

# The paradox of municipal cooperation

Municipalities' organizational culture and its effect on  
negotiation strategy

-The case of Northern Bohuslän

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# Abstract

This thesis aims to study if organizational culture affects the negotiation strategy in negotiation processes between municipalities in Sweden. Our cases are four municipalities involved in the municipal cooperation “Tillväxt Bohuslän”; a project which aims to foster cooperation.

The question this thesis seeks to answer is: *“Does the cultural attribute of organizational culture (ability for joint action) of the municipalities in ‘Tillväxt Bohuslän’ affect negotiation strategy in a negotiation process?”*

The municipalities’ ability for joint action has been classified as either strong or weak by a previous study. This thesis uses these already established classifications with the intention to test if they affect which negotiation strategy municipalities use. The negotiation strategy can either be of a competitive or a collaborative nature.

The method to collect data about the municipalities’ negotiation strategies is semi-structured interviews with politicians who are actively involved in the negotiation in the municipal cooperation “Tillväxt Bohuslän”.

Results from the analysis in this thesis show a zero result; the municipalities’ ability for joint action does not affect which negotiation strategy they use. However, interesting empirical findings are explored.

**Keywords:** *negotiation process, collaborative negotiation strategy, competitive negotiation strategy, ability for joint action, municipal cooperation.*

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Last, we offer our regards to our program coordinator, Per Assmo, for the financial allowance we received.

/ Annica Lindquist and Mathias Sköld

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# 1. Introduction

Negotiating and cooperating are both essential elements for development and progress and is something that occurs every day, everywhere around the world. Due to the fact that this is a frequent phenomenon there are also tons of forms and ways to negotiate and cooperate. A further understanding of this could result in that more negotiations end with a win-win situation where each party is satisfied; both with the process and the outcome.

This thesis aims to discuss if organizational culture affects the negotiation strategy used by municipalities, and hence affects the negotiation process between municipalities in Sweden.

There is a project in Northern Bohuslän in Sweden, “Tillväxt Bohuslän” which seeks to foster the cooperation between five small municipalities; Strömstad, Tanum, Sotenäs, Munkedal and Lysekil. In general, the fields of cooperation concern maritime action, rural development, “tourist industry”<sup>1</sup> and internal activity.<sup>2</sup> The politicians involved in this project are under mandate from their respective municipalities and seek to find solutions that are best suitable for their own municipality. “Tillväxt Bohuslän” is a local complement to the local government federation of Fyrbodal and thus a form of municipal cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

These municipalities possess their own organizational culture which affects, not only how they act and perceive each other, but also how they act and perceive people outside their organization. This gives us reason to believe that the organizational culture also affects the negotiation process, because during that process people from one organization act outside their own organization and meet, cooperate and negotiate with people from other organizations. The scholar Siverbo has classified four of the municipalities included in “Tillväxt Bohuslän” and their organizational culture.<sup>4</sup> This classification will act as the independent variable in our thesis. We seek to test if municipalities’ *ability for joint action* affects which negotiation strategy they possess; either *collaborative* or *competitive*, which act as the dependent variable. Further, the degree of the will to cooperation is embedded in the two negotiation strategies, in the sense that a collaborative negotiation strategy is more prone to enter cooperation.

What this thesis will point out is that there is a paradoxical, and in many times problematic, situation in municipal cooperation. Due to the fact that municipalities in municipal cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> Swe: Besöksnäring

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tillvaxtbohuslan.se/page/970/verksamhet.htm> (2011.05.05)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Siverbo:2004

in many cases have a relatively low total population number they stand weak alone, both economically and in times when they need to influence the state or the region. Cooperation is therefore needed in order to survive and become a force of influence. As one respondent put it:

“It is [cooperation] totally necessary. It’s even so important that if we do not cooperate we will not be able to sustain our business. That is the way it is! If you are a municipality consisting with less than 25,000 inhabitants, you are a depopulated municipality; whether you want it or not. The civic function has to be there, even if you are 25,000 or 10,000 people. Consequently, cooperation is a necessity for survival and for providing service.”<sup>5</sup>

- **A municipality in Northern Bohuslän**

Regarding the quote above one might think that cooperation would be a simple action to implement and sustain, but there is an embedded contradiction which threatens the demand for cooperation. Paradoxically, each municipality seeks to find the best options for *their own* community which sometimes makes them act competitive. As one respondent put it:

”When we work with this ”Tillväxt Bohuslän” we don’t have complete mandate to act as we please as if we did not have our own municipality to take into consideration. Every decision we make has to be firmly established to our own municipality.”<sup>6</sup>

- **A municipality in Northern Bohuslän**

As earlier stated, this thesis will see if organizational culture affects the negotiation strategy that municipalities in Sweden use when cooperating over the municipality borders. We use Strömstad, Tanum, Munkedal and Sotenäs, who operate within the municipal cooperation “Tillväxt Bohuslän”, as cases.

This is an interesting topic to study due to a number of reasons. First, it is a current issue; there are a lot of municipal cooperation all around Sweden and some cooperation work more effectively than others. More profound knowledge of the subject, and knowledge about what makes cooperation and negotiation between municipalities effective, could result in that more municipal cooperation function more successfully. Second, as the literature review will show, there are no thorough research about organizational culture and its effect on cooperation and

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<sup>5</sup> ”Det [samarbete] är totalt livsviktigt. Det är till och med så viktigt att om vi inte samarbetar, så är vi inte kapabla att klara av vår verksamhet. Så är det! Om man är en kommun med under 25000 invånare så är man en avfolkningskommun, vare sig man vill eller inte. Samhällsfunktionerna måste ändå finnas där, oavsett om man är 25000 eller 10000. Så ja, samarbete är en nödvändighet för överlevnad och för att vi ska kunna ge service.”

<sup>6</sup> ”När man sitter i det här ”Tillväxt Bohuslän’ så har vi ju inte fullt mandat och agera som om vi inte hade en egen kommun och ta hänsyn till. Allting vi beslutar ska ju tillbaka och förankras i våra egna kommuner.”

negotiation between municipalities in Sweden. This is the scientific relevance of this study; to point out and fill that gap. The third reason to study this topic is its political relevance. The decentralization in Sweden has meant that decision making has been moved to the municipalities so the municipal politicians have more influence and power. The political relevance of this study is therefore that the findings could result in more knowledge about municipalities who are dependent on each other, and could consequently increase the effectiveness of the municipalities' work.

The first part of the thesis will contain a discussion of previous scholars in the field and their findings, and also a framing of the gap in this field of studies. Further, the second part contains the theoretical approach where definitions of central concepts are established, which theories are used and how, and finally an analytical framework is presented. The third part contains the aim and the specified questions of the thesis. The fourth part is where a discussion about methods for gathering and analyzing data is discussed. We discuss what design, cases and methods that are used and why. Last, the fifth part contains the results and the analysis of our findings. To finish off, some interesting empirical findings are presented.

