rail Administration representatives. The first of these groups includes individuals who have attended an informational meeting, been involved in a pressure group, or contacted the Rail Administration directly. The second group includes individuals who have not done any of these things but who have appealed a decision, contacted decision authorities in writing, signed a petition, participated in a demonstration, or written a letter to the editor.

Having been active in a way that entails face-to-face contact does not affect the relationship between perceived procedural fairness (either conceptualization) and decision acceptance. Neither public justification nor effective influence mattered more among those who had interacted directly with Rail Administration officials than among other respondents. In contrast, public justification *does* tend to encourage decision acceptance more among those who have been active via channels that

do *not* involve direct interpersonal contact with Rail Administration officials ( $b=0.19$ ,  $p=0.07$ ).

The two dimensions of procedural fairness affect institutional trust differently among those who have interacted directly with authorities. Public justification matters more, while effective influence matters less. Public justification fosters institutional trust among all respondents irrespective of active involvement, but the effect of public justification among those who have had face-to-face contact is significantly stronger than within the other two groups (non-active and active with no direct contact). Contrary to expectation, however, effective influence has a significantly *weaker* effect among those who have had face-to-face interactions with Rail Administration officials than among both of the other two groups. In fact, the relationship between effective influence and institutional trust among those who have had face-to-face contact seems to be slightly negative ( $b= -0.07$ ).

### **Dispositional moderating effects**

The residents of the communities along the West Coast Line vary not only in the degree to which they are stakeholders or have been directly involved in the railway expansion issue. As in any group of individuals, the residents of the seven communities also differ from one another in their political dispositions and in their overall regard for government. The remaining two sets of analyses consider two such dispositional factors: individual expectations regarding how decisions in land use issues ought to be made, and a person's overall trust for political institutions.

The work of Albert Hirschman (1970) sets the stage for the analysis for these two moderating conditions. Though Hirschman seeks to delineate channels of customer or citizen feedback necessary for a firm or political entity to perform well enough to survive, his reasoning can easily be modified to predict when certain forms of procedural fairness might assume a larger role in different kinds of political issues.

As a hypothesized description of citizen actions and attitudes, an application of Hirschman's theory might go something like this: political trust (loyalty), direct participation in decision making (voice), or withdrawal from collaboration with a political institution (exit) represent complementary modes of behavior in interactions with political institutions. As exit opportunities become expensive or highly impracticable, the other two modes of interaction increase in importance. Citizens may expect more extensive opportunities to participate directly (voice) as exit opportunities diminish, and this expectation should be greater among those with little or no trust for the political institution. The aim is not to test Hirschman's theory or even a transmuted version or Hirschman's theory, but rather to situate the two remaining contingencies of the procedural fairness theory.

### *Procedural expectations*

John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (1995; 2002b) have undertaken a number of studies that seek to determine what citizens consider procedurally appropriate and desirable in political decision making. While they principally emphasize the conclusion that most citizens do not desire a more direct and active role in political decision-making, their data show considerable variation in citizens' definitions of procedural fairness (2002, chapter 4). More relevant to the study at hand, they detect a discrepancy between how people, or at least people in the United States, would *like* political representatives to go about making decisions and perceptions of how decision making actually transpires. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse find that the people feel decision makers should be more attuned to citizens' wants and needs (2002b, 85).

Organizational justice research has demonstrated that procedural expectations, regardless of whether they derive from personality attributes, prior experiences, or even cues given during a decision process, may greatly intensify or diminish the procedural fairness effect (Brockner, Ackerman and Fairchild 2001, 187-190). As an example of how prior experiences may shape procedural expectations, employees of companies who have survived previous layoffs in which the company gave ample prior notification and adequate explanations, expressed greater disappointment (and lost commitment to the company and work motivation) in response to the perception that later layoffs were issues with little advance notification or inadequate explanations (Brockner, Ackerman and Fairchild 2001, 190). Similarly, laboratory studies have shown that cues regarding how a decision will be made can strongly affect which approach to decision-making shapes consent. Van den Bos, Vermunt and Wilke find that procedural expectations are so important that experiment participants told they would not have an opportunity to voice an opinion in a decision process but who subsequently were given such an opportunity, deemed the process less fair than those who had been forewarned that they would not be given an opportunity to voice their opinion (1996, 414). Concurrence between promised procedure and actual procedure also enhanced participants' task performance (Van den Bos, Vermunt and Wilke 1996, 422).

In the West Coast Line case, as in facility siting issues in general, the exit opportunity tends to entail a rather high economic and social cost for the citizen, as it consists in uprooting oneself and family and relocating. Given that the exit opportunity is not a ready alternative, it may be the case that some citizens hold expectations that are more in line with participatory democracy (voice) in siting issues.

The first set of analyses presented in this chapter already touched upon this possibility. Those who have a stake in an issue are in all likelihood those most likely to seek either to exit the issue or to make their voices heard. The findings of that analysis (Table 6.2) offer some support for the fact that voice is more important among those who

might have a reason to seek exit. To reiterate, effective influence played a larger role in fostering decision acceptance among those who had a stake in the issue than among those who did not.

The data allow for a more direct investigation of these issues, however. The survey included a set of questions regarding how respondents thought decisions about major construction efforts in their municipality *ought* to be made. The battery of questions focused specifically on whether decision makers ought to devote time and resources to gathering input from local residents. The survey also included a question regarding whether the respondent personally would consider participating in consultation meetings with decision makers if a construction project were planned in their local community. These questions provide the basis for an index capturing inclinations to favor a participatory democratic model of decision making. According to the criteria used (see Appendix A for operationalization details), about one fourth (N=621) of the sample tend to favor a more participatory democratic approach in decisions regarding the installation of large-scale structures in the local environment.

Does this normative orientation moderate the effects of perceived procedural fairness? To put it succinctly: no. None of the interaction terms (participatory democrat\*public justification, and participatory democrat\*effective influence) differs from zero at a level of statistical certainty that exceeds 75 percent. This result does not change even if the interaction terms are entered one at a time to avoid problems with multicollinearity, nor even if the main effect for participatory democrat (which also had no statistically significant relationship to either of the consent indicators) is excluded from the model. Perceived procedural fairness did not prompt a different response among those individuals who seemed inclined to support a participatory democratic model of decision making than among those who were not so inclined.

#### *Political trust*

Hirschman's (1970) theory of organizational legitimacy suggests another query that is relevant for producing a more complete understanding of the mechanics of procedural fairness theory. Does political trust itself moderate the effect of procedural fairness? Does an individual who generally trusts political institutions extrapolate assessments of other aspects of the political system to the same extent as a person who generally distrusts political institutions? Hirschman's theory suggests that trust should mitigate citizens' need for exerting influence in the affairs of a political institution.

As mentioned in previous chapters, a considerable body of research on political trust and compliance with decisions indicates that both indicators of consent derive from sources ranging from socialization to a cognitive calculation of risks and benefits associated with trusting or complying. Both theoretical and empirical work on political trust

suggests that trust acts as a heuristic for compliance; those who trust political institutions (and trust their fellow citizens) are more prone to comply with rules and rulings than those who lack trust (Scholz 1998; Scholz and Lubell 1998a). Furthermore, Mark Hetherington (1998) observed that people who trust political institutions are more apt to judge individual office holders more generously than individuals who are generally distrusting of political institutions. Rather than collecting detailed information regarding the pros and cons of each decision and the merits or short-comings of each political actor, citizens fall back on sentiments toward more familiar political actors and these sentiments provide cues as to how to respond to specific or less well-known aspects of the political system.

The analyses presented thus far in this study lend considerable support to the theory that trust acts as a powerful heuristic. The analyses in Chapter five showed that trust for more familiar political institutions influences trust for the Rail Administration even under control for numerous other factors. The cross-lagged analyses presented in Figure 5.2 identified a similar effect: that trust for the Rail Administration colors people's assessments of the decision processes at a later point in time. Trust for higher order (in terms of the structure of the national political system) or well-known institutions therefore seems to play a consistent role in shaping reactions to less well-known institutions, and trust for an institution shapes more specific assessments regarding the practices of that institution (Gibson 1991, Tyler 1994).

These results all indicate that political trust has an independent effect on shaping compliance and assessments of specific aspects of political institutions. Existing research does not, however, provide much guidance in making predictions about how political trust may moderate the effect of perceived procedural fairness. Research on how trust colors the intake of new information about a particular actor indicates that trusters tend to attribute greater credibility to positive information while distrusters tend to attribute greater credibility to negative information about the actor in question (Cvetkovich et al 2002). This finding suggests that both strong distrust and high levels of trust for political institutions may function as more powerful heuristics than moderate political levels of trust.

Preliminary analyses revealed that political trust does not function uniformly as a heuristic when making assessments of more specific elements of the political system. These preliminary analyses compared the procedural fairness effects among those with very low levels of political trust (below the twentieth percentile) with those who have relatively high levels of political trust (above the eightieth percentile).<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Since the survey did not include questions about trust for political institutions in general, these analyses use a proxy in the form of a mean index of trust for national and for municipal politicians. The category 'low political trust' includes the twentieth percentile

The general trend is that procedural fairness matters somewhat *less* (in particular for decision acceptance) among those with high levels of political trust, and matters *more* (for both indicators of consent) among those with very low levels of political trust. Since low political trust has a more consistent and dynamic role in shaping the effect of procedural fairness, Table 6.4 presents the results of models that include only these effects.

The analyses of the moderating effect of political trust clearly indicate that procedural fairness, and in particular public justification, has the strongest effect on both decision acceptance and trust for the Rail Administration among those who have little or no trust for political institutions more generally. While public justification has a rather weak bearing on decision acceptance among those with moderate or high trust ( $b=0.05$ ), people with little or no political trust react quite strongly to perceptions of public justification ( $b=0.16$ ). With respect to fostering trust for the Rail Administration, public justification matters a great deal to those who have moderate or abundant trust for political institutions more generally ( $b=0.50$ ), but has a significantly *stronger* effect ( $b=0.62$ ) among those who have low levels of trust for political institutions more generally.<sup>101</sup>

People with low levels of trust for political institutions do not, however, seem to value effective influence more than people with higher levels of trust. Satisfaction with one's own perceived influence in the railway issue has, in fact, a significantly weaker relationship with decision acceptance than it does among trusters ( $b=0.07$  for low trusters and  $0.20$  for trusters). The role of effective influence on institutional trust does not, however, differ depending on a person's level of trust for political institutions more generally.

The fact that the relationship between procedural fairness and consent is strongest among individuals who generally distrust political institutions is of both theoretical and practical importance. On the theoretical level, the finding suggests that while political trust acts a heuristic in assessing lesser known political institutions, a lack of trust does not seem to have this function. Low trust therefore appears to be a lack of trust rather than a categorical skepticism or even antagonism toward political institutions. Instead, it seems that those who lack trust

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value (1 on a scale from 0 to 6) and below, and 'high political trust' includes the eightieth percentile value (3.5 on the 0 to 6 scale) and above.

<sup>101</sup> Those who lack trust for political institutions may rely less on political trust as a heuristic and therefore form an opinion based more on the information available about that issue. Could it be that utility also plays a stronger role in shaping consent among those who lack political trust? With respect to institutional trust, this is to some extent true. The strength of the 'public justification\*low political trust' estimate diminishes somewhat when the utility is also allowed to interact with low political trust. With respect to decision acceptance this alternative explanation carries no weight whatsoever. The perceived utility of the new rail carries no more weight among political distrusters than among those who profess higher levels of trust for political institutions.

for political institutions more generally may in this case be more receptive to information regarding the Rail Administration's handling of the issue and may also monitor and scrutinize the Rail Administration more closely. This attention would explain the stronger relationship between process assessments and consent among the non-trusting.<sup>102</sup>

Table 6.4 The effects of procedural fairness depending on trust for political institutions

Dependent variable:	Decision acceptance		Institutional trust	
	B (S.E.)	$\beta$	B (S.E.)	$\beta$
Constant	-0.05		-0.34	
Public Justification (PJ)	0.05** (0.03)	0.05	0.50*** (0.03)	0.41
Effective influence (EI)	0.20*** (0.02)	0.19	0.05 (0.03)	0.03
Utility	0.42*** (0.02)	0.48	0.16*** (0.02)	0.16
PJ* Low political trust	+0.11** (0.05)	0.09	+0.12** (0.06)	0.08
EI* Low political trust	-0.13** (0.06)	-0.07	0	
Political trust	0.07** (0.03)	0.07	0.33*** (0.03)	0.30
Interested in the issue	0.18*** (0.02)	0.16	0.04 (0.03)	0.03
R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub> and N	0.44	1634	0.44	1654

\* p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.001. See Appendix A for operationalization details.

The finding has momentous practical implications as well. If, as many authors have implied, the waning level of trust felt by citizens for political institutions constitutes a problem for governance and perhaps even for democracy, then procedural fairness seems to present a viable means of arresting the erosion of political trust. This street goes both ways, however. If authorities disregard the matter of the public's assessments of decision-making processes, their behavior will not only lead to the erosion of trust, but it will do so most among those who already harbor skepticism toward political institutions more generally.

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<sup>102</sup> This theory can be substantiated by yet another set of subsidiary analyses. If we create a variable that represents the intensity of person's public justification assessments (the absolute deviation from the midpoint 3) and use this as the dependent variable, the low trust variable proves to be the strongest predictor of the intensity of process assessments. Control variables include the intensity of utility assessments, political interest, active involvement, having received information from the Rail Administration, education, proximity of the new rail to one's home, frequency of railway travel, and whether the respondent lived in Båstad.