## 2. Literature review

The municipal research in Sweden contains a significant amount of literature, with different entry points and topics. First, there are three main subject fields that can be identified as frequently studied: economic issues<sup>7</sup>, the merging/division of municipalities<sup>8</sup> and cooperation<sup>9</sup>. This thesis will focus on the latter subject field; cooperation.

Jörgen Westerståhl was one of the first scholars who contributed to the municipal research in the 1960's and 1970's. Studies about municipal independence and merging<sup>10</sup> and election campaigns<sup>11</sup> were by that time hot topics.

There is consensus among researchers studying the former and ongoing division and merging of Swedish municipalities putting emphasis on intrinsically two focal points concerning this subject field; municipal self-rule and democracy.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning with municipal self-rule, there is consensus among researchers stating that the division and merging of municipalities have had a large impact on the society.<sup>13</sup> Gustafsson and Svensson compare this impact with similar international cases.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, one researcher also applies it nationally, where Gustafsson discusses municipalities' self-rule and its effect on integration.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, other scholars focus on the effect concerning the relationship between the nation and the government.<sup>16</sup> Continuing with the second subject field, democracy, prominent researchers discuss the issue of division and merging from a democratic perspective.<sup>17</sup> Thus a lot of already existing municipal research regards research on specific aspects within one municipality.

The third main subject field, cooperation, is another approach angle of municipal research. It is also the same approach angle this thesis will have, since we are looking into municipalities that negotiate and cooperate with each other. Therefore, the cooperation approach plays a noteworthy role in this literature review.

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<sup>7</sup> Brorström:1990, Brorström:2002, Brorström:2001

<sup>8</sup> Gustafsson:1999, Gustafsson:1996

<sup>9</sup> Danermark:2004, Löwström:2001

<sup>10</sup> Westerståhl:1970

<sup>11</sup> Westerståhl:1966

<sup>12</sup> Dahlberg:2008, Gustafsson:1996, Gustafsson:1999, Johansson:2001, Nielsen:2003, Westerståhl:1987

<sup>13</sup> Gustafsson:1996, Gustafsson:1999, Johansson:2001, Jönsson:1995, Westerståhl:1987

<sup>14</sup> Gustafsson:1999

<sup>15</sup> Gustafsson:1996

<sup>16</sup> Häggroth:2002, Johansson :2001, Jönsson:1995, Westerståhl:1987

<sup>17</sup> Birgersson:1995, Dahlberg:2008, Karlsson:2007, Johansson:2001

There is consensus among researchers stating that the reason for cooperation, in general, is due to demands for improvements.<sup>18</sup> Löwström stresses the importance of cooperation within municipalities, especially concerning an extension or limitation of borderlines.<sup>19</sup> Danermark studied whether power relations exist in cooperation.<sup>20</sup>

There is consensus among scholars that different forms of cooperation can be considered.<sup>21</sup> First, there is an inter-professional cooperation, which occurs between different occupational groups. The second form of cooperation, inter-sectional cooperation, is concerned with cooperation between principals.<sup>22</sup> Gustafsson especially emphasizes the third form of cooperation, the inter-organizational cooperation, which occurs between organizational entities, as the most common one.<sup>23</sup> Again, this form of cooperation will be the form focused on in this thesis since we study municipalities and their negotiation strategies, which affect the cooperation between them.

Scholars agree that Swedish municipalities have helped each other out by exchanging knowledge and resources for a considerably long time. It is also stated that informal arrangements have been the most common type, where the municipalities simply coordinate activities without any contracts.<sup>24</sup> To give a better overview of cooperation, the next part will include what forms of cooperation between municipalities that previous scholars have studied.

Municipalities can cooperate with each other in different ways. There is consensus among scholars stating that there are three different forms of cooperation between municipalities; common boards<sup>25</sup>, municipalities federations<sup>26</sup> and local government federations.<sup>27</sup> Scholars agree that the purpose is still the same no matter the forms of cooperation, namely to achieve improvements.<sup>28</sup>

As discussed, common boards, municipalities federations and local government federations deal with cooperation and agreements. A logical step in cooperation and agreements is negotiation. There is consensus that negotiation is likely to occur when two or more parties want to achieve

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<sup>18</sup> Ahrne:1994, Anell:2009, Danermark:2004, Gossas:2003, Gustafsson:1999, Johansson:1997

<sup>19</sup> Löwström:2001

<sup>20</sup> Danermark:2004

<sup>21</sup> Ahrne:1994, Anell:2009, Gossas:2003, Gustafsson:1999, Johansson:1997

<sup>22</sup> Ahrne:1994, Anell:2009, Gossas:2003, Gustafsson:1999, Johansson:1997

<sup>23</sup> Gustafsson:1999

<sup>24</sup> Anell:2009

<sup>25</sup> Swe: Gemensam nämnd

<sup>26</sup> Swe: Kommunförbund

<sup>27</sup> Swe: Kommunalförbund

<sup>28</sup> Anell:2009, Gossas:2003, Gustafsson:1996, Gustafsson:1999

something, similar to the reasons for cooperating.<sup>29</sup>

According to several scholars, there are five different strategies that may occur in the negotiation process.<sup>30</sup> *Accommodating negotiation* is when the party tries to give the counterparty everything there is to give and enjoys solving other peoples' problems. *Compromising negotiation* is another strategy used by parties that affect the negotiation process. Parties using this strategy are trying to find a solution where both parties make equally big concessions which results in that both parties are satisfied. The third strategy that may occur in the negotiation process, *avoiding*, is when one party tries to avoid the actual negotiation. *Collaborative negotiation* strategy is the fourth strategy where the negotiator is trying to find the best solutions for everyone involved by discovering the basic needs and interests of the other parties. When using the fifth strategy, *competitive negotiation*, the party will try to gain as much out of the negotiation as possible, without giving any thought to the consequences for the others.

This thesis will only focus on the two latter strategies presented; *collaborative* and *competitive* strategy. We believe that these two strategies are the main strategies used, since they more or less are incorporated in the other strategies presented above. Further, as will be discussed in the theoretical approach, these two strategies are to a high degree correlated with the will to cooperate.