At the end of the day, the relationship between perceived procedural fairness and consent seems to be less dynamic than existing research led us to anticipate. With respect to effective influence, the results of this chapter extend the findings of the preceding chapter, and show that effective influence has a consistently weak influence on consent indicators. Satisfaction with perceived level of influence has only a modest bearing on institutional trust on decision acceptance in all of the groups examined here. Even those respondents inclined to support a participatory model of decision making in land use issues do not react more strongly to effective influence. Only in one group of respondents, those negatively affected by the issue, does effective influence have a somewhat stronger relationship with decision acceptance. Considering, however, that this group is for obvious reasons the most likely to contest a decision, the finding suggests that meaningful opportunities to exert influence may present a means to obviate adversarial contestation and controversy in land use decisions.

Assessments of public justification had a consistently strong relationship with trust for the Rail Administration, and a consistently modest relationship with decision acceptance. In two groups of individuals, those who have been actively involved, and those with low political trust in general, the effects of public justification were even more pronounced. In both of these groups, the perception that the Rail Administration exhibited a willingness to engage in public dialogue was more strongly associated both with institutional trust and with decision acceptance. Perceived public justification fostered consent to the same extent among those adversely affected by the railway project as those not, and irrespective of a person's own normative position on how land use policies should be decided.

## **7** **Decision Processes in the Public Eye: Exploring perceptions of procedural fairness**

During the period between May 2000 and September 2002, an average of 3.7 items (articles or letters to the editor) concerning the West Coast Line expansion through Varberg appeared in local and regional newspapers each month. The volume of local reporting on the Hallandsås tunnel during the same period was about the same, while in the other communities it was considerably less. Items relating to Åsa and Frillesås appeared once and twice a month respectively. Only about half of this coverage mentioned procedural aspects of the issues, while the remainder discussed the routing alternatives and their local implications.

Parallel to this medial reporting, the Rail Administration has to varying extents made itself visible in the local community by disseminating its own information, arranging meetings, and responding to input from interested individuals and pressure groups. This chapter turns to the question of whether the varying approaches used by the Rail Administration in the seven communities led to more positive assessments of procedural fairness in some communities than in others.

In doing so, it investigates an aspect of the theory of procedural fairness that has received little attention in empirical research, namely that of how citizens evaluate actual decision processes. With some notable exceptions to be discussed below, much of the existing research on procedural fairness has focused on the link between perceived procedural fairness and citizens' willingness to consent to authority. The preceding two chapters have sought to contribute to this literature. We know less, however, about what explains perceptions of procedural fairness. This chapter addresses the third and fourth research questions: Do variations in approaches to decision formation affect citizens' assessments of procedural fairness? Does the structure of the decision process also affect consent to the overseeing authority? Evidence from experimental research suggests that they do. However, the relevance of this evidence for political reality is somewhat limited. In the experimental setting, researchers present respondents with clear and

distinct information regarding the structure of a decision-making process. While this allows for a closer examination of procedural variations, it leaves open the question of to what extent people take note of how decisions are made in everyday politics.

The literature review in Chapter five indicated that the link between perceived procedural fairness and consent was much more well-documented in settings in which citizens had face-to-face contact with decision makers. The same is true with respect to investigations of how different decision-making situations shape perceptions of procedural fairness. This research suggests that the institutional design of public institutions, as well as the demeanor of public authorities, can have implications not only for assessments of the decision situation itself, but also of the decision outcome, as well as of political institutions more generally. Less evidence has emerged regarding citizens' assessments of decision processes when such direct contact does not occur.

This chapter employs two methodological approaches to explore the connection between the decision-making processes and assessments of procedural fairness held by residents in the seven communities along the West Coast Line. The first set of analyses seeks to determine whether community level variations in perceived procedural fairness exist independent of the perceived utility of the new rail, and also to explain this variation with the use of the contextual descriptions presented in Chapter three. These analyses combine macro-level data on the different approaches to decision formation in each case study community, with micro-level data on individual citizens' assessments of and reactions to the decision process. The second set of analyses explores individual level variations in procedural assessments.

As mentioned in Chapter five, most, though not all, of the survey based research on the implications of perceived procedural fairness assume the validity of those procedural fairness assessments. Such studies generally present respondents with questions regarding fairness in political decision making, and then investigate whether these evaluations correlate with indicators of consent. In their discussion of the direction of causality in the observed relationship between perceived procedural fairness and willingness to comply with laws, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001, 151) argue that it is theoretically more plausible that process judgments foster compliance rather than the other way around. As mentioned previously, what Hibbing and Theiss-Morse do not address is the possibility that the empirical relationship is spurious and that both compliance and perceived procedural fairness derive from a more overarching orientation toward political institutions (the same issue can be raised with respect to the findings of Ulbig 2002 and Tyler 1994, among others).

Researching public opinion is an endeavor fraught with pitfalls. In his thorough discussion of opinion research, Zaller (1992) presents lists of social and psychological forces and mechanisms that may cloud,

distort and, most worrisome of all, induce public opinions in survey research. These well-documented effects inspire caution in any research building upon survey data, and most certainly places the burden of proof on the researcher aiming to argue that evaluations of decision processes pertain to the set of cognitive activities of citizens. Responses on questions regarding a specific decision process may be informed by evaluations of the substance of the decision, may reflect previous assessments of the authority in question, may be shaped by diffuse attitudes toward the political system and political authority, may echo the respondent's mood, and so on.

The difficulty of isolating procedural assessments from this potential noise in survey responses in part explains the scarcity of research on the procedural fairness theory in non-experimental settings. Unlike many policy issues, this case presents a means of exploring the extent to which survey responses build upon assessments of actual decision processes. The overall substance of the issue, the national political context, and the authority responsible for making decisions are the same in each of the seven communities surveyed, yet variation exists in the decision-making processes in individual local subprojects.

This variation results in part from the Rail Administration's organizational structure. The Rail Administration received its first assignments with few administrative directives in place regarding public involvement and relations. The absence of such guidelines, combined with a project-driven organizational structure (decentralized and adaptable to local conditions) has implied considerable variation in interactions with municipal governments and local publics. The most relevant and systematic source of variation in decision procedures comes, however, from a reform in the Environmental Code enacted in January of 1999. The revised Code requires that public consultation meetings be held with citizens identified as potentially affected by a proposed large-scale construction project. When the revised Environmental Code came into effect, the final decision regarding the railway expansion route had not been reached in two of the seven case study communities, Varberg and Båstad. The legislative reform required that Rail Administration officials reassess the prevailing plan in accordance with the new Code in these two communities. The differences among the seven case study communities therefore constitute somewhat of a natural experiment, providing a unique opportunity to examine the link between actual decision processes and public assessments of procedural fairness.

Despite this legislative reform, the variation at the community level is nonetheless somewhat less than optimal from a methodological point of view. While the Rail Administration only provided formal opportunities for public influence in two of the case study communities, they arranged meetings in most of the other communities, and some of these meetings encouraged local residents to react to and provide input regarding routing alternatives. More distinct variations would certainly

have provided more conclusive results, but social science research in natural settings seldom enjoys such privileges.

### **Public assessments of decision processes: the findings and the gaps**

As mentioned above, the extent to which citizens make cognitive judgments of political decision processes are issues that have remained largely unexplored in non-experimental empirical research. And with good reason. An investigation of the link between decision formation and perceived procedural fairness ideally requires either variation in decision-making procedures with other contextual factors held relatively constant, or variation in exposure to the decision process with other individual factors held constant. Neither of these sets of circumstances is a common occurrence in real political life.

Evidence from experimental research indicates that the structure of the decision process can be decisive for fairness assessments irrespective of substantive outcomes. In one experimental study, participants took part directly in carefully structured decision processes that varied with regard to whether respondents had the opportunity to voice an opinion and whether their opinion was subsequently reflected in the final decision. Voice opportunities proved to influence how respondents regarded the outcome of the process as well as the process itself (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).<sup>103</sup> Sulkin and Simon (2001) also show that an opportunity to deliberate a proposed allocation in game theoretical experiments also significantly increases the perceived fairness of the allocation process.

Using a somewhat different experimental approach, two studies have presented survey respondents with vignettes describing the process leading to a Congressional decision (Tyler 1994) or Supreme Court ruling (Mondak 1993). After relating the vignette, the survey asked respondents to gauge the fairness of the decision process and state an opinion about the decision outcome. These experiments have produced mixed results. Tyler (1994) found that the vignette describing unfair decision processes led to significantly more critical assessments on the part of the respondents, and that these critical assessments were also associated with a reluctance to accept the decision outcome. Mondak (1993), in contrast, found that the process descriptions did not affect the perceived fairness of the decision process. Though experimental

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<sup>103</sup> The influence of voice on the perceived fairness of the decision process and willingness to accept a decision outcome was not, however, consistently positive. The opportunity to express one's opinion had an adverse effect on the willingness to accept a decision outcome if, for example, the decision maker demonstratively disregarded the respondent's input. The experiment illustrates clearly, however, that the specifics of the decision process have implications for the perceived fairness and legitimacy of the process, irrespective of the decision outcome.

manipulations of decision procedures do in most cases (with the exception of Mondak's 1993 study) affect assessments of the fairness of the processes, it is difficult to generalize to the relationship between citizens and authorities in noisy political reality.

A few innovative studies have found ways to surmount the methodological barriers and to explore citizens' reactions to divergent decision-making situations. A few do this by comparing similar political contexts which vary with respect to decision-making at the highest political level. Bowler and Donovan (2002), for example, examine whether the number of referenda held in different states in the United States affect citizens' internal and external efficacy as measured in the American National Election Study. The Bowler and Donovan study reveals that the existence of direct democratic opportunities in a state has a considerable, positive effect on both internal and external efficacy, even once all other relevant determinants of efficacy are taken into account. The effect of the number of state referenda on both internal and external efficacy is on par with the effect of a person's level of education (Bowler and Donovan 2002, 384-389; Mendelsohn and Cutler 2000, 695-696 report similar findings).

Comparative political research also reveals that the structure of decision making in a political system as a whole may shape citizens' satisfaction with democracy. Citizens of more consensual systems tended to be slightly more satisfied with how democracy works in their country, and, more importantly, the electoral losers (those who voted for a party not elected into power) in consensual systems are much more satisfied with democracy than losers in majoritarian systems (Anderson and Guillory 1997). Banducci and co-authors take advantage of a rare reform of electoral system in an established democracy to investigate the implications of this meta-decision procedure on the perceived legitimacy of the political system. They examine the shift in New Zealand from a first past the post majoritarian system to proportional representation, and reveal that the institutional change enhanced voters' assessments of the responsiveness of parliament and their own ability to influence political decisions (Banducci, Donovan and Karp 1999).

A third growing literature seeks to explain both consent and perceived procedural fairness in terms of the design of public policy and welfare state programs (Mettler and Soss 2004). These studies show that different institutional settings tend to generate systematic differences in political trust and perceived procedural fairness among aid recipients, even once other relevant factors are taken into account. Institutional settings in which street-level bureaucrats have considerable discretionary power, and in which aid recipients have little or no possibilities to challenge decisions regarding aid allocations, tend to undermine citizens' confidence in political institutions (Kumlin 2002, 284-5), and foster a sense that both the service provider and the political

system generally are not responsive to citizens' demands (Kumlin 2002, 280; Soss 1999, 371). Furthermore, contact with welfare programs that require no means testing (like public health care in Sweden) tend even to enhance political trust and assessments of the responsiveness of public authorities (Kumlin 2002, 285).

Margaret Levi's innovative comparative studies in historical institutionalism have explored states' varying degrees of success in coaxing citizens to volunteer for military service (1997) and to pay taxes (1988). Both of Levi's studies elucidate the consequences of the structure of political institutions for citizens' willingness to comply with the demands of the state. Levi's most significant finding with respect to this study is that polities that prove better at encouraging willing cooperation are those whose governments behave fairly and impartially both in making and implementing political decisions (Levi 1997, 204). These studies all provide evidence that the characteristics of the political regime affect citizens' willingness to cede individual autonomy.

While this research has documented the link between institutional arrangements and citizen behavior, the answers they provide are only a beginning. In several of these studies, the nature of the data do not allow for a distinction between assessments regarding procedural fairness and distributive justice (e.g. Anderson and Guillory 1997; Levi 1997), which are known to be closely associated in citizens' minds (Kumlin 2002, 275).<sup>104</sup> Those studies that focus more strategically on procedural assessments primarily examine settings in which citizens have had face-to-face contact with authorities. The remainder compare contexts with fairly dramatic differences in decision procedures (the electoral reform in New Zealand, for example).

The analyses in this chapter advance this line of investigation by examining whether the design of decision-making processes affects procedural assessments even when citizens do not necessarily have face-to-face contact with decision makers, and also with rather moderate variations in institutional design. Whereas the studies mentioned above tend to focus on the implications of substantial variations in approaches to decision-making, the analysis presented here examines whether relatively minor differences (compared to a reform in the electoral system) in decision-making processes matter for the perceived fairness of those processes.

The analyses to follow employ two distinct methodological approaches. The first analysis explores the aggregate level attitudinal differences among the communities, and attempts to determine whether the variation can be explained in terms of differences in the processes of decision formation among the seven communities. Though attitudes do

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<sup>104</sup> Soss (1999, 365-367) offers an exception in this regard. By conducting extensive fieldwork and follow-up interviews with aid recipients, Soss is able to elucidate that respondents react overwhelmingly to procedural aspects of the encounters.

vary among the seven communities, the variation among the communities is much smaller than the variation among individuals residing in these communities. The second set of analyses therefore explore these individual level variations in assessments of the decision process. Does, for example, attendance at informational or consultation meetings affect procedural fairness assessments independent of a person's assessments of the substance of the issue?