This thesis seeks to study if the attribute of organizational cultural, the ability for joint action, affects which negotiation strategy municipalities use, thus affecting the negotiation process. Variables affecting the negotiation process have been brought up by scholars, these are: gender<sup>31</sup>, power<sup>32</sup> and organizational culture.<sup>33</sup>

Scholars agree that gender is an important variable strongly connected to the negotiation process.<sup>34</sup> Some scholars are discussing the dominance of men and its effect on the negotiation process.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Stuhlmacher argues that men and women have different perceptions and behavioral patterns, which affect how they act in a negotiation.<sup>36</sup> Eckel argues that women in a negotiation find it easier to settle with a given negotiation than men, and therefore women are

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<sup>29</sup> Putman:1992, Thompson:2008

<sup>30</sup> Lax: 1986, Rosell:2000, Shell:2006

<sup>31</sup> Francis:2004, Stuhlmacher:1999, Eckel:2008

<sup>32</sup> Hammerstein:1982, Hopman:1998, Hornstein:1965, Zartman:2000, Faure:2009

<sup>33</sup> Brett:2000, Cohen:2001, Faure:2009, Gesteland:2005, Hall:1990, Ting-Toomey:1998

<sup>34</sup> Francis:2004, Stuhlmacher:1999, Eckel:2008

<sup>35</sup> Francis:2004, Stuhlmacher:1999

<sup>36</sup> Stuhlmacher:1999

easier to negotiate with.<sup>37</sup>

Another part of the academic world studying the negotiation process is looking at the parties' power and their capabilities in a negotiation and the effect they have on the negotiation process. Here the controversies are clear; Hopmann argues that power asymmetry is the worst starting position in a negotiation.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, other scholars argue the complete opposite; that power asymmetry is the optimal starting position in negotiations.<sup>39</sup>

The last variable, and the most important one in this thesis, is organizational culture. The meaning of the word organizational culture is broad, resulting in that scholars looking at its effect on the negotiation process are writing about different aspects of the issue. First, studies regarding the negotiation process and culture have been brought up by scholars, where they put emphasis to the causal relation between them.<sup>40</sup> However, these papers concern international perspectives of this issue, either between countries or within a country. This corroborates the aim of this thesis; to study if organizational culture affects negotiation strategy in a negotiation process in municipalities in Sweden. Since earlier research about municipalities, cooperation and negotiation have been brought up in this literature review, the next part treats earlier research about organizational culture. This is important to consider due to the aim of this thesis.

There are many prominent scholars stating that understanding organizational culture is essential in order to understand how organizations function. Further, the same scholars also stress that organizational culture is a variable affecting how both organizations and people within the organizations behave.<sup>41</sup> There is consensus among researchers saying that organizational behavior is connected to the culture within organizations.<sup>42</sup>

When studying organizational culture, some scholars believe that the negotiation process is connected to if there is a *high* or *low communication culture* within the organization.<sup>43</sup> Other scholars believe that it is the degree of *power distance* that affects the process of negotiation.<sup>44</sup> Two other organizational culture dimensions which also have been studied thoroughly are the *individualism vs.*

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<sup>37</sup> Eckel:2008

<sup>38</sup> Hopmann:1998

<sup>39</sup> Hammerstein:1982, Hornstein:1965, Zartman:2000, Faure:2009

<sup>40</sup> Cai:2000, Gelfand:1999, Osman-Gani:2002

<sup>41</sup> Bang:1999, Capon:2000, Deal:2000, Hatch:2000, Hodge:2003, Kreitner:2008, Schein:1996

<sup>42</sup> Alvesson:2009, Alvesson:1988, Bowditch:2005, Brooks:2006, Hofstede:2005, Ivancevich:2008, Kreitner:2008

<sup>43</sup> Brett:2000, Donghoon:1998

<sup>44</sup> Hofstede:1983, Ting-Toomey:1998

*collectivism dimension*<sup>45</sup> and the *hierarchical vs. egalitarian dimension*.<sup>46</sup>

When considering organizational culture in Sweden, there is literature treating the connection between organizational culture and change<sup>47</sup>, leadership<sup>48</sup> and development.<sup>49</sup> Bergström and Varonen have looked into organizational culture and its effect on decision making in companies.<sup>50</sup> Other studies treat organizational culture between two public services and firms in Sweden.<sup>51</sup> However, these studies do not treat the effect of organizational culture *between* municipalities, which this study does.

Further, studies about organizational culture and its effect on Swedish municipalities do exist, but to an unsatisfying extent.<sup>52</sup> Bergström studied three municipalities in Sweden; Hudiksvall, Lidköping and Trelleborg, in order to examine their organizational culture, but not its effect on negotiation strategies and not in relation to each other.<sup>53</sup> Siverbo's theory states that organizations' ability for joint action and their ability to change are reasons for development *within* municipalities.<sup>54</sup> In this thesis, the ability for joint action will function as the independent variable.

## **2.1 The gap and contribution**

This paper focuses on the attribute of organizational culture, *ability for joint action*, and its effect on the negotiation process.

As shown in this literature review, this field of studies is broad and complex. Despite this fact, a lot of studies have been performed on all different angles and approaches presented in this review. As stated, some prominent work about organizational culture and municipalities has been done, but it concerns inter-sectional levels *within* organizations. Further, a majority of the studies are conducted on an international level.

As a result from this, the important thing missing in this field is a thoroughly constructed research about the negotiation process in Sweden, more precisely; a study about the organizational culture and its effect on negotiation process *between* municipalities in Sweden. This

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<sup>45</sup> Brett:2000, Gelfan:1999, Triandis:1998

<sup>46</sup> Adair:2004, Brett:2000, Thompson:2008

<sup>47</sup> Alvesson:2008

<sup>48</sup> Alvesson:2009, Alvesson:2002, Clemedson:2006, Dahlgren:2008

<sup>49</sup> Alvesson:1988, Bruzelius:2004

<sup>50</sup> Bergström & Varonen:2002

<sup>51</sup> Rådberg:2006, Alneng:2008

<sup>52</sup> Bergström:2002, Siverbo:2004

<sup>53</sup> Bergström:2002

<sup>54</sup> Siverbo:2004

study is important, not only to improve and simplify municipal cooperation, but also to understand if different organizational cultures can have an impact on how municipalities negotiate with each other, which in turn affects their cooperation and the negotiation process. Thus, future cooperation problems and an understanding about Swedish municipalities' characteristics can easier be identified.

## 3. Theoretical approach

As shown in the literature review, the factors that may influence the process of negotiation can be many. This study will only focus on one attribute of organizational culture; organizations' ability for joint action. We want to study if this organizational attribute affects which negotiation strategy municipalities use. This section will start off with defining three central concepts in this thesis. It will also contain a discussion of the theoretical framework of the dependent variable, the different negotiation strategies, and finish off with the independent variable, organizational culture.

### 3.1 Definitions of central concepts

There are three central concepts used in this thesis which need to be thoroughly defined in order to exclude confusion; negotiation, cooperation and organizational culture.

#### 3.1.1 What is negotiation?

To define the concept negotiation and its meaning we use the definition by Thompson, stating that: *"Negotiation is an inter-personal decision making process necessary whenever we cannot achieve our objectives single-handedly..."*<sup>55</sup> Thompson emphasizes that negotiation does not only necessarily mean negotiation between two or more people, but also between parties, companies and organizations. Further, it is through the decision making process that the two sides try to negotiate in order to achieve the objectives.