### **Contextual determinants of procedural fairness assessments**

The analyses of the decision processes in the seven contexts presented in Chapter three focused special attention on three attributes of the planning process: information and dialogue, opportunities for citizens to exert influence in each community, and evidence that the Rail Administration had accommodated local demands. These three, summarized in Table 3.1 and in more condensed form in 7.1, provide the basis for creating two contextual indexes: *information and dialogue*, which encompasses aspects of the decision processes that may explain assessments of public justification, and *influence*, which captures aspects that may explain assessments of effective influence. Information and dialogue includes the Rail Administration's informational activities, but also meetings and exhibits intended as opportunities for public influence, as these also provide a forum for dialogue. The second contextual index, influence, reflects the presence of formal opportunities for local residents to influence the outcome of the decision process, but also any instances in which the Rail Administration in fact did incorporate local demands.

The aspects of the planning processes under examination do not easily lend themselves to quantification. Nonetheless, some analytical guidelines can enable a more meaningful comparison. What, for example, would it mean to say that the Rail Administration had provided little information in one community, and a lot in another? Informational efforts vary in two ways: reach (the proportion of local residents who received the information) and strategy (active or passive, where active information is sent directly to residents and passive information requires citizens to make an effort to attain the information.) Mailers such as newsletters and brochures are active, while exhibits, meetings and open house events are passive. Active information that reaches a large proportion of residents would therefore be considered 'a lot' of information, followed by passive information with a broad reach (many of the open houses drew large numbers of people), active information with a limited reach (letters to affected property owners), and, finally, passive information with a limited reach would be considered 'a little' information. An example of passive information with a limited reach would be a temporary informational exhibit that attracts few visitors.

Opportunities to exert influence may also vary, but only in terms of reach. In some of the communities, the Rail Administration has provided the possibility for all interested citizens and organizations to comment on expansion plans. In others, only small groups of residents more directly affected by the expansion project have been invited to discuss specific aspects of the plans. The third aspect, whether the Rail Administration has accommodated local demands, presents less of a problem simply because concessions that were sufficiently large to receive medial attention occurred only in two of the communities.

How the Rail Administration has handled the decision process is in all likelihood not the only factor that has shaped procedural fairness assessments as measured by the survey questionnaire. Two major aspects of the case itself may have colored procedural assessments: the municipality's handling of the issue, and the perceived local utility of the expanded railway. Though these two aspects are contextual in nature, they can be taken into account on an individual level by controlling for respondents' level of trust for municipal politicians and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of the new rail. Rather than examining the raw mean values of public justification and effective influence, the community comparisons therefore use community means under control for utility and trust for municipal politicians. The community values discussed below and presented in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 therefore show the variation that cannot be explained by these two factors.<sup>105</sup>

Controlling for local political trust serves another function as well. The respondents in the case study communities share more than the specific local implications of a railway expansion effort. They share a connection to the local economic conditions, to the successes or failures of the municipal government, and they may also share certain demographic characteristics. These factors may shape local residents' attitudes not only toward local political institutions but may also affect local residents' sentiments toward political endeavors and even their perceived ability to exert influence in the political sphere. Controlling for trust for politicians in the municipal government indirectly takes these effects into account.

It is also conceivable, however, that the municipalities' actions in the planning process may affect assessments of the Rail Administration without strongly affecting citizens' level of trust for municipal politicians. Though this possibility cannot be controlled for statistically, it will be taken into consideration in the qualitative analyses.

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<sup>105</sup> Though other factors may color assessments of the Rail Administration's handling of the decision process, such as internal efficacy, a person's procedural preferences, or psychological disposition, it is unlikely that these vary at the community level.

## Community variations: decision processes and public assessments

The description of the case study communities presented in Chapter three detailed the variation among the cases in terms of opportunities for public involvement, the volume and form of information issued by the Rail Administration, and whether the Rail Administration had accommodated local demands. Table 7.1 presents a recapitulation of the cases on these three points and provides the foundation for distilling the data down to the two contextual indexes, information and dialogue, and influence. To reiterate, the information and dialogue index refers to the Rail Administration's information efforts and formal influence opportunities; the influence index reflects any formal influence opportunities as well as instances of the accommodation of local demands. As the table indicates, information and dialogue were the most extensive and proactive in Båstad. With a community wide newsletter sent out four times a year, public meetings approximately three times a year, a mailer of a more limited scope four times a year, an active website, an exhibit at the site office, and occasional open house events, the efforts of the Rail Administration in Båstad far outstrip those in other communities.

*Table 7.1 The main attributes of the decision processes in seven communities*

	Information	Opportunities for influence	Accommodation of local demands
Åsa	Three, wide reach, active and passive	Three meetings, wide reach, early 1990s	One, but to the municipal govt
Frillesås	Three, wide reach, active and passive	Three meetings, wide reach, early 1990s	None
Varberg	Four, wide reach and active	Wide reach	One minor
Falkenberg	Wide reach, passive	Restricted and in mid-1990s	One minor
Båstad	Wide reach, both active and passive	Extensive and wide reach	Several
Glumslöv	Wide reach, both active and passive	Wide reach in 1996	One minor
Lund	From 1997 onwards, none	One restricted in 1998	Two minor

Sources: The Rail Administration's information and local print media. See case descriptions in Chapter three and discussion of media analysis in chapter 4 for details.

Glumslöv takes a somewhat distant second place. Glumslöv residents received a considerable volume of information from the Rail Administration in the form of approximately four mailers a year for a period of several years in the 1990s (during the final planning stages of the local project), and the opportunity to attend two open house events once construction commenced. In addition, the Rail Administration installed an on-site office which also contained an informational exhibit open

during the entire construction phase. The detailed plan of the new rail was also made available for public scrutiny and comment.

Information and dialogue in Åsa and Frillesås were less extensive than in Glumslöv, but also closer to the time of the survey. In both of these small communities, the Rail Administration sent out at least one community wide mailer and arranged one large informational meeting during the two years before the survey in 2002. Several mailers directed at much smaller groups of residents were also sent out in Åsa. In Frillesås the Rail Administration installed a temporary on-site office and residents were encouraged to contact site managers with questions and comments.

Of the remaining three communities, Varberg had the most proactive and voluminous information with two community wide mailers (though some time before the survey) and two exhibits which provided an opportunity for local residents to examine and comment on decision alternatives. These two exhibits were quite close to the time of the survey but drew few visitors and little input. In Falkenberg, the Rail Administration arranged occasional meetings throughout the 1990s, and these attracted considerable interest and attention. In Lund, the informational efforts were all prior to 1997.

In terms of the influence factor, Båstad once again distinguishes itself. The Rail Administration arranged no less than nine public consultation meetings between January of 2000 and the survey period in the fall of 2002. Varberg residents also had the opportunity to attend one community wide meeting in 1999, and to visit the two consultation exhibits in 2001 and 2002 respectively. Furthermore, the Rail Administration has accommodated local demands in both Båstad and in Varberg. In the latter, the local print media report an instance in which the Rail Administration in Varberg incorporated input from a resident of the local community. Glumslöv residents also had an opportunity to comment on routing alternatives, but the event took place many years before the survey period. To the extent that the Rail Administration provided formal opportunities for influence in the other four communities, these generally took place in the early 1990s. In both Falkenberg and Åsa, the case descriptions revealed that the Rail Administration has made some concessions to local demands. In Falkenberg, the Rail Administration accommodated local demands by attending a public meeting convened by a pressure group, an event which took place very near the time of the survey. And in Åsa, the Rail Administration conceded to the municipal government's demand for the inclusion of rescue and evacuation tunnels in construction plans. Based on this discussion and the case descriptions in Chapter three, it is possible to rate each community as having low, medium, or high degree of information and dialogue, and opportunities for and examples of public influence. Table 7.2 shows these ratings.

Table 7.2 Ratings of 'Information and dialogue', and 'Influence' in the decision processes in the seven communities

	Information and dialogue	Influence
Lund	Low	Low
Varberg	Low-Medium	Medium-High
Falkenberg	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
Åsa	Medium	Low-Medium
Frillesås	Medium-High	Low
Båstad	High	High
Glumslöv	High	Medium

*Explaining public justification assessments*

The preceding chapters have employed a public justification index that comprised three survey items: assessments of authority receptivity, assessments of the information provided, and assessments of the consideration shown for the local community. The subsequent analyses instead use a pared down version of public justification, which includes only assessments of authority receptivity and the quality of information provided.<sup>106</sup>

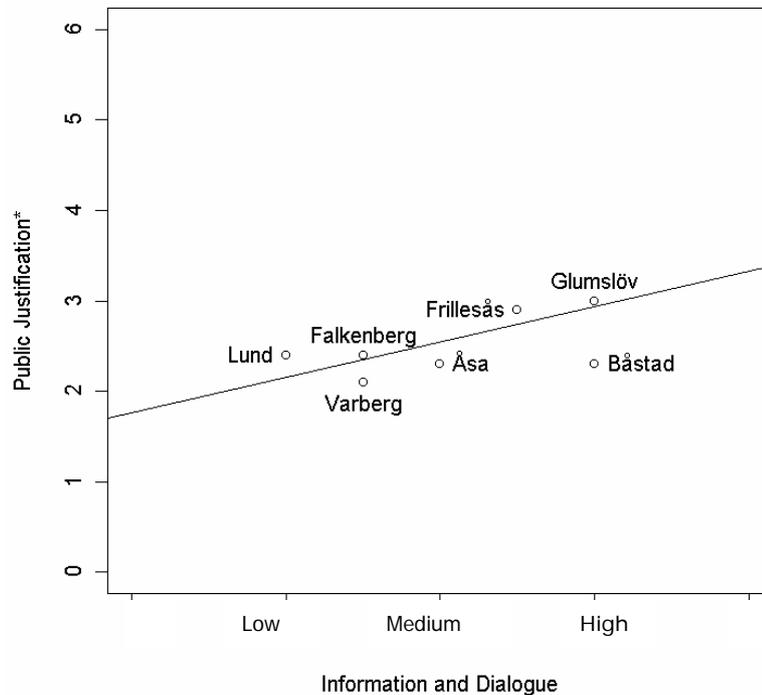
The overview above gives rise to an *expected* pattern in public justification assessments in the seven communities. Given the scope and proactiveness of information as well as the existence of arenas for dialogue in Båstad and Glumslöv, one might expect the residents of those communities to be among the most positive regarding public justification. The summary in Table 7.1 suggests that the Frillesås and Åsa residents might have moderately laudatory assessments of public justification, followed by the residents of the remaining three communities.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show the relationship between the two contextual indexes and procedural assessments. The x-axes in both figures represent a quantification of the ratings shown in Table 7.2, where low is equal to one and high equals three. The y-axes in both figures show the mean value of public justification (Figure 7.1) and effective influence (Figure 7.2) for each community. Both procedural fairness dimensions are measured on a seven-point scale from zero to six. The mean values shown in the figures are under control for individual assessments of the utility of the rail, as well as for trust for municipal politicians. The dia-

<sup>106</sup> The 'consideration' item is excluded from the analysis because the question was phrased in the negative ('Do you agree with this statement: The Rail Administration does not show consideration for the local community.'). Including a negative statement in the index avoids the problem of an acquiescent response set, reducing measurement error at the individual level. The mean responses to the 'consideration' item in the seven communities tend, however, to cluster much closer to the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that measurement error in that particular item may be greater than in the other items. Respondents may simply have overlooked the 'not' in the survey question. In the analyses of community level mean assessments, the negative item is not needed for reliability of measurement reasons, and considerably reduces community level variations in procedural fairness assessments.

gonal line in Figure 7.1 is the regression line ( $b=0.20$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) of the contextual index regressed on mean assessments, excluding the Båstad case. The estimated slope must be taken with a grain of salt, considering the sensitivity of the model to small changes in contextual values, which in turn result from a tremendous reduction of a considerable body of qualitative data. If Båstad is included in the model, the estimate becomes statistically insignificant. In contrast, excluding individuals who have had face-to-face contact with Rail Administration officials has no bearing on the relationship between information and dialogue, and aggregate assessments of public justification.

Figure 7.1 The effect of Rail Administration's information and dialogue on aggregate community assessments of public justification\*



\*Public justification refers to the community mean of assessments of two of the three components of the public justification index (information and receptivity), under control for utility and municipal political trust. Information and dialogue reflects the ratings shown in Table 7.2.

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of the findings presented in Figures 7.1 and 7.2, it is important to draw attention to the fact that even under control for the perceived utility of the new rail and respondents' trust for municipal politicians, statistically significant differences exist

among the seven case study communities both in terms of public justification and effective influence assessments. The aggregate level differences among the communities do not, in other words, depend on the perceived utility of the new rail, nor on community residents' attitudes to political institutions in general. Glumslöv residents are significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) more positive than the residents of all other communities with the exception of Frillesås, and Frillesås residents are more positive ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the residents of all of the remaining communities. The differences among Åsa, Varberg, Falkenberg, Båstad and Lund are not statistically significant, though the difference between Varberg and Falkenberg is significant at the 10 percent level.

In accordance with what one might have expected, Glumslöv residents are relatively positive to the Rail Administration with respect to public justification. Båstad and Glumslöv are the only two communities in which the Rail Administration arranged exhibits at the construction site offices that were open to the public throughout the construction process. Though the number of visitors to the Glumslöv office was reportedly small (a few hundred visitors a year)<sup>107</sup> in comparison to that recorded at the Båstad exhibit (between 5,000 and 10,000 annually), attendance at the periodic open-house events in Glumslöv was reportedly much higher, and the population of Glumslöv much smaller. The opportunity in Glumslöv to examine construction plans and register comments and questions may also have contributed to the positive attitudes. The extensive dialogue and information in Båstad could not mitigate the technical problems that have arisen in constructing the Hallandsås tunnel, though it is interesting to note that Båstad residents are in fact not the most critical with respect to public justification.

The observed difference in assessments of public justification in Åsa and in Frillesås is larger than expected. Though the Rail Administration did arrange two community-wide informational efforts in Frillesås, these efforts are on par with those in Åsa. Åsa residents' assessments of public justification are, in contrast, significantly less enthusiastic than those of Frillesås residents. The primary difference in the Rail Administration's handling of the decision process in Åsa and Frillesås is that in Frillesås the Rail Administration installed a site office and provided area residents with contact information regarding the personnel in charge of the construction work. Alternatively, the positive assessments of Frillesås residents may reflect the fact that the municipality gave in to local demands for a commuter station, which if true would indicate that the Rail Administration benefited by association. The contextual differences reflected in Table 7.1 generated the prediction that Åsa would produce more positive assessments than Varberg, which in turn would be more positive than Falkenberg and Lund. Instead, the only statis-

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<sup>107</sup> Telephone interview with Jan Källqvist (Rail Administration's project manager for Glumslöv, 14 August 2003).

tically significant difference among these communities' assessments is that Falkenberg residents are slightly more positive than Varberg residents. Both information and influence opportunities were more extensive in Varberg than in Falkenberg. The one distinguishing feature of the decision process in Falkenberg was the large public meeting held shortly before the survey period. Convened by a local pressure group, this meeting offered no realistic possibility of amending the decision regarding the local routing. Nonetheless, Rail Administration officials attended the meeting to field questions, and the event received considerable media attention.

On the whole, the volume of information provided or made available to local residents, but also the visibility and accessibility of Rail Administration officials in the community in the form of on-site offices, seem to have fostered a sense that the Rail Administration is open to input and willing to engage in dialogue with local residents regarding the local implications of the new rail. There is also some evidence that how other authorities, specifically the municipal government in this case, handle the issue may also to some extent affect assessments of the Rail Administration. Though the limited number of cases combined with the perhaps less than optimal variation among the communities in terms of the actual decision processes limit the ability to draw hard and fast conclusions, the preceding analyses do suggest that how a decision authority handles a decision process does in fact matter for the perceived procedural fairness of that process.

Before turning to an examination of community level differences in effective influence, a word on two alternative hypotheses is in order. The first relates the apparent lack of a relationship between formal influence opportunities and assessments of public justification, and the second relates to an alternative explanation of the laudatory assessments of Glumslöv and Frillesås residents.

The two communities where the Rail Administration offered the most extensive formal opportunities to exert influence were Båstad and Varberg. It was exactly these two communities where residents were the most critical of the Rail Administration in terms of public justification. The aggregate assessments of public justification are, in other words, exactly the inverse of what a simplified form of participative democracy theory might have predicted. Even if only a small portion of those surveyed had attended the meetings or visited the exhibits, it is not improbable that residents in these communities would have been aware that opportunities to participate had existed and therefore judged the Rail Administration more positively.

How can we understand this discrepancy between expected and observed results? Is it possible that efforts on the part of authorities to involve the public in a decision process backfired and instead fostered more *critical* assessments of that authority's receptiveness to input? The answer is: it is possible, but that is probably not what happened in

Varberg and Båstad. Experimental research has shown that people tend to regard a decision-making authority that invites input but then proceeds to categorically disregard participants' concerns and demands as more unfair than a decision authority that simply makes a decision without inviting input (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002a). This possibility cannot be eliminated as an explanation for critical assessments of residents in Varberg and Båstad, although the Rail Administration has incorporated suggestion from the general public in both Varberg and Båstad.

In this case, the ostensible negative effect of public consultation opportunities on perceived responsiveness is more likely spurious. In the two communities with the most public consultation, specific reasons lay behind the delays in planning and construction. In Båstad, the technical difficulties that forced a stop in the construction process in 1997 also explain the fact that the tunnel came under the jurisdiction of the new Environmental Code requiring public consultation. In Varberg, the presence of a well-organized pressure group and an intense conflict since the early 1980s delayed the planning process, again leading to the introduction of public consultation opportunities in accordance with the new Code.<sup>108</sup> The sources of the delays in these two cases may explain residents' more tepid assessments of the Rail Administration, and also explain the occurrence of public consultation opportunities.

Even if the course of events in the railway expansion in these two communities may offer plausible explanations for the observed aggregate attitude, it is interesting to note that the opportunities for public consultation do not appear to have moderated criticism of the receptivity of the Rail Administration whatsoever. Assessments of the Rail Administration's receptivity in Varberg in 2000 were slightly *more positive* than assessments in the fall of 2002, and Båstad residents' assessments on this point did not change between 2000 and 2002. Public consultation does not appear to offer a simple way to curry favor with the public when conflict is otherwise relatively intense.

The final hypothesis that requires commentary is an alternative explanation of the positive assessments among the residents of Frillesås and Glumslöv. A distinguishing feature of these two communities is that at the time of the survey in 2002, construction had already reached completion. Is it possible that public justification assessments reflect a collective relief at the end of the disruptive construction phase? Results from the 2000 survey allow us to check this explanation and suggest that it does not hold. Construction had not begun in Frillesås and was in full swing in Glumslöv in 2000, yet public justification assessments were identical to those in 2002.

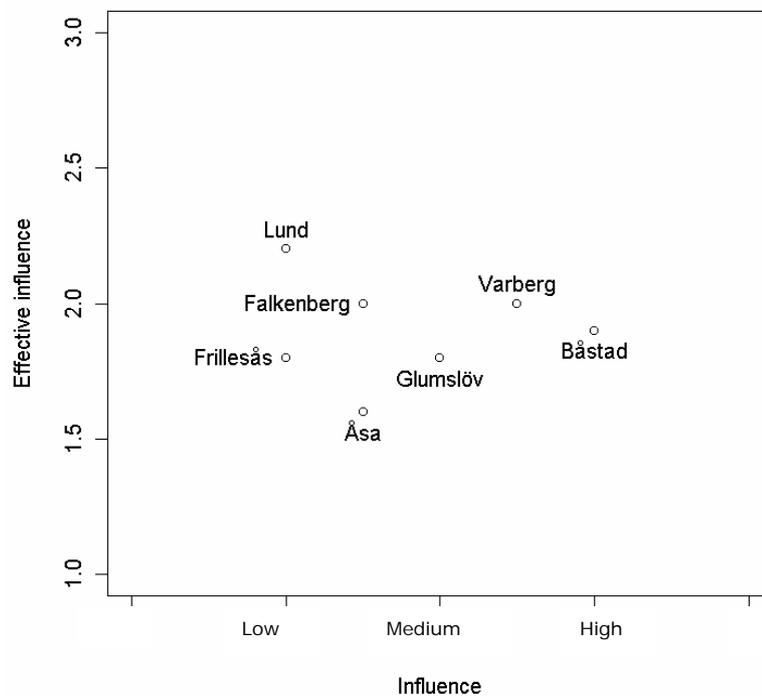
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<sup>108</sup> Though the case descriptions followed the issue from the early 1990s and onward, material provided by the pressure group in Varberg indicate that the issue has been alive since the early 1980s. The pressure group itself formed in 1984.

*Explaining effective influence assessments*

In contrast to public justification, different approaches employed in the local decision processes seem quite irrelevant in explaining community level variations in assessments of effective influence. Table 7.2 indicates that Båstad and Varberg were rated the highest with respect to influence. The residents of Båstad and Varberg had more extensive formal opportunities to exert influence than in other communities, and these opportunities fell quite close to the time of the survey.

*Figure 7.2 The effect of Rail Administration's influence opportunities on aggregate community assessments of effective influence*



In addition, the Rail Administration made concessions to demands posed by local residents in both of these communities. There is therefore reason to expect that residents of these communities might feel more satisfied with their perceived ability to exert influence in the railway issue than the residents of other communities. The case descriptions suggest further that Glumslöv residents should follow Varberg and Båstad residents in this regard, and that Frillesås and Lund have reason to be the most critical.

Again, before discussing the results, it is important to note that statistically significant differences exist among the communities with respect to effective influence. Åsa differs significantly from Varberg and Falkenberg, and Lund differs significantly from Åsa, Frillesås and Glumslöv. As in the preceding analyses, community means are under control for individual assessments of utility and trust for municipal politicians. The community level differences among the effective influence assessments are substantively smaller than public justification assessments, and for that reason the y-axis in Figure 7.2 does not show the full zero to six scale of the effective influence variable.

Contrary to prediction, Lund residents express the highest levels of satisfaction with their perceived ability to influence the railway issue. Varberg and Båstad residents are relatively positive, but so are Falkenberg residents. Despite the influence opportunities offered to Glumslöv residents, they are no more positive than Frillesås residents. The only safe conclusion with respect to effective influence is that formal opportunities to exert influence and accommodation of local demands do not seem to be the primary determinants in these data. It is possible that satisfaction with one's perceived level of influence instead builds on individual behavior such as having personally taken contact with the Rail Administration, or even factors such as education and political self confidence. The following section considers these possibilities as it explores variation in procedural fairness assessments at the individual level.

### **Explaining individual variation in procedural assessments**

The community comparisons showed that the extent to which the Rail Administration provided information and had been visible and accessible in the community did seem to enhance residents' assessments of public justification. For this finding to attain support at the individual level, individuals who recall having received information from the Rail Administration or report having attended meetings with Rail Administration officials should hold more laudatory assessments of the decision process. Furthermore, the preceding chapter found that individual procedural fairness assessments had a stronger bearing on consent among, for example, individuals who have been actively involved in the issue in some fashion as well as among individuals who have comparatively low trust for political institutions in general. Since these individuals react more strongly to perceived procedural fairness, it is interesting to investigate whether their assessments of the decision processes differ from other respondents'.

I consider three types of factors that may shape or be reflected in assessments of procedural fairness. The first are factors related to respondents' exposure to and involvement in the issue that would indicate a basis for cognitive evaluations of the actual decision process.

The analyses also control for factors related to respondents' views of the substance of the issue (the benefits and negative consequences of the new rail) that may be refracted into their assessments of the planning process. Third, dispositional and demographic factors are also investigated.<sup>109</sup>

*Individual variations in assessments of public justification*

Before delving into the individual determinants of public justification assessments, it is interesting to explore whether the quantification of the actual decision-making processes has any bearing on individual level assessments of public justification. The first model in Table 7.3 reports the results of this analysis. Controlling for utility assessments and for trust for politicians in the municipality, the contextual variable (information and dialogue) proves to have a significant and substantial influence on residents' assessments. Furthermore, if Båstad is excluded from the analysis, the contextual effect becomes even stronger ( $b=0.23$ , coefficient not shown in table). Community level variations in information and dialogue lose their explanatory power when individual factors are taken into account, however (model 2).

Turning now to those individual factors, all of the Rail Administration's various forms of contact with local community residents seem to have had a positive effect on assessments of public justification (Table 7.3, model 2). Community members who have received informational mailers from the Rail Administration, have visited the Rail Administration's exhibits, have attended informational meetings, or have contacted the Rail Administration on their own initiative tend to have more laudatory assessments of public justification.<sup>110</sup> In contrast, more critical respondents to a greater extent report having partaken of information provided by pressure groups. As described in Chapter three, pressure groups have mobilized in all of the case study communities, and in four of the communities have been active during virtually the entire life of the issue.

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<sup>109</sup> As discussed in Chapter six, diffuse support for political institutions may serve as an heuristic in assessing the fairness of these specific decision processes. A considerable body of research shows that people use heuristics in forming opinions about issues and candidates (e.g. Lupia 1994). Ideology and party affiliation may have been relevant in this investigation as well, if the railway expansion had been politicized along party lines. Except for dissenting minority parties Varberg and Falkenberg, the issue has enjoyed consensus among parties in all municipalities examined in this study.

<sup>110</sup> It may seem that the reason that the Rail Administration's various information efforts influence assessments of the decision process is because the index of procedural assessments includes a question about information. This is not the case, however. If the questions included in the index are analyzed independently, the effect of the Rail Administration's information efforts is equally strong on the perceived receptivity of the Rail Administration.

Table 7.3 Explaining individual level variation in assessments of public justification

	Model: 1: Contextual level determinants		2: Individual and contextual level determinants	
	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$
Information and dialogue (contextual variable)	0.11 ** (0.03)	0.07	0.06* (0.04)	-0.04
Received mailers from Rail Adm.			0.32* (0.07)	0.13
Visited Rail Adm. exhibits			0.35* (0.07)	0.12
Attended informational meeting(s)			0.2*** (0.08)	0.07
Contacted Rail Administration			0.27)** (0.13)	0.05
Active engagement			-0.03 (0.06)	-0.01
Information from pressure group			-0.24** (0.08)	-0.07
Saliency of the railway issue			0.06** (0.03)	0.06
Utility	0.19 *** (0.02)	0.25	0.15*** (0.02)	0.19
Trust for municipal politicians	0.19*** (0.02)	0.23		
Negative consequences			-0.28*** (0.06)	-0.11
Political distruster			-0.37*** (0.06)	-0.13
Participatory democrat			-0.12** (0.06)	-0.05
Political efficacy			0.16*** (0.03)	0.11
Women			0.06 (0.05)	0.02
Education			-0.06* (0.03)	-0.04
	N=2119	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub> = 0.09	N=1923	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub> = 0.18

Dependent variable: Assessments of public justification. Standard error given in parentheses. \* p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.001. See Appendix A for operationalization details.