For further understanding and framing of the concept negotiation we use Putman's and Roloff's definition of negotiation as a process that *"...entails two or more interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals and engage in social interaction to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome."*<sup>56</sup>

To conclude, the essential elements of a negotiation include:

- a decision making process between two or more people.
- that parties are dependent of each other because **1.)** they cannot achieve their goals alone and/or because **2.)** they have incompatible goals.
- a social interaction in a formal context which seeks to achieve objectives.
- cooperation; objects cannot be achieved single-handedly and therefore the parties involved have to cooperate to a certain extent.

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<sup>55</sup> Thompson:2008 p.2

<sup>56</sup> Putman:1992 p.3

This definition slightly differs from some parts of what Shell sees as negotiation. He advocates that negotiation is a process that occurs *whenever* we want something from someone else or someone wants something from us.<sup>57</sup> This definition seems too vague and indicates that just about everything can be identified as negotiation. We have for instance established that one essential element of negotiation is that parties in a negotiation are dependent on each other. Shell's definition of a negotiation is a process that occurs when we want something from someone. For instance, a son negotiating with his father about what time he should be home at night is a negotiation according to Shell, in the sense that the son wants something from someone. However, we do not consider this as a negotiation because it does not contain the essential elements of a negotiation that were established in this section.

### 3.1.2 What is cooperation?

To define what cooperation is we refer to the Oxford dictionary stating that "*cooperation is the action or process of working together to the same end.*"<sup>58</sup>

It appears that negotiation and cooperation have similar definitions, where both definitions give us the view that two or more parties work together to reach a certain goal. This connection between negotiation and cooperation is a relation we want to pay attention to because the case we study, "Tillväxt Bohuslän", is a form of cooperation.

One first basic assumption can be created from the statement above:

- 1.) Negotiation process and cooperation goes hand in hand.

In order to justify this assumption, we once again refer to Thomson stating that: "*Negotiation is an inter-personal decision making process necessary whenever we cannot achieve our objectives single-handedly.*"<sup>59</sup>

As understood by this quote, negotiation between parties is necessary in order to reach the set up objectives. Further, the definition of cooperation is when people work together towards the same end. In order to further clarify the connection between negotiation and cooperation, we once again use the definition by Putman and Rollof saying that negotiation "...*entails two or more interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals and engage in social interaction to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome.*"<sup>60</sup> Putman and Rollof state that in order to reach mutually satisfactory outcomes in a negotiation, the two or more interdependent parties need to interact with each

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<sup>57</sup> Shell:2006 p.6

<sup>58</sup> [http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0177760#m\\_en\\_gb0177760](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0177760#m_en_gb0177760), 2011.05.03

<sup>59</sup> Thomson:2008 p.2

<sup>60</sup> Putman:1992 p.3

other, thus in some way cooperate to reach the set up objectives.

The other assumption created in this thesis is:

- 2.) Negotiation strategy influences the negotiation process and therefore also the cooperation.

To justify this assumption, it is argued that depending on which negotiation strategy you possess, the negotiation process will look different. That is, if you are categorized as a user of a collaborative negotiation strategy or a competitive negotiation strategy, you use different methods when negotiating. Depending on your strategy you also have various characteristics; something that affects what the negotiation process looks like. Studies have shown that people who are collaborative negotiators have a propensity to become extremely effective negotiators, while people who are competitive negotiators do not possess this propensity to the same degree.<sup>61</sup>

### **3.1.3 What is organizational culture?**

The definition that we use is that organizational culture is “*the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments.*”<sup>62</sup> The question is however how organizational culture differs from a general or national culture. It is advocated that the only difference is that the former has been developed within the walls of the organization.<sup>63</sup> This gives us reason to believe that there is a difference between national and organizational culture and that there are differences concerning the organizational cultures between organizations within the same nation.

To gain further understanding about what organizational culture is, one should know that there are three main elements which are recurring in this field of study; values<sup>64</sup>, norms<sup>65</sup> and basic assumptions.<sup>66</sup> These elements are important to keep in mind when we, in a bit, clarify the connection between organizational culture and the negotiation process.

Values in an organization function as a guidance in how we relate to, and which approach to use in, different situations. Values work as a planner during conflict resolution and decision making.

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<sup>61</sup> Shell:2006 p.14-15

<sup>62</sup> Schein:1996 p.236

<sup>63</sup> Driskill:2005, Jacobsen:2008

<sup>64</sup> Bang:1999, Christensen:2005, Greenberg:2008, Hatch:2000, Kreitner:2008

<sup>65</sup> Bang:1999, Christensen:2005, Greenberg:2008

<sup>66</sup> Bang:1999, Hatch:2000, Kreitner:2008

It helps people who share the same values to make decisions in conflicting situations.<sup>67</sup> The second main element, norms, concerns with what is seen an acceptable behavior and are also the expectations that we have on each other's behavior.<sup>68</sup> The third element that conducts organizational culture is basic assumptions which are values that have become so taken for granted that they guide the behavior of the employees in organizations.<sup>69</sup>

To clarify again what organizational culture even has to do with our dependent variable, the negotiation process, we could use Faure's quotation which states that; "*Negotiation is a multidimensional activity and the overall orientation adapted by an actor to achieve his goal is a strategy. Strategic choices are led by interests and values, which refers to culture.*"<sup>70</sup> This indicates that the values and interests, which the theory has established as main elements of organizational culture, are related to which strategies the negotiators choose. Another argument can be presented by recalling the definition of organization culture; "...assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments." These assumptions, norms and values do not only determine how the people of the organization perceive and act towards each other, but also how they perceive and act towards people outside the organization, such as actors they meet in negotiation situations.

#### Transmission of organizational culture to the members of the organization

Now that we established the definition of organizational culture and its very nature, we turn our attention to how the organizational culture is transmitted to its members. This transmission is of importance in this thesis, since we do not study individuals but organizations. Further framing of the organizational culture and the transmission to its members gives us reason to believe that the individuals, who operate within the same organization, also have the same organizational culture. Newly employees have to learn the values, norms and basic assumptions that guide the behavior of the already existing members and are outsiders until they do so.<sup>71</sup> It is advocated that there are four different ways that organizational culture is transmitted to its members (see figure below).