The perceived utility of the new rail, along with several dispositional factors also prove to have a hand in shaping assessments of public justification. Once again we see that the Rail Administration can only be held partially responsible for how local residents judge decision processes. Those who felt low levels of trust for political institutions more generally (below the twentieth percentile) were more critical of

public justification, as were those who were inclined to support a participatory model of decision making in land use decisions. In contrast, individuals who feel more positive about citizens' ability to exert influence in political matters in general (political efficacy), also feel more positive about the Rail Administration in this case.

Several of the dispositional factors seem to play a more substantial role in public justification assessments than whether or not the individual has partaken of information from the Rail Administration. However, the four factors relating to exposure to the planning process also correlate with one another. Residents who visited the Rail Administration also reported to a greater extent having received informational mailers. If combined into an additive index, the first four individual factors in model 2 have the strongest effect on assessments of public justification ( $b=0.29$ ,  $\beta=0.26$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

*Individual variations in assessments of effective influence*

As the seemingly random placement of the seven communities in Figure 7.2 suggests, the quantification of influence opportunities has no apparent relationship to individual assessments of effective influence. Even in a bivariate analysis, context and individual assessments appear to be completely unrelated.

*Table 7.4 Explaining individual level variation in assessments of effective influence*

	b (S.E.)	$\beta$
Influence (contextual variable)	0	0
Received mailers from Rail Adm.	0.23*** (0.07)	0.09
Visited Rail Adm. exhibits	0.14* (0.08)	0.04
Attended informational meeting(s)	0.07 (0.09)	0.02
Contacted Rail Administration	-0.25* (0.15)	-0.04
Active engagement	-0.44*** (0.08)	-0.16
Information from pressure group	-0.21** (0.09)	-0.06
Interest in the issue	-0.21*** (0.03)	-0.19
Utility	0.18*** (0.02)	0.22
Negative consequences	-0.51*** (0.07)	-0.19
Political distruster	-0.47*** (0.08)	-0.15
Participatory democrat	-0.28*** (0.07)	-0.10
Political efficacy	0.14*** (0.04)	0.09
Women	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.03
Education	0.04 (0.03)	0.02
	N=1523	$R^2_{adj} = 0.24$

Dependent variable: Assessments of effective influence. Standard error given in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . See Appendix A for operationalization details.

The most influential factors with respect to satisfaction with perceived level of influence are the perceived utility of the new rail, and whether the respondent expects negative consequences as a result of the railway project. Even if combined into an index, the first four individual factors relating to having received information about the project (received mailers from Rail Administration, visited Rail Administration Exhibits, attended informational meeting(s), contacted Rail Administration) only has a modest bearing on effective influence assessments ( $\beta=0.10$ ). People who have contacted the Rail Administration directly are even slightly less satisfied with their perceived level of influence, though the large standard error indicates that assessments among this group varied considerably. Individuals who received information from pressure groups, or who have been actively involved in some fashion in the railway issue are also less satisfied with their ability to influence the decision outcome than those who have not been actively involved.

Dispositional factors play a considerable role in shaping effective influence assessments as well. Both political trust and political efficacy play a role in mitigating a sense of disempowerment in the railway expansion issue. Interestingly enough, those who prefer a participatory model of decision making in land use issues are less satisfied with their own ability to influence this issue.

### **Do contextual variations affect consent?**

The findings of the preceding analyses provide grounds for exploring whether the individual level variations in consent itself can be explained in terms of the specifics of the decision processes in the seven case study communities. Since influence opportunities had no apparent bearing on assessments of procedural fairness, those will be left aside. What is considered here is whether information and dialogue as rated in Table 7.2 has any influence on local residents' trust for the Rail Administration and for their willingness to accept the decision outcome.

With respect to the capacity of decision-making processes to foster institutional trust, the answer is, yes, provided that no large scale technical foul-ups or environmental disasters occur. If the implications of contextual factors for institutional trust are examined with the residents of all the communities included, more information and dialogue has no relationship to trust for the Rail Administration. If, however, Båstad residents are excluded, then residents of communities in which the Rail Administration arranged more information and dialogue do have higher levels of trust, even once the perceived utility of the new railway and a person's level of trust for political institutions more generally are taken into account (Table 7.5). Though less important than utility assessments and political trust, contextual factors have a considerable bearing on trust levels. Residents of communities in which the quantity of information and dialogue have been relatively

high have a mean level of trust that is about 0.8 (0.39\*2) of a step on a seven point scale higher than residents of communities in which information and dialogue activities have been low.

Table 7.5 The effect of decision process design on consent (excluding Båstad residents)

Dependent variable:	Institutional Trust		Decision Acceptance		
	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	b (S.E.)	$\beta$	
Information and dialogue (contextual variable)	0.39 ** (0.04)	0.18	0.05 (0.04)	0.02	
Utility	0.22*** (0.02)	0.23	0.52*** (0.02)	0.58	
Political trust	0.49*** (0.02)	0.40	0.12*** (0.02)	0.12	
Constant	0.05 (0.11)		0.30 (0.10)***		
	N and R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub>	1839	0.30	1744	0.39

Standard error given in parentheses. \* p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.001. See Appendix A for operationalization details.

More information and dialogue does not, in contrast, have a direct bearing on residents' willingness to accept the decision, even if Båstad residents are excluded from the analysis (Table 7.5). The perceived utility of the new railway plays the largest role in shaping acceptance of the decision outcome, and by a considerable margin. It is possible, however, that the Rail Administration's information and willingness to engage in explanatory dialogue with local community residents affects citizens' assessments of the utility of the new rail, which in turn affect willingness to accept the decision outcome. The data suggest that this may be the case. Information and dialogue have quite a strong bearing on the perceived utility of the project (b=0.58,  $\beta$ =0.26, p<0.001, not shown in table), and therefore affect decision acceptance indirectly.<sup>111</sup> To estimate the strength of that effect, we can multiply the effect of information and dialogue on utility by the effect of utility on decision acceptance (0.52\*0.58=0.3). The estimated indirect effect of information and dialogue (again, excluding Båstad residents) on decision acceptance is therefore 0.3 ( $\beta$ =0.16), which means that residents of communities with high levels of information and dialogue are on average 0.6 of a step more positive (on a five point scale) toward the decision outcome than residents of communities with low levels of information and dialogue.

\* \* \*

<sup>111</sup> The model excluded Båstad residents and controlled for political trust. N=1866, R<sup>2</sup><sub>adj</sub>=0.11. If Båstad residents are included in the model, the effect of information and dialogue on utility is somewhat weaker (b=0.31 as compared to 0.58) but is still statistically significant.

The design of the decision process seems, in other words, to matter. The data from the case of the West Coast Line indicate that procedural assessments, as well as indicators of consent, build at least to some extent upon observations and experiences with the Rail Administration's handling of the decision-making process. Procedural assessments are, however, also formed by more diffuse political attitudes and expectations, as well as perceptions of the positive and negative local and personal consequences of the expanded railway system.

## 8 Conclusion

In a pessimistic forecast for the future of democracy, Samuel Huntington and associates (1975) deemed the growth of political individualism and the decline of political consent to portend an impending crisis of democracy and perhaps even the beginning of the end of democratic governance. While this outcome today seems neither obvious nor eminent, citizens' reluctance to accept and abide by decisions taken by democratically elected representatives may still have unfortunate consequences for democratic governance. A leading municipal politician, Annika Billström, articulated one such possible consequence in her description of politics in Stockholm. In an interview regarding the controversial issue of road tolls in and around the city of Stockholm, Billström observed that politics in Stockholm had become more of "...a series of legal battles and appeals than a political debate about viable alternatives to solve our environmental problems and mitigate traffic congestion..."<sup>112</sup>

A political system that fails to resolve disputes within the bounds of the democratic decision process runs the risk of transferring the final authority over political decisions to the judiciary, where actors are neither elected nor can be held accountable for their decisions via the electoral process. Though this scenario falls far short of Huntington's doomsday projections of a quarter century ago, it certainly represents a failure on key points of democratic governance.

Politics inevitably involves winning and losing. Even in the most consensual of political systems, it is improbable that everyone will be satisfied all of the time. After all, matters tend only to become political when they are the subject of controversy, or entail the expenditure of finite resources (Warren 1999). A political system must therefore have the capacity to induce some citizens to accept defeat in virtually every decision. This study has investigated the theoretical contention that

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<sup>112</sup> My translation. Annika Billström, Social Democrat and Financial Commissioner in the Municipality of Stockholm (24th minute of *Aktuellt* 1 March 2005). Original quote: "Politiken i Stockholm har ju blivit mer av juridik och överklaganden än att man tar en politisk debatt om vilka alternativ vi har för att lösa våra miljöproblem och trängsel problem ...."

citizens' willingness to accept such outcomes depends on the extent to which they perceive the procedural aspects of political decision making to be fair and proper. In short, can decision-making procedures be constructed so as to satisfy citizens' expectations of procedural fairness and thereby foster consent to political institutions?

The analyses presented in the preceding chapters suggest that they can. The empirical investigations examine two attitudinal forms of consent (institutional trust and decision acceptance) in seven local contexts in which a decision-making authority, the Swedish National Railway Administration, employed different approaches (and in particular different modes of interacting with the local community) in making decisions regarding the routing of a double-tracked railway. I explore local residents' assessments of these seven decision-making processes, and with the use of panel data examine whether these procedural assessments affect citizens' willingness to defer to the decision-making authority and to its decisions.

The field of possible conceptualizations of procedural fairness is vast. These analyses have considered two conceptualizations of some currency: 1) Public justification, the extent to which authorities provide information regarding the various decision alternatives and publicly justify their choices and decisions; and 2) effective influence, the extent to which citizens are satisfied with their own level of influence in the decision-making process. A brief recap of the main findings will help to bring the threads together.

Assessments of the public justification conceptualization of procedural fairness play a strong and robust role in citizens' trust toward the decision-making authority. Assessments of public justification proved in fact to be the most powerful determinant citizens' trust for the decision-making institution. Public justification also plays a modest but also robust role in engendering acceptance of the outcome of the decision-making process.

The extent to which citizens feel satisfied with their own level of influence in the decision process has, in contrast, not emerged as a major factor in engendering consent. Effective influence has a rather modest, though nonetheless consistent, part in shaping both institutional trust and decision acceptance.

In order to be able to substantiate the claim that the design of decision-making processes affects citizens' consent, this study also investigated the link between public assessments of procedural fairness, and the decision-making processes themselves. The analyses confirm that the authority's handling of the decision-making process does have a considerable bearing on public perceptions of procedural fairness. In particular, the extent to which the authority was visible and accessible to local residents (in the form of written information, and by way of arranging meetings, and providing contact information for responsible officials) proved instrumental in shaping citizens' assessments of public

justification, independent of citizens' reactions to the content of the issue.

Variation in assessments of effective influence was somewhat more difficult to explain in terms of variations in the decision-making processes. The two strongest determinants of effective influence instead related to the expected utility of the decision outcome. In contrast to public justification assessments, effective influence seems, in other words, to be more closely associated with a person's attitude toward the new rail itself, and depend less on how the decision-making authority has handled the decision process or which influence opportunities have been made available.

These points suggest a two-pronged conclusion. On the one hand, the evidence makes a fairly strong case for the idea that political institutions may replenish their own political capital by handling their decision-making responsibilities with care. Even though procedural fairness by no means offers a panacea for assuring acceptance of all decision outcomes by all citizens, the evidence from the analyses presented here suggest that it is a powerful engine for fostering, or eroding, trust for political institutions. This trust, in turn, provides a foundation for constructive dialogue and a willingness to collaborate. The implications of how political institutions handle decision processes have long-term and far-reaching consequences, since it affects citizens' overall sentiments toward those institutions.

This finding is especially noteworthy since assessments of public justification have the strongest bearing on institutional trust among those who have a low baseline level of trust for political institutions more generally. It does not, in other words, seem to be the case that those who distrust political institutions in general dismiss all favorable information and impressions about a specific institutions with which they come in contact. Had this been the case, then political distrusters would simply have had less trust for the Rail Administration and procedural fairness assessments would have done little to augment institutional trust. As it is, however, assessments of the Rail Administration's efforts at public justification played a more marked role in trust for the Rail Administration among those who professed low levels of trust for political institutions more generally.

On the other hand, offering citizens opportunities to exert influence in a decision process does not seem to enhance their own sense of empowerment, and also does not appear to greatly engender consent to decision-making institutions. I will discuss this finding in more detail below.

On the whole, the results presented in the Chapters five, six and seven concur with the findings of previous research. A considerable body of research on face-to-face interactions between citizens and decision makers has documented that assessments of procedural fairness shape reactions to the decision maker and to the decision outcome

(Kumlin 2002; Soss 1999; Tyler 1990; 1997; 1998; Tyler, Casper and Fisher 1989). The finding that self-assessed ability to exert influence in political decisions has little bearing on trust for authorities and acceptance of decision outcomes is also consistent with this existing research (Kumlin 2002; Tyler 1997). My analyses have shown that the same patterns hold even when citizens do not have face-to-face contact with decision-making authorities.