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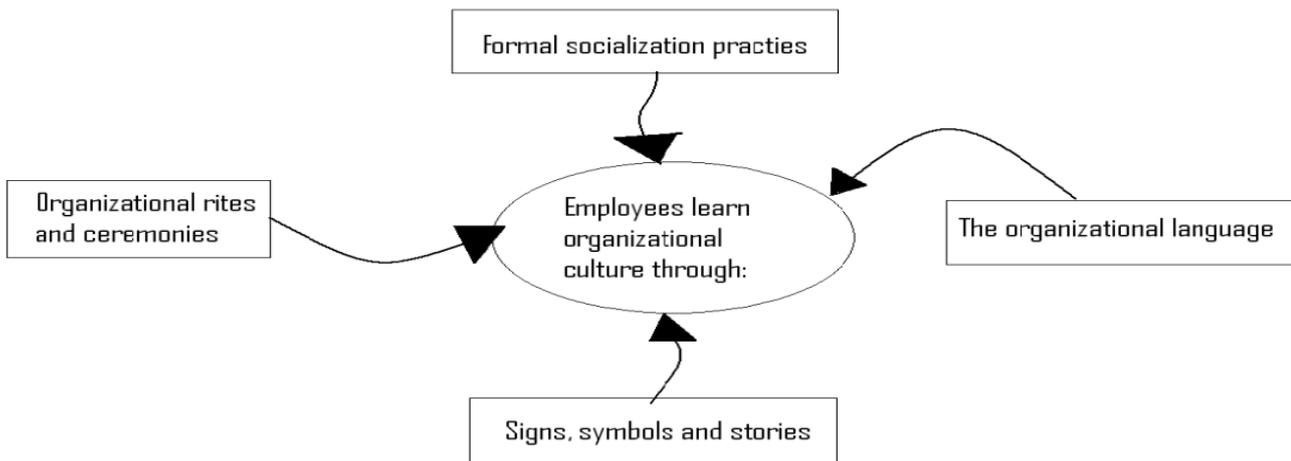
<sup>67</sup> Bang:1999 p.53-54

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p.54

<sup>69</sup> Kreitner:2008 p.70

<sup>70</sup> Faure:2009 p.509

<sup>71</sup> George:2008



- Figure: George:2008 p570

The first source of transmission of organizational culture is signs, symbols, stories and objects.<sup>72</sup> It is said that objects transfer meaning about organizational culture. For instance, it is advocated that a lot of trophies in the working area of an organization indicates a culture that stresses the importance of success.<sup>73</sup> The second source of transmission of organizational culture is ceremonies.<sup>74</sup> These are also told to help transmitting culture because the employees learn what the norms and values of the company are.<sup>75</sup> The third source of transmission of organizational culture is the organizational language, such as slogans and the everyday language.<sup>76</sup> Formal socialization practice is the fourth and maybe the most obvious source of transmission of organizational culture. This is when the employees, new and old, obtain knowledge about the organization's values through formal social programs.<sup>77</sup>

### 3.2 Theory

As established, we want to see if organizational culture affects which negotiation strategy municipalities use. It is also important to further emphasize that we are studying municipal organizations and not the individuals within them. We believe that the individuals within the municipalities act homogeneously because the organizational culture has been transmitted to them in the various ways presented in the previous section. We first discuss our dependent variable, the negotiation strategy.

<sup>72</sup> George:2008, Greenberg:2008

<sup>73</sup> Greenberg:2008 p.554

<sup>74</sup> George:2008 p.571

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Greenberg:2008 p.554,556

<sup>77</sup> George:2008 p.570

### **3.2.1 Negotiation strategy**

As we established, we only choose to study two negotiation strategies; the collaborative and the competitive negotiation strategy. As this section will show, these two strategies are indeed correlated with the degree of the will to cooperate. This is important since our independent variable, the ability for joint action, is as we will see also correlated with the degree of the will to cooperate.

#### **3.2.1.1 Collaborative negotiation**

In a collaborative negotiation, the parties enter the negotiation with the motive to cooperate and find solutions that are accepted and advantageous for all parties involved. The basic idea is for all parties to feel that they have won when the negotiation is over.<sup>78</sup>

The resources are not seen as a fixed pie which ought to be argued for and split between the parties involved. Instead, the pie is seen as something that can be expanded, a way of handling shares, resulting in increased benefits for all. By probing beneath the surface of the situation and asking questions to discover underlying problems and interests, negotiators develop new ways of looking at the issue. They try to find solutions that are beneficial for both parties, for example by brainstorming new options.<sup>79</sup>

That the other parties in a negotiation are willing to cooperate is something that is expected from collaborative negotiators.<sup>80</sup> This results in that there is openness and trust towards the other parties.<sup>81</sup> There is an emphasis on the importance of the relationship between the parties involved. The reason for this is that there is a will from collaborative negotiators to solve problems together with the other parties, and try to discover the underlying interests of the opponents.<sup>82</sup>

#### **3.2.1.2 Competitive negotiation**

In contrast to collaborative negotiation where cooperation and interaction are important, the competitive negotiation includes elements like winning and losing. The negotiation is seen as an opportunity to win where all your moves and actions results in either winning or losing.<sup>83</sup> A competitive negotiator wants the most out of the negotiation and selects options where the

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<sup>78</sup> Shell:2006 p.246

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ogilvie:2008 p.137

<sup>81</sup> Rudawsky:1999 p.173

<sup>82</sup> Shell:2006 p.246

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

relative gain is maximized.<sup>84</sup>

This type of negotiator sees the resources of a negotiation as fixed and that he or she has to grab as much as possible before the opposite parties do.<sup>85</sup> Whatever one party gets comes at the expense of the other. This also has consequences on how a competitive negotiator perceives his or her opponents. In contrast to a collaborative negotiator, the competitive negotiator bear suspicious feelings towards the opponents, expecting them to have the same goal and practice the same tactics as he or she does.<sup>86</sup>

Relationships are not important, since this type of negotiation is more task-oriented and the main goal is to maximize the own interests. A consequence of this, is an absence of future motives and trust towards the other party, leaving a short-term relationship as a distinctive feature of a competitive negotiator.<sup>87</sup>

### 3.2.1.3 Further framing

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between these two negotiation strategies and the degree of the will to cooperate. A person who uses a collaborative negotiation strategy is more willing to cooperate. In contrast, a person who uses a competitive negotiation strategy is less prone to cooperate.<sup>88</sup>

	<b>Competitive</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>
<b>Basic position</b>	Win-lose	Win-win
	Fixed pie	Expanding pie
	Self-benefit	Mutual benefit
<b>Attitude and tactics</b>	Suspicion	Trust
	Aggressive	Submissive
<b>Relationship</b>	Task-oriented	Task- and social-oriented

The table above illustrates the characteristics of the two negotiation strategies. The column to the

<sup>84</sup> Ogilvie:2008 p.137, Shell:2006 p.13

<sup>85</sup> Ogilvie:2008 p.140

<sup>86</sup> Rudawsky:1999 p.173

<sup>87</sup> Shell:2006 p.246-247

<sup>88</sup> Shell:2006 p.14-15

left demonstrates the three main headlines in which we have categorized the different attributes of the theory; basic position, attitude and tactics, and relationship. The two remaining columns are the different attributes that the negotiation strategies possess, the column in the middle shows all the attributes of a competitive negotiator and the column to the right illustrates the different attributes of a collaborative negotiator.

First of all, we are trying to examine the municipalities' basic positions. For example, is a municipality more win-lose or win-win oriented? Do they view negotiation as a fixed pie, where there is only a fixed amount to be negotiated about, leaving one party winning and the other losing? Or do they see it as an expanding pie, where both parties are seen as winners? Further, what outcome goals are set by the municipalities in a negotiation? For example, do municipalities try to maximize their individual gain or do they instead seek to achieve mutual gain?

Next, what attitudes do the municipalities have and what tactics are used? For instance, is there any suspicion or are the relations built on trust? Do municipalities tend to use an aggressive tactic where threats, deadlines and extreme offers are common or do they use a submissive tactic where they try to explore alternatives, show interest and use inviting proposals?

Last, how do municipalities view relationship? For instance, do they view the relationship with other municipalities as a short-term relationship or as long-term where the worth of the relationship is significantly high?

Now that we have presented the theory of the different negotiation strategies, we turn the attention to the independent variable in this thesis; organizational culture.

### **3.2.2 Organizational culture**

As discussed in the literature review, Siverbo has studied how the municipalities' ability for joint action and their ability to change affect the development of the municipalities.<sup>89</sup> This thesis will use Siverbo's categorizations of the organizational culture of four municipalities (Strömstad, Tanum, Munkedal and Sotenäs) conducted based on his empirical study. However, we will exclude the second dimension of his categorization, the municipalities' ability to change, and only focus on their ability for joint action. When studying independent variables, variation is advocated.<sup>90</sup> Studying cases with either strong or weak ability for joint action is variation enough. Too much variation in terms of studying cases with both weak and strong ability for joint action

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<sup>89</sup> Siverbo:2004

<sup>90</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p. 102

*and* weak and strong ability to change could cause confusion. We believe that this thesis will show a clearer and deeper connection to the negotiation process if we only focus on one attribute of organizational culture. Further, as will be seen in the next part, we believe that the ability for joint action has a stronger connection to negotiation and cooperation than the other organizational attribute.

### **3.2.2.1 Ability for joint action**

An organization's ability for joint action is fostered by three organizational features; trust, cooperation and reciprocity.<sup>91</sup>

Trust increases organizations' ability to work towards joint action. The reason to this is that the people of the organization do not have to worry about whether or not other actors within the organization behave opportunistic. It is believed that a lack of trust can result with malcontent co-workers within the organization which, as a result, decreases the credence towards the organization. This alarming situation could result in that the co-workers in an organization become less motivated and also less dedicated to the ambitions and goals.

Cooperation is another organizational feature which fosters the ability for joint action. Logically, there is a strong connection between cooperation and trust since cooperation is a result of relationships with a flourishing sense of trust. At the same time, cooperation is a fundamental condition to obtain trustful relationships.

Reciprocity is correlated with cooperation and trust and fosters organizations' ability for joint action. When a relationship between members of an organization is flourishing with reciprocity, they operate under a collective rationality. This is characterized by that the members act towards a result which is beneficial, not only for themselves, but also for other actors of the organization.

We believe that the ability for joint action is strongly correlated with the negotiation process and the negotiation strategy because it, in a sense, eases the will to cooperate in a negotiation. An assumption we make is that municipalities which are categorized as having a strong ability for joint action will also use a collaborative negotiation strategy. The three features which foster organizations' ability for joint action are all strongly correlated with the different attributes of the two negotiation strategies. Trust for instance, which is one of the feature that fosters the ability for joint action, is also one of the main attributes of a collaborative negotiator.

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<sup>91</sup> Siverbo:2004 p.22-26

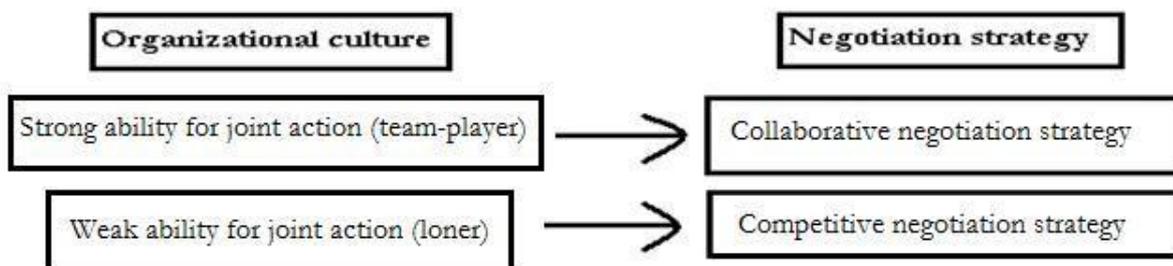
### 3.2.2.2 The classifications - Each municipality's organizational culture

After taking the ability for joint action into consideration in his study, Siverbo has classified four municipalities into an index (please see below). The result of Siverbo's study was conducted through interviews and surveys in each of the studied municipalities. These municipalities and their classifications will also be used and studied in this thesis (see table below).

<b>Ability for joint action</b>	<b>Strong</b>	Tanum & Strömstad
	<b>Weak</b>	Sotenäs & Munkedal

We here present new theoretical labels in order to move focus from the case to the theory; which is typical when conducting a theory-testing study.<sup>92</sup> The theory states that an organization with a strong ability for joint action is more prone to cooperate; thus they are labeled *municipalities of team-players* in this thesis. On the other hand, an organization with a weak ability for joint action is less prone to cooperate, hence labeled *municipalities of loners*.

For the theory to be valid the “municipalities of team-players” should use a collaborative negotiation strategy and the “municipalities of loners” should use a competitive negotiation strategy. This reasoning is clarified in the analytical framework below.



### 3.3 Test, consume or develop theory?

The theory stating that the features of organizational culture presented in this report affect if and how organizations develop and improve is established by earlier research.<sup>93</sup> This thesis aims to test whether our assumptions, based on earlier research can be valid or not. For example,

<sup>92</sup> Esaiasson: 2007 p.100

<sup>93</sup> Siverbo:2004

remember the analytical framework from above; a municipality with a strong ability for joint action, a “municipality of team-players”, should use a collaborative negotiation strategy. Thus, this thesis will test if the assumptions comport with reality.<sup>94</sup> Further, this qualitative thesis is a causal study in the sense that we try to see links where  $X \rightarrow Y$ .<sup>95</sup> In this study X, the independent variable, is the organizations’ ability for joint action whereas Y, the dependent variable is the negotiation strategy, either collaborative or competitive.

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<sup>94</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p. 99-100

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.41

## **4. Aim and research question**

What the framing of this thesis have shown so far is that there are several variables that can influence the negotiation process. For further framing, here follows the aim which this thesis seeks to achieve and the questions which we seek to answer.

### **4.1 Aim**

This thesis aims to study if organizational culture affects negotiation strategy in the negotiation process between municipalities in Sweden.