Consequently, the findings of this study also provide a more solid foundation upon which to interpret recent research on public attitudes toward national legislative assemblies. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001), Tyler (1994), and Ulbig (2002), all note that assessments of how legislators behave in formulating laws and making decisions regarding the allocation of resources correlates with the perceived legitimacy of those institutions. These studies have tended to rely on theoretical argumentation regarding the causal role of procedural fairness assessments in legitimacy. The present study provides empirical evidence to support this theoretical contention.

### **Generalizability and future research**

Chapter one outlined several dimensions which set land use issues apart from other political issues. That discussion raises the question of whether the findings of this study can help us to understand public attitudes and behavior in other kinds of political issues. The analyses in Chapter six lay the groundwork for addressing this issue.

In land use issues, especially those that involve siting intrusive facilities, the negative implications tend to fall on small groups of citizens, and exit options for those most affected tend to be costly. The high stakes nature might lead one to expect that perceive procedural fairness might have less legitimating capacity among those directly affected. On the other hand, the fact that land use issues tend to attract considerable attention and citizen involvement suggests that the analyses of this case might *overestimate* the role of perceived procedural fairness in consent in politics more generally. Active involvement yields rich information about the political process that may effect change in consent to a much greater extent than information acquired through, for example, media reporting. It is also conceivable that citizens might have different expectations regarding fair procedures, and prefer participatory models of decision making in land use issues.

The analyses in Chapter six compared the extent to which perceived procedural fairness fosters consent among groups of respondents who differed in each of these respects: those directly affected with those not, those who have been actively involved with those who have not, and those inclined to favor a participatory model of decision making with those who do not. Those analyses suggest that the findings of this study

of attitudes in the West Coast Line case may not be entirely idiosyncratic.

The overarching conclusion from those analyses is that both public justification and effective influence assessments foster consent irrespective of whether a person expects direct, negative consequences, and regardless of an individual's level of direct involvement, and procedural fairness expectations. Public justification assessments did have a somewhat stronger bearing on both institutional trust and decision acceptance among those who had been actively involved in some fashion, but mattered even among those who had not been actively involved. The weight of public justification assessments was exactly the same among those who expected to suffer negative consequences as among those who did not. Supporters of a participatory democratic model of decision making react to the same extent as those with other normative inclinations.

Though the differences were rather small and the results therefore somewhat ambiguous, the analyses in Chapter six did suggest that effective influence might be more important for decision acceptance among citizens asked to bear the negative implications of political decisions, and also among those who become actively involved in the decision process. Interestingly enough, however, effective influence did not matter more (nor did it matter less) among those inclined to support a participatory democratic model of decision making.

In sum, the analyses did not produce grounds to suspect that process assessments should matter a great deal more, or less, in other kinds of political issues. The results do suggest that the potential for building and eroding political trust is greater when citizens take an initiative and become involved in some form in decision processes, though process assessments are not unimportant even when citizens do not become actively involved. So even if ordinary citizens may not desire any direct influence in the formation of, for example, the national budget, and may even have difficulty discerning how the allocation of resources will affect them specifically, it may still behoove decision makers to invest time and effort to give an account of and justify major decisions in the budget deliberations and decisions.

A second question of generalizability relates to whether the findings presented in this study can be expected to describe citizens' reactions to other kinds of political institutions. As mentioned at the outset, the Rail Administration as a political institution is primarily responsible for *implementing* decisions made by democratically elected representatives. Moreover, implementing decisions regarding the expansion of the railway system requires first and foremost technical competence and expertise, which undoubtedly constitute important legitimating criteria

for such an administration (Rothstein 2001).<sup>113</sup> It is possible, in other words, that popular consent to the Rail Administration builds to a greater extent on assessments of Administration officials' technical competence.

Despite the fact that the Rail Administration's primary task consists in implementing decisions, and that that implementation first and foremost requires technical expertise, procedural assessments play a major role in building and eroding consent in this case. It therefore seems reasonable to expect that perceived procedural fairness would play an even more substantial role in shaping public reactions toward political assemblies whose role in the political system is *expressly* to make decisions in a way that is *responsive to the preferences* of the demos. On this matter, more research is needed.

Another question that requires closer examination in future research relates to new institutional arrangements of decision making. The analyses presented in Chapter seven suggest that public consultation opportunities did not even slightly enhance the perceived fairness of the decision process. As institutional innovations such as public consultation, citizen juries, and new strategies for including and informing the public become more common in political reality, social scientists need to be solicitous about monitoring public sentiment. Do members of the public take note of these innovations and to what extent do these new forms of decision formation enhance the perceived fairness of those processes?

### **Theoretical implications of the empirical findings**

This study compares the capacity of two conceptualizations of procedural fairness to foster consent. The overwhelmingly strong and consistent concurrence between theory and empirical observations with respect to public justification, and the consistently weak support for the theory regarding effective influence, each merit further commentary.

The powerful role that public justification assessments played in fostering institutional trust raises the question of how this conceptualization of procedural fairness might compare with others not examined in this study. Innumerable other criteria of fairness in decision processes are possible. Citizens may, for example, deem decision processes unfair if they perceive that decision-makers are unduly swayed by special interest groups, or that specialized expertise has been manipulated to satisfy narrow political interests. There is, however, reason to believe that public justification assessments might supersede these considerations in shaping public trust for a political institution.

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<sup>113</sup> The low trust among Båstad residents, despite the extensive opportunities for information and dialogue, attests to the importance of perceived competence for residents' trust for the Rail Administration.

Public justification signifies a willingness on the part of public officials and elected representatives to engage in debate and publicly justify decisions and actions more generally. Such openness and transparency in decision making may communicate to citizens and other political actors that decision makers do not have a hidden agenda or, for that matter, other reasons to fear scrutiny. It is precisely an authority's willingness to be scrutinized, monitored, and challenged, and of course its ability to respond to these reviews and challenges, which may allow citizens to infer that the authority is behaving properly in other procedural respects. If, in contrast, decision-making authorities seem reluctant to give an account for their decisions and respond to questions and concerns, citizens may make inferences regarding the competence and impartiality of those decision makers. A reluctance to be challenged and scrutinized may in the longer term rouse skepticism regarding the internal checks within the institution and perhaps also the political system as a whole.

The willingness of elected representatives and public officials to justify decisions and actions may indicate to citizens how individual office holders or political institutions as a whole see their own power and authority. A willingness to engage in a broader discussion about policy options and decisions may indicate to citizens that the organizational boundary between those political institutions and civil society, as well as between political institutions and other professional sectors of society, are permeable. In sum, public justification may signify an awareness on the part of political authority that its competence and even claim to power are circumscribed.

In contrast to the theoretical claims regarding public justification, effective influence gained only modest support in the data. Pateman (1970), among others has hypothesized that an opportunity to exert influence might increase willingness to accept collective decisions. In contrast, the analyses in Chapter five show that citizens' subjective assessments of, and satisfaction with, their own ability to exert influence in this case was not the most important factor in willingness to accept the decision outcome and trust for the Rail Administration. How can we understand the apparent discrepancy between the prediction extracted from normative theories of political participation and the empirical results of this study?

Two different interpretations of the empirical results are possible depending on how we construe the concept of influence. In Chapter two, I argued for a conceptualization that was broader than a purely instrumental understanding of the word (i.e. successfully translating one's own preferences into the decision outcome, Dahl 1956). Instead, I defined influence as the perception that one has had an opportunity to exert influence in a process free from manipulation. This concept of influence includes, for example, being able to amend authorities'

understanding of a policy issue, even if that influence does not result in the selection of one's preferred outcome.

Assuming for a moment that respondents also construed influence in this broader way, the findings paint a rather dismal picture for normative theories of participatory democracy. The rather weak relationship between subjectively felt influence and willingness to accept the decision outcome, compounded by the weak relationship between actual influence opportunities and perceptions of effective influence, suggests that creating opportunities for people to participate in decision making, would be a rather fruitless means of lessening conflict in controversial decisions. With this conceptualization of influence, even a well-structured participatory process would, in light of the findings of this study, neither foster institutional trust nor decrease participants' inclination to contest unwanted decision outcomes.

If, on the other hand, we assume influence to mean (and we assume that survey respondents understood influence to mean) successfully swaying the decision process so that the outcome concurs with one's own preferences, then the results presented here reveal less about the theory of participatory democracy. Pateman (1970) does not stipulate that participation must ensure that all participating individuals attain the outcome that they desire (such a normative constraint would require that participation end in consensus), but rather that all participating individuals have the same opportunity to affect the outcome. Nonetheless, if the respondents who participated in this study interpreted influence in this sense, then the findings of the analyses in Chapter five are somewhat less theoretically instructive.

What this discussion highlights is the need to exercise care and precision when discussing the concept of influence. Political thinkers and politicians alike raise calls for greater citizen influence without considering the distinction between a broad versus an instrumental conceptualization, and misunderstanding on this issue may result in detrimental discrepancies between citizens' expectations and authorities' intents. While the implications of effective influence were not overwhelmingly strong, they were consistent and did weigh more heavily among those expecting direct and negative consequences in the issue, and therefore should not be dismissed lightly.

### **Political trust**

This study has built upon and sought to contribute to the growing body of empirical and theoretical work on political trust. The empirical results suggest primarily two developments to the theories on trust, the first relating to the relationship between trust and monitoring, and the second regarding the way in which trust functions as a heuristic to reduce complexity in political relationships.

Many theorists have observed that trust and a need to monitor the behavior of the other generally stand in inverse relationship to one another (e.g. Dasgupta 1988; Ostrom 1990; Ostrom 1998). Trust among collaborating partners reduces the need for monitoring of others' behavior, and therefore reduces the costs and maximizes the gains from collaborative efforts. Attempts at collaborative efforts in which trust is lacking altogether would require virtually continuous vigilance, thereby drastically reducing the marginal gains of collaborative efforts. The empirical findings of this study suggest that the connection between trust and monitoring may have another level as well. In line with the reasoning of deliberative democracy theory (Chambers 2003; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Warren 1996), I would argue that a perceived *willingness to be monitored* may be an important factor in augmenting trust. In terms of political decision making, public justification is synonymous with willingness to be monitored, and public justification assessments have proven instrumental in fostering trust.

A second contribution to the existing theoretical discussion of trust relates to the way in which trust functions as a heuristic. From earlier research we know that trust for major national level institutions (such as legislative bodies at the national level) may play a role in shaping citizens' assessments of lower level institutions (Hetherington 1998). The results presented throughout this study confirm these earlier findings. Trust for politicians in the parliament, the Government, and the municipal government colors trust for the Rail Administration, and trust for the Rail Administration also acts as a filter when local residents evaluate the Rail Administration's handling of the decision process. What the findings of this study add to our current understanding of trust as a heuristic is, somewhat surprisingly, that trust does not function uniformly as a heuristic. While high levels of trust for established political institutions does seem to act as a heuristic, and therefore weakens the effect of procedural assessments on trust for the Rail Administration, an absence of trust does not. As mentioned above, those with little or no trust for political institutions more generally were *more* sensitive to procedural assessments than those who placed greater confidence in political institutions in general.

The main issue I have sought to investigate with respect to political trust has, however, been the question of what factors build and erode citizens' trust for political institutions. In their review of research on political trust, Levi and Stoker (2000) observe that definitive answers to this question have not emerged, and attribute the inconclusiveness of existing results to a shortage of studies that allow us to draw causal inferences regarding the correlates of political trust. In particular, Levi and Stoker issue a call for studies that integrate micro-level attitudinal data with macro-level data regarding the attributes and behavior of political institutions, as well as for studies that employ longitudinal data and therefore shed light on the roots of political trust (2000, 500-501).

This study offers both. In doing so, it suggests an explanation for the decline in citizens' trust for political institutions in Sweden and many other established democracies over recent decades (Dalton 2004; Dalton 1999; Holmberg 1999).

The answer that has emerged in these analyses differs, and is in some ways more encouraging than, other accounts of this downward trend. Ronald Inglehart's (1999) well-known theory attributes declining trust to the shift from materialist to postmaterial values, which implies a rise in individualism and an erosion of deference to all forms of authority. This explanation locates the source of declining trust outside the political institutions themselves, attributing them instead to over-arching changes in society.

Other accounts of citizens' waning confidence in and approval of political institutions attribute the trend to growing demands on government services at a time when the tax base of many developed countries is contracting (Bok 1997; Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975; Orren 1997). On the whole, theories that attribute support for political institutions to citizens' self-interest considerations paint a rather bleak outlook for state-citizen relations. The likelihood that all citizens will feel that their preferences are continually being translated into policy outcomes is small simply by merit of the diversity of preferences in any national or even local political association (Klosko 2000). Furthermore, the resources available to the state do not depend exclusively on factors within the control of the state itself but instead are affected by factors as diverse as distant economies and weather patterns. With public coffers shrinking at many levels of government in many established democracies, we may hope that political consent does not build exclusively on the provision of goods and services.

The steady decline in political trust may instead stem from a gradually increasing gap between expectations of political decision making processes and the way in which political decisions actually are made. To the extent that the findings presented in this study account for fluctuations over time in trust for political institutions more generally, they offer a more fruitful foundation upon which to begin formulating a possible means of renewing political trust. While it may not be feasible to improve household economies and improve services to satisfy the demands of all citizens, reviewing and revising institutional arrangements for decision making requires mostly political reflection and intent. A continuation in the decline of political trust may not, in other words, be unavoidable and ought not to be entirely dismissed as the result of factors exogenous to the political institutions themselves.