### **4.2 Specified questions**

1. Does the cultural attribute of organizational culture (ability for joint action) of the municipalities in “Tillväxt Bohuslän” affect the negotiation strategy in the negotiation process?
2. If so, how?

# 5. Research design & methods for gathering and analyzing data

## 5.1 Design

This is a theory testing thesis which, as stated by Esaiasson and colleagues, is a study where the theory is the center of the investigation and tested on empirical data.<sup>96</sup>

We use a comparative design which means that we will study several municipalities using the same method. It is even advocated that when doing a cross-cultural study, using a comparative design is the more obvious choice.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, it is stated that when studying phenomenon such as municipalities and organizations, the best applied design possible is to do a comparative study.<sup>98</sup> The implications of this design is that a comparison enables researchers to see if a social phenomenon, in this case organizational culture and its effect on negotiation strategy, only is a coincidence that is accurate in one municipality or a general trend for several municipalities.<sup>99</sup> However, since we are studying only four municipalities, this study has to be replicated on several other cases in order for the external reliability to be strengthened.<sup>100</sup>

Another argument to why we use a comparative design is because our specified questions *force* us to compare. One of the specified questions was “*Does the cultural attribute of organizational culture (ability for joint action) of the municipalities in “Tillväxt Bohuslän” affect the negotiation strategy in the negotiation process?*”. What logic would it be to use a case study as a design when our specified questions and our selection of cases in a way demand a comparison between municipalities with *different* organizational cultures? Since “Tillväxt Bohuslän” is a municipal cooperation which includes more than one municipality, the most logical design to use is a comparative design.

However, a comparative design is not the only option when seeking for variation and comparison.<sup>101</sup> When using a cross-sectional design, researchers also collect data about more than one case searching for patterns of associations. The difference is however that the data collected is of a quantitative nature.<sup>102</sup> This qualitative study seeks to *understand* the organizational cultural effect on negotiations in municipalities in Sweden instead of, for example, merely *explaining* how many municipalities that are affected by their cultural differences.

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<sup>96</sup> Esaiasson:2007

<sup>97</sup> Bryman:2008 p.58

<sup>98</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.122

<sup>99</sup> Marsh:2002 p.249

<sup>100</sup> Bryman:2008 p.376

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p.44

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p.44

### 5.1.1 Selection of cases

When selecting the cases to study, we seek for two things. First, when it comes to the explanatory factor, we look for variation.<sup>103</sup> This thesis contains organizations with a strong *and* a weak ability for joint action. Second, we seek homogeneity when searching for cases to study. Municipalities with different organizational cultures shall be as similar as possible in all the other aspects except their organizational culture.<sup>104</sup> We use the most similar system design (mss), where we select the cases depending on the independent variable (the organizational culture) and establish the value of the dependent variable (negotiation strategy).<sup>105</sup>

After taking the arguments from above into consideration, we have chosen to include the municipalities of Strömstad, Tanum, Munkedal, and Sotenäs in south-west Sweden in this thesis. We know from previous studies that their organizational culture is different.<sup>106</sup> We also argue that these are as similar as possible in other aspects.

First of all, they all have the same structure. According to Swedish law, all municipalities in Sweden are regulated by the municipal law.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, they all have to grant the same civic functions to their municipality inhabitants. The implication of this is that they all have the same structure and operate under the same conditions. Second, the municipalities chosen exist in the same geographic area of Sweden. This means that they have the same interests; they cooperate across the borders and strive to achieve similar goals. Third, they are all small municipalities in terms of total population number. Furthermore, small municipalities receive grants from the government when cooperating across the municipality borders.<sup>108</sup>

The mss-design is not the only option to use when comparing cases; a most different system design (mds) is also an option. However, we have chosen not to use the mds-design since it is mostly used when striving to decrease the credence towards previous studies.<sup>109</sup> Further, when using the mds-design, there is a risk that the result can be a combination of several different explanation factors to the phenomenon studied.<sup>110</sup> This is a risk we want to exclude.

As shown, there are risks with the mds-design, but using the mss-design has its consequences as well. The argument to search for cases that are homogenous is an obvious problem with the mss-

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<sup>103</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.102

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p.114

<sup>106</sup> Siverbo:2004

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/index.aspx?nid=3911&bet=1991%3A900> (2011.05.20)

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.statskontoret.se/upload/publikationer/2005/200523.pdf> (2011.04.20)

<sup>109</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.116

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p.117

design.<sup>111</sup> Undoubtedly, we can never find cases which are completely homogenous, but from the discussion above, we argue that the cases chosen are as close to homogeneity as possible.

When considering the ability to generalize our result to other municipalities, there are reasons to believe that it is possible. First of all, as just stated, all municipalities in Sweden are regulated by the municipal law, resulting in that all Swedish municipalities more or less work the same. Thus the Swedish municipal law strengthens this study's ability to generate credible results.<sup>112</sup> A consequence of this is that a municipality's structure is less likely to be a causal variable for exercising a certain negotiation strategy in a negotiation process.

Municipal cooperation has become a more and more recurring phenomenon, further demonstrating municipalities' similarity which in turn corroborates the credibility.<sup>113</sup> Many of the municipalities therefore face the same need for cooperation, making causal variables such as interests less likely to the choice of negotiation strategy in a negotiation process. Additionally, government benefits are granted to border-crossing cooperation in order to simplify collaboration, again stressing municipalities' similar need for cooperation.<sup>114</sup>

When further discussing generalization, there are conflicts among scholars regarding to what degree results can be generalized to other cases or to the whole population, showing the difficulty in generalizing.<sup>115</sup> Bryman states that generalizations are always hard to make, since there may be other factors involved affecting research results.<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, Esaiasson states that even with very few cases, in this thesis four, conclusions about the whole population are possible to draw.<sup>117</sup> Thus; the municipal law, the increased need for cooperation and very clear results are three important pillars strengthening the results of this thesis and consequently the external validity.

## 5.2 Methodology

### 5.2.1 Method for data collection

Dependent variable – Negotiation strategy

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<sup>111</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.115

<sup>112</sup><http://www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/index.aspx?nid=3911&bet=1991%3A900> (2011.05.20)

<sup>113</sup>[http://www.skl.se/vi\\_arbetar\\_med/demos/samhallsorganisation\\_1/samverkan/kommunalforbund\\_och\\_gemensam\\_namnd](http://www.skl.se/vi_arbetar_med/demos/samhallsorganisation_1/samverkan/kommunalforbund_och_gemensam_namnd), (2011.05.06)

<sup>114</sup> Utredning om den statliga förvaltningen, Fi 2009:07, Kommunala samverkansorgan, *Statens offentliga utredningar*, 2011-03-39, (2011-05-11)

<sup>115</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.180

<sup>116</sup> Bryman:2008 p.187

<sup>117</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.187

When measuring municipalities' strategy when negotiating, it is important to understand their ideas and arguments about how they perceive, not only the negotiation process, but also the opponent. Since we are aiming to understand how the "active" people manage the negotiation process, but also what their thoughts and motives are, we have to extract data from primary nature; that is "*collecting information by observing, recording and measuring activities and ideas of real people*"<sup>118</sup>. In order to get the most out of our data, we therefore use primary sources.