Moreover, how a political institution handles its decision-making authority matters not only for its own legitimacy. Constructing the analytical framework for this study required making certain simplifying assumptions about the empirical case. One of these was to equate the decision process with the actions of the Rail Administration during the

planning process. In reality, numerous other political institutions, as well as consultants, local citizens groups and pressure groups formed specifically to influence the railway issue, have all contributed to shaping the course of events in the seven communities. The fact that the municipality agreed to allocate funding for a commuter station in Frillesås and refused to do the same in Åsa may, for example, explain the fact that Frillesås residents are considerably more positive in their assessments of public justification than are Åsa residents, despite the fact that the Rail Administration approached the decision process in the two communities quite similarly.

It seems therefore plausible that how one political institution behaves in a decision process affects citizens' assessments of the decision process as a whole, and even of other institutions involved in deciding an issue. An individual political institution, in other words, has not only the capacity to enhance or undermine its own political capital, but also that of other political institutions.

\* \* \*

The findings of this study can be reformulated in the language of social contract theory. The state establishes rules for citizens to follow, and citizens have expectations regarding proper behavior from the state. These expectations may derive from the state's own rules for itself regarding decision processes, but may also derive from citizens' preferences regarding how political decisions should be made, and perhaps also societal norms regarding what sort of treatment people feel entitled to from others. If political institutions do not fulfill citizens' expectations, then citizens may find it justifiable to dodge the obligations set by the state. Citizens themselves may, in other words, construe themselves engaged with the state in some form of contract, and feel released from that commitment if the state appears to fail at keeping up its end of the bargain. In addition to being a useful theoretical tool, the idea of the social contract may, in other words, also describe political attitudes and behavior.

For political actors and institutions, the legitimating capacity of decision processes perceived as fair provides a means of obviating conflict and more importantly of slowing the trend toward more adversarial politics. For political philosophers, and in particular those who advance normative arguments regarding how collective decisions ought best be made, the findings of this study draw attention to the fact that the connection between procedural fairness and political legitimacy is not only a theoretical one. While specific approaches to decision making may be more or less concurrent with specific normative definitions of legitimacy, this study illustrates that institutional innovations need also to be evaluated in terms of whether they meet public conceptualizations of procedural fairness.

## Appendix A: Operationalization of concepts

### Procedural Fairness

#### Effective influence

'Do you feel that you have been able to influence the planning of the railway expansion in your community?'

'Do you wish that you had had greater opportunities to influence the planning of the railway expansion in your community?'

Response scale: 'No, not at all' (0) to 'Yes, definitely' (4)

The effective influence variable is the first minus the second. A person who felt they had been able to influence the issue and had not wanted any greater influence in the issue would, for example have a value of 4 (4 on the first question and 0 on the second), i.e. a very satisfied citizen.

'Tycker Du att Du har kunnat påverka hur järnvägen skall byggas ut på Din ort?'

'Önskar Du att Du hade haft större möjlighet att påverka utbyggnaden av järnvägen på Din ort?'

Responses scale: 'Nej, inte alls' (0), 'I viss mån' (2), 'Ja, i hög grad' (4)

#### Public Justification

A mean index of three items:

'With respect to the expansion of the West Coast Line in your community, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Rail Administration?'

a) 'The Rail Administration listens to local citizens' (Receptivity)

b) 'The Rail Administration does a good job of providing information about the railway expansion' (Information)

c) 'The Rail Administration does not show consideration for the local community' (Consideration, reversed)

Response scale: 'disagree' (0) to 'agree' (6)

'Om du tänker på utbyggnaden av Västkustbanan på din ort, vad anser Du om följande påståenden när det gäller Banverket?'

a) 'Banverket lyssnar på medborgarna'

b) 'Banverket informerar bra om ombyggnaden av järnvägen'

d) 'Banverket tar inte hänsyn till det lokala samhället' (reversed)

Response scale: 'Helt felaktigt påstående' (0), 'Helt riktigt påstående' (6)

### Consent

#### Institutional Trust

Mean of two questions:

'How much do you trust the Rail Administration?'

Response scale: 'no trust' (0) 'moderate trust' (3), 'a great deal of trust' (6)

'How do you think that the Rail Administration has handled the railway expansion project in your community?'

Response scale: 'very badly' (0) to 'very well' (4), rescaled to 0 to 6

'Hur stort förtroende har Du för följande grupper, myndigheter och företag?  
Banverket'

Response scale: 'Inget förtroende alls' (0), 'Måttligt förtroende' (3), 'Mycket stort förtroende' (6)

'Flera myndigheter och politiska instanser är engagerade i den nya Väst kustbanan. Hur tycker Du att de har hanterat utbyggnaden på Din ort?  
Banverket'

Response scale: 'Mycket dåligt' (0) to 'Mycket bra' (4) rescaled to 0 to 6

#### Decision acceptance

'Are you for or against the expansion of the West Coast Rail as planned in your community?'

Response scale: 'very much against' (0) to 'very much for' (4).

'Är Du för eller emot utbyggnaden av järnvägen som den planeras på Din ort?'

Response scale: 'I hög grad emot' (0), 'Varken för eller emot' (2), 'I hög grad för' (4)

### **Control Variables**

#### Utility

In 2002, mean of four questions:

'Will you personally gain from the rebuilt railway in your community?'

'Will you personally experience disadvantages from the rebuilt railway in your community?' (reversed)

'Will your community gain from the rebuilt railway?'

'Will your community experience disadvantages from the rebuilt railway?' (reversed)

Response scales: 'very little loss/gain' (0) to 'very large loss/gain' (6).

'Tror Du att den nya Väst kustbanan innebär fördelar för Din ort?'

Response scale: 'Inga fördelar för orten' (0) to 'Många fördelar för orten' (6)

'Tror Du att den nya Väst kustbanan innebär nackdelar för Din ort?'

Response scale: 'Inga nackdelar för orten' (0) to 'Många nackdelar för orten' (6)

'Har Du personligen fördel av att järnvägen byggs ut på Din ort?'

Response scale: 'Ingen fördel alls' (0) to 'Mycket stor fördel'

'Förlorar Du personligen på att järnvägen byggs ut på Din ort?'

Response scale: 'Ingen personlig förlust' (0) to 'Mycket stor förlust' (6)

In 2000, mean of two questions:

'Will you personally gain or experience disadvantages from the rebuilt railway in your community?'

'Will your community gain or experience disadvantages from the rebuilt railway in your community?'

Response scale: 'very large loss' (0) to 'very large gain' (6).

'Kommer Du personligen att ha någon fördel eller nackdel av att järnvägen byggs ut på Din ort?'

Response scale: 'Mycket stor nackdel' (0) to 'Mycket stor fördel' (6)

'Tror Du att Din ort kommer att ha fördel eller nackdel av den nya Väst kustbanan?'

Response scale: 'Mycket stor nackdel för orten' (0) to 'Mycket stor fördel för orten' (6)

#### Political Trust

Mean of two questions:

'How much do you trust the politicians in your municipality?'

'How much do you trust the politicians in the national government?'

Response scale: 'no trust' (0), 'moderate trust' (3), 'a great deal of trust' (6)

'Hur stort förtroende har Du för följande grupper, myndigheter och företag?'

'Politiker i regering och riksdag'; 'Politikerna i kommunen'

Response scale: 'Inget förtroende alls' (0), 'Måttligt förtroende' (3), 'Mycket stort förtroende' (6)

#### Trust for the Road Administration

'How much do you trust the National Road Administration?' Response range: 'no trust' (0) 'moderate trust' (3), 'a great deal of trust' (6)

'Hur stort förtroende har Du för följande grupper, myndigheter och företag? Vägverket'

Response scale: 'Inget förtroende alls' (0), 'Måttligt förtroende' (3), 'Mycket stort förtroende' (6)

#### Competence of Rail Administration

'With respect to the expansion of the West Coast Line in your community, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Rail Administration? The Rail Administration is not technically competent enough' (reversed)

Response scale: 'disagree' (0) to 'agree' (6)

'Om du tänker på utbyggnaden av Västkustbanan på din ort, vad anser Du om följande påståenden när det gäller Banverket? Banverket saknar nödvändiga tekniska kunskaper' (reversed)

Response scale: 'Helt felaktigt påstående' (0), 'Helt riktigt påstående' (6)

#### Objective measures of self-interest

1) 'How often do you travel by train?'

Response scale: 'Never' (0), 'About once a year' (1), 'Several times a year' (2), 'Every month' (3), 'Every week' (4), 'Several times a week' (5), 'Every day' (6)

2) 'If the railway is rebuilt according to current plans, how close will it come to your house or summer home?'

Response scale: 'Very close (less than 100 m from my house or property line)'; 'Fairly close (100-500 m from my house or property line)'; 'About 500 m to 1 km away'; 'More than 1 km from here'; 'Don't know'

3) 'In what way are you personally affected by the expansion of the railway? Noise and disturbances'

Response scale: 'yes' (1), 'no' (0)

4) 'How do you think the railway expansion will affect the following aspects in your community?'

a) 'Travel to and from the community'; b) 'Property values'; c) 'Freedom of barriers in the community'; d) 'The landscape'; e) 'Local nature and environment'

Response scale: 'Much worse' (0), 'Somewhat worse' (1), 'About the same' (2), 'Somewhat better' (3), 'Much better' (4)

1) 'Hur ofta reser du med följande färdmedel - Tåg?'

Response scale: 'Aldrig' (0), 'Någon gång om året' (1), 'Flera gånger om året' (2), 'Varje månad' (3), 'Varje vecka' (4), 'Flera gånger i veckan' (5), 'I princip varje dag' (6)

2) 'Om järnvägen byggs ut efter de nu aktuella planerna, hur nära kommer den att passera ditt hem eller sommarstuga?'

Response scale: 'Mycket nära (mindre än 100 m från mitt hem eller tomtgräns)'; 'Ganska nära (100 m - 500m från mitt hem eller tomtgräns)'; 'En bit bort (500 m - 1 km härifrån)'; 'Ganska långt bort (mer än 1 km härifrån)'; 'Vet ej'

3) 'På vilket sätt påverkas Du personligen av järnvägsutbyggnaden? Buller och störningar'

Response scale: 'ja' (1), 'nej' (0)

4) 'Vad tror Du att utbyggnaden av järnvägen innebär på Din ort?'

a) 'Resandet till och från orten'; b) 'Hus- och fastighetspriser'; c) 'Framkomlighet på orten'; d) 'Landskapsbilden'; e) 'Lokal natur och miljö'

Response scale: 'Stor försämring' (0), 'Viss försämring' (1), 'Varken eller' (2), 'Viss förbättring' (3), 'Stor förbättring' (4)

## Moderating conditions examined in Chapter six

### Negatively affected

Dichotomous variable where 1 indicates an affirmative answer on any of the following:

'In what way are you personally affected by the expansion of the railway?' a) 'Noise and disturbances'; b) 'Ceding house'; c) 'Ceding property'; d) 'Worse commuter services'; e) 'Legally defined as property owner' (and also expects negative effects); f) Reports that the new rail will pass within 100 meters of respondent's home (and also expects negative personal effects)

Response scale: 'yes' (1), 'no' (0)

**OR** those who answered 'significantly worse' on any of the following:

'How do you think the railway expansion will affect the following aspects in your community?'

g) 'The urban environment'; h) 'Travel to and from the community'; i) 'Property values'; j) 'Freedom of barriers in the community'; k) 'Local nature and environment'; l) 'The landscape'

Response scale: 'Much worse' (0), 'Somewhat worse' (1), 'About the same' (2), 'Somewhat better' (3), 'Much better' (4)

'På vilket sätt påverkas Du personligen av järnvägsutbyggnaden? Fler än ett alternativ kan kryssas för.' a) 'Buller och störningar'; b) 'Förlorar hus'; c) 'Förlorar mark'; d) 'Sämare pendelmöjligheter för mig'; e) 'Berörd hus- eller markägare' (if also expecting personal losses); f) 'Kommer närmare än 100 meter' (if also expecting personal losses)

'Vad tror Du att utbyggnaden av järnvägen innebär på Din ort?' g) 'Miljö och trivsel i centrum'; h) 'Resandet till och från orten'; i) 'Hus- och fastighetspriser'; j) 'Framkomlighet på orten'; k) 'Lokal natur och miljö'; l) 'Landskapsbilden'  
Response scale: 'Stor försämring' (0), 'Viss försämring' (1), 'Varken eller' (2), 'Viss förbättring' (3), 'Stor förbättring' (4)

Direct and personal negative consequences: b, c, d, e, f

Indirect negative consequences: a, g, k, l,

#### Positive consequences

Those who answered 'Somewhat better' or 'Much better' on:

'How do you think the railway expansion will affect the following aspects in your community? Better commuter services for me'

Response scale: 'Much worse' (0), 'Somewhat worse' (1), 'About the same' (2), 'Somewhat better' (3), 'Much better' (4)

OR, answered 'yes' to:

'Legally defined as property owner' (and also expects gains)

'Vad tror Du att utbyggnaden av järnvägen innebär på Din ort? Bättre pendelmöjligheter för mig

Response scale: 'Stor försämring' (0), 'Viss försämring' (1), 'Varken eller' (2), 'Viss förbättring' (3), 'Stor förbättring' (4)

'Berörd hus- eller markägare' (and also expects gains)

#### Active

A dichotomized variable where 1 is assigned to respondents who answered 'yes' to any of the following:

'Have you during the past few years done any of the following with regard to the new railway in your community? Mark all items that apply.' a) 'Attended information meetings'; b) 'Involved in pressure group'; c) 'Contacted the Rail Administration'; d) 'Sent a formal letter'; e) 'Appealed a decision'; f) 'Participated in a protest or demonstration'; g) 'Written a letter to the editor'; h) 'Signed a petition'

Response scale: 'no' (0), 'yes' (1)

Active face-to-face: a, b, c

Active not face-to-face: d, e, f, g, h

'Har Du under de senaste åren gjort något av följande när det gäller utbyggnaden av den nya järnvägen på Din ort? Fler än ett alternativ kan kryssas för.' a) 'Närvarit vid informationsmöte';

b) 'Engagerad i intressegrupp eller aktionsgrupp'; c) 'Kontaktat Banverket'; d) 'Skickat skrivelse'; e) 'Överklagat beslut'; f) 'Deltagit i protestmöte eller demonstration'; g) 'Skrivit insändare'; h) 'Skrivit på namninsamling'

#### Participatory democrat

A dichotomized variable where 1 is assigned to respondents that answered 'yes, definitely' (Ja, i hög grad) to all of the following four items:

'When it comes to decisions about large construction projects in your municipality, do you think that decision-makers should dedicate time and resources to finding out what the following groups think?

a) Everyone that lives in the municipality; b) Groups that have formed to try to influence the construction plans; d) Affected home-owners; e) Local clubs and organizations'

Response scale: 'No, not at all' (0) to 'Yes, definitely' (4)

AND 'yes, maybe' or 'yes, definitely' to:

'If presented the opportunity, do you think you would participate in any of the following ways if a planned construction project affected your local area?'  
'Attend meetings with decision-making authorities regarding different construction alternatives'

Response alternatives: 'Yes, definitely'; 'Yes, maybe'; 'No, probably not'; 'No, definitely not'

'När det gäller beslut om stora byggprojekt i kommunen där Du bor, tycker Du att beslutsfattarna skall ägna tid och resurser åt att sätta sig in i vad följande grupper anser?'

a) Alla som bor i kommunen; b) Grupper som bildats i syfte att påverka det planerade bygget; c) Berörda hus- och markägare; d) Lokala föreningar

Response scale: 'Nej, inte alls' (0) to 'Ja, i hög grad' (4)

AND 'Ja, kanske' or 'Ja, definitivt' to:

'Om möjligheterna erbjöds, tror Du att Du personligen skulle engagera Dig på något av följande sätt i ett byggprojekt som berörde Din ort eller närmiljö?'  
'Delta i möten med beslutsfattande myndigheter om olika byggalternativ'

#### Low political trust

A value of 1 or below on the Political Trust, an index building on two questions (see above) with responses ranging from 0 to 6.

#### Interest in the issue

'How interested are you in the expansion of the West Coast Rail in your community?'

Response scale: 'Not interested at all' (0), 'Moderately interested' (2), 'Very interested' (4)

'Hur intresserad är Du av utbyggnaden av Västkustbanan på Din ort?'

'Inte alls intresserad' (0), 'Måttligt intresserad' (2), 'Mycket intresserad' (4)

### Variables introduced in Chapter seven

#### Trust for municipal politicians

'How much do you trust the politicians in your municipality?'

Response scale: 'no trust' (0) 'moderate trust' (3), 'a great deal of trust' (6)

'Hur stort förtroende har Du för följande grupper, myndigheter och företag?'  
'Politikerna i kommunen'

'Inget förtroende alls' (0), 'Måttligt förtroende' (3), 'Mycket stort förtroende' (6)

#### Information and dialogue (Contextual variable)

Quantification of the Rail Administration's availability and information in the seven communities: Low (1), Medium (2), High (3)

### Influence (Contextual variable)

Quantification of availability of opportunities for local residents to exert influence in the seven communities: Low (1), Medium (2), High (3)

### Variables used in analyses shown in Table 7.3

'How have you gotten information about the railway expansion in your community? Mark all items that apply.' a) 'Rail Administration's exhibits'; b) 'Rail Administration's informational meetings'; c) 'Mailers from the Rail Administration'; d) 'Contacted the Rail Administration myself'; e) 'Information from pressure group'

Response scale: 'yes' (1), 'no' (0)

'Hur har Du fått information kring utbyggnaden av järnvägen på Din ort? Du kan kryssa för flera svar.' a) 'Banverkets utställningar'; b) 'Banverkets informationsmöten'; c) 'Utskick från Banverket'; d) 'Har själv varit i kontakt med Banverket'; e) 'Information från aktionsgrupp/intressegrupp'

### Political Efficacy

An index representing the mean of respondents' reactions to the following 10 items:

'How effective do you think the following activities are if the average citizen wants to influence a political issue?' a) 'Write a letter to the editor'; b) 'Sign a petition'; c) 'Contact the press'; d) 'Join a political party'; e) 'Contact municipal politicians'; f) 'Contact members of Parliament'; g) 'Contact public authorities'; h) 'Start and circulate a petition'; i) 'Participate in a demonstration'; j) 'Join an interest group'

Response scale: 'Not at all effective' (0) to 'Very effective' (4)

Hur effektiva tror Du att följande aktiviteter är om den enskilda medborgaren vill påverka samhällsfrågor? a) 'Skriva insändare'; b) 'Underteckna namninsamling'; c) 'Kontakta massmedier (tidningar, TV, radio)'; d) 'Engagera sig i något politiskt parti'; e) 'Kontakta kommunpolitiker'; f) 'Kontakta rikspolitiker'; g) 'Kontakta kommunala tjänstemän'; h) 'Bedriva namninsamling'; i) 'Deltaga i protestmöte eller demonstration'; j) 'Engagera sig i intressegrupp eller aktionsgrupp'

Response scale: 'Inte alls effektivt' (0) to 'Mycket effektivt' (4)

### Education

'What is your highest level of education?'

'Vilken är Din högsta utbildning?'

Responses categorized with the following groupings.

1 'Grundskola/folkskola/enhetsskola'; 'Tvåårigt gymnasium/fackskola'; 'Flickskola/realexamen';

'Minst treårigt Gymnasium'

2 'Studerat vid högskola/universitet'; 'Folkhögskola'

3 'Examen från högskola/universitet'

## Appendix B Newspaper articles, documents, and interviews

### Newspaper articles

#### Abbreviations:

AN *Arbetet Nyheterna*  
GP *Göteborgs-Posten*  
NH *Norra Halland*  
HN *Hallands Nyheter*  
NST *Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar*  
HD *Helsingborgs Dagbladet*  
SSD *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*

AN 000127 Grannar vill tycka till om tågbanan.  
AN 000310 "Låt oss tycka till om Väst kustbanan."  
AN 970124 Ingen fara för magnetfält: Banverket – Värdet kan öka till det dubbla men blir ändå lågt.  
AN 970129 Glumslövsbor redo att gå till Europadomstolen.  
AN 970130 Arga Lundabor mötte politikerna: Sista chansen att påverka fullmäktiges beslut om dubbelspåret i kväll.  
AN 970131 Striden över om dubbelspår: Kommunfullmäktige antog detaljplanen för Väst kustbanan.  
AN 970222 Byggstart skjuts upp igen: Sträckan förbi Glumslöv ödesdiger för Väst kustbanan.  
AN 970308 Högarna växer med överklaganden: 160 skivelser med protester mot nya Väst kustbanan inkomna till länsstyrelsen.  
AN 970709 Vill ha bort tåg bullret: Villaägare överklagar detaljplan för Väst kustbanan.  
AN 971013 Dubbelspåret får godkänt av länsstyrelsen.  
AN 971113 Nytt dubbelspår blir en regeringsfråga.  
AN 980110 Start för jättebygget vid Glumslöv: Efter år av protester gav Banverket klartecken för ännu en järnvägstunnel.  
AN 980304 Boverket ger kommunen bakläxa: Har missat ta hänsyn till hälsa och säkerhet i planeringen av dubbelspåret.  
AN 981026 Allmänheten bjöds på tunnelvisning: Stort intresse för Banverkets mäktiga bygge under natursköna Glumslövs backar.  
AN 981221 Koncessionsnämnden ger bakläxa på Banverket.  
AN 990420 Bullernivå godkänns av Naturvårdsverket.  
AN 990510 Banverket villigt lösa in ytterligare åtta fastigheter.  
AN 991016 Tunnelvisning i Glumslöv på söndag.  
AN 991018 Underjorden lockade mer än solen: Många tog chansen till tunnelpromenad.  
GP 000617 Miljökonsekvens av tunnel utredd.  
GP 000718 "Att borra är miljövänligast" Bättre maskin ger lindrigast skador på Hallandsåsen enligt Banverket.  
GP 000813 Nya strider väntar Banverket.

GP 000830 Bakläxa för Banverket Miljöchef Bo Wendt i Båstad kritisk till miljöutredningen.

GP 000905 Krav på ny pendeltågsstation.

GP 001115. Dom om tunnel överklagas inte.

GP 010126 "Grävning i Frillesås slöseri."

GP 010224 "Lägg tunnelbygget i malpåse" Curt Blom, en av få som yttrade sig om projektet på Hallandsåsen.

GP 010913 Banverket står för kommunalt vatten.

GP 021210 Fem år med torrlagda brunnar Nu ska de drabbade på Hallandsåsen få kommunalt vatten.

GP 041104 Tågtunnel tas i bruk - tyst i Åsa.

GP 940120 Prästen leder Stafsingeborna i protestaktion.

GP 940224 Kräver omröstning om järnväg.

GP 940708 Utbyggnaden upprör: Frillesåsbor anklagar Banverket för maktmissbruk.

GP 941030 Spår som väcker heta känslor.

GP 950315 Klart ja till tågtunnel under Domus.

GP 951205 "Folkomrösta om dubbelspåret".

GP 960126 "Vi är oerhört besvikna" Motståndarna förlorade – regeringen ger klartecken för tvångsinlösen av mark.

GP 960128 Ingen folkomröstning om spåret.

GP 960203 Östra spåret kräver stopp.

GP 960917 Nya protester mot dubbelspår.

GP 961113 Klart för tåg under stan: Efter åtta års debatt och otaliga förslag vann "statsmiljötunneln" till sist.

GP 961203. Tunnelns säkerhet kan bli normgivande.

GP 961209 Pendlarna vädjar om en annan sträckning.

GP 970929 Tågprotester får inget gehör.

GP 971003 Klart för dubbelspår förbi Falkenberg.

GP 971024. Kungsbacka vill stoppa tågtunnel.

GP 971030 Hårda ord om Banverkets beslut.

GP 980218 Tunneldebatt väntas i Falkenberg.

GP 980306. Ja till räddningstunnel vid Åsa.

GP 980403 S säger nej till folkomröstning.

GP 980515. Grannar överklagar tunnelbeslut.

GP 990121 Splittring kring spåret: Förslaget till detaljplan röstades ner.

GP 990420 Ingen folkomröstning om tunneln.

GP 991026 Miljödomstolen ger Banverket dubbel bakläxa.

HD 010109 Vatten från tunnelbygget leds ut i havet?

HN 000219 Tunneln ännu bättre när den utretts.

HN 000302 Ompröva beslutet om stationen.

HN 000308 Sensationellt resultat av Banverkets bakläxa.

HN 000429 Länsstyrelsen säger nej till östra spåret.

HN 000524 Banverket vilseleder om östligt spår.

HN 010105 Allt fler flyttar från Falkenberg.

HN 010126 Frillesås får sin pendeltågsstation: Ett kvalificerat slöseri med pengar, tycker moderaterna.

HN 010220 Tredje året i rad som befolkningen i Falkenberg minskar.

HN 010908 Dags för ny omgång kring Skreatunneln: Avbrutna förhandlingar återupptas efter två år.

HN 011128 Möte med Östra spåret blev en strid om statistik.

HN 020413 Tunnelmotståndare sätter sitt hopp till EU-kommissionen.  
HN 020615 Nya prövningar för Banverket: Stafsinge - Tröingeberg står på tur.  
HN 980326 "Nu ska vi prata om genomförandet" Laddat massmöte när  
Banverket skulle informera om järnvägsbygget.  
HN 980424 Banverket fick bygglov för tunneln: Men än är inte sista ordet sagt...  
HN 990916 Flera års förseningar hotar dubbelspåret.  
HN 991026 Banverkets tafflighet irriterade domstolen.  
HN 991222 Banverket har börjat från noll igen: I februari år 2000 blir den nya  
förstudien klar.  
NST 000118 Banverket på charmoffensiv: Banverket vill ha folket med sig.  
NST 000323 Miljöspanare bra kontrollanter?  
*Ny Teknik* 971106 Banverket i nytt bråk om tunnel på Västkustbanan:  
Befolkning i Åsa protesterar mot tunnelbygge under mosse.

### Other documents

Rail Administration newsletter, *Banverket bygger Västkustbanan*, December 1994.  
Rail Administration Newsletter, *Banverket bygger Västkustbanan*, May 1997.  
Rail Administration newsletter, *Banverket bygger Västkustbanan*, November 1996.  
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### Interviews with Rail Administration officials

Eva Dufva, public relations manager, 25 October 2004.  
Rolf Jädersten, Falkenberg project manager, 7 August 2003  
Jan Källqvist, Lund project manager, 14 August 2003.  
Birger Löfqvist, head planner of the routing through Glumslöv, 18 April 2005.  
Göran Martinsson, Åsa and Frillesås project manager, 2 November 2004.  
Per Rosquist, principal technical evaluator, 8 December 2004.

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