To collect data about the negotiation strategy used by different municipalities through secondary sources, such as documents, would be almost impossible. One reason is because it would be hard to estimate how representative the documents are.<sup>119</sup> A further reason is because we see negotiation strategy as a state of mind; it is the actions of the negotiators and their perception of their opponents that results in if they use a collaborative or a competitive negotiation strategy. Recall from section 3.2.1 where we discussed the collaborative and the competitive negotiation strategies. To understand for example how the respondents from each municipality perceive their opponent, if they commiserate trust or suspicion towards them, would not be possible to understand from documents. Formal documents would not show if the municipalities feel trust towards each other and therefore the very nature of this research makes it a logic choice to collect primary sources, in this case interviews.

We decided to collect primary data through interviews because we want to avoid simple yes or no questions, which are suitable when doing a questionnaire survey.<sup>120</sup> In order to "dig into the mind" of our respondents and understand *how* the negotiation process looks like and how they think, the best alternative is to conduct interviews. The implications of our choice are that we get the opportunity to clarify answers we do not understand, an opportunity which is not possible when conducting a questionnaire survey.<sup>121</sup>

As stated by Esiasson et.al., the purpose to use respondent interviews is that it enables the researchers to see how things are from the respondents' perspectives.<sup>122</sup> In contrast an elite interview is another form of interview used when the respondents are witnesses of, and actors in, events; in this case negotiations.<sup>123</sup> When studying cooperation and the negotiation process in municipalities we argue that a mix of these two types of interviews should be used as the data collecting method. This because the framing of the dependent variable forces us to achieve two

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<sup>118</sup> Walliman:2006 p.87

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. p.86

<sup>120</sup> Walliman:2006 p.91

<sup>121</sup> Bell:2010 p.161

<sup>122</sup> Esiasson:2007 p.260

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. p.257

things with the collection of data: 1) we have to understand what the process looks like. To ask the respondents elite questions like; “what general goals are set before you enter a negotiation?” would show which outcome goal they aim for. Do they strive for self-benefit, which has been established as typical for a competitive negotiator, or do they strive for mutual benefit, which has been established as typical for a collaborative negotiator? 2) We also have to understand how the respondents perceive the opponent. Do they trust them, which indicates the use of a collaborative strategy, or do they feel suspicious towards them, which in turn indicates the use of a competitive strategy? Asking them respondent questions like; “What do you expect from the other parties in a negotiation?” would generate answers which could emphasize the importance of trust and honesty or suspicion.

We have agreed upon conducting a semi-structured interview to collect our data. The reason to this is that we want our questions and answers to be detailed, but at the same time balanced, where the respondent will have some leeway in how he or she will answer. Since our topic already is fairly complex we do not wish for extremely broad and abstract answers, which is a common outcome in an ideal unstructured interview.<sup>124</sup>

The people interviewed are politicians from the four municipalities studied. By reason of possible clashes or frictions which might occur after our investigation and due to the ongoing-projects in “Tillväxt Bohuslän” we have guaranteed the respondents anonymity and therefore names or positions will not be exposed to the public sphere. The politicians have experience of, and knowledge about the negotiations process itself. There are a total of eleven interviews. To make sure that each municipality has the same kind of representativeness we also find it important to interview politicians whose position are the same in every municipality. Consequently, the validity of the interview process becomes strengthened, since the respondents, at least from an ideal world, ought to have the same knowledge *about*, and to the same degree be well-grounded *in* the negotiations. Further, we have created our questions through the operationalization scheme, which in turn was carefully constructed from the theory, which strengthens the validity of this study. A result from this, according to Esaiasson, is that we are able to measure what we are supposed to measure.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, we have had the same interview questions on all our interviews which is said to further strengthen the reliability.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Bryman:2008, p.438

<sup>125</sup> Esaiasson:2007 p.63

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p.70-71

The Swedish translations of the quotations are available for the reader in the footnotes and the interview-guide can be found in the Appendix, section 9.

To conclude, we state that a semi-structured respondent- and elite interview is the most appropriate method to understand our dependent variable.

### Independent variable – Organizational culture

The data and knowledge about the organizational culture of the municipalities studied are collected through secondary data – more precisely, the previous study of Siverbo.<sup>127</sup> The organizational culture of each municipality is already categorized.

There might be opposition about our choice to collect data concerning something that is as complex as culture from a previous study. One reason is because it would be hard to estimate how representative the theoretical study is.<sup>128</sup> The study used as a source of collecting data was conducted about eight years ago and some might wonder if the organizational cultures classified are accurate in present time. We argue that the organizations studied have the same organizational culture today because we agree with Schein, one of the most prominent scholars in the field of organizational culture. He argues that culture is the dimension in an organization which is most resistant to change, thus changing very slowly.<sup>129</sup> Recall from section 3.1.3 where we discussed the different channels of how organizational culture is transmitted to its members. We argue that these different channels do not change radically in a time period which is less than a decade.

### **5.2.2 Methods of analyzing**

This section will discuss what certain indicators from the answers of the respondents that either can be categorized as *competitive* or *collaborative* negotiators. The table below is the same one as we used in section 3.2.1.3. What we have to know when analyzing the data of the interviews are which indicators that demonstrate if the municipalities can be categorized as using a competitive or a collaborative negotiation strategy.

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<sup>127</sup> Siverbo:2004

<sup>128</sup> Walliman:2006 p.85

<sup>129</sup> Schein:2004

	<b>Competitive</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>
<b>Basic position</b>	Win-lose	Win-win
	Fixed pie	Expanding pie
	Self-benefit	Mutual benefit
<b>Attitude and tactics</b>	Suspicion	Trust
	Aggressive	Submissive
<b>Relationship</b>	Task-oriented	Task- and social-oriented

Meaning categorization is the method used when analyzing data, which means that the interviews will be coded into categorizations.<sup>130</sup>

Starting off with taking the municipalities' basic positions and how they handle shares into consideration, we can see several tendencies. Do they enjoy solving tough problems by communicating, and also try to find solutions which in turn are anchored in their devotion for the opposite party's interest? Or do they enjoy negotiating but then for one primary reason; winning and maximizing their own benefits? What we thus look for are indicators that support our beliefs that they can be categorized into one of the two negotiation strategies. For example, if considering the two alternatives just mentioned, we can find out if a municipality is categorized as a user of the collaborative negotiation strategy by searching for certain words and arguments which emphasizes communication, understanding and dialogues. We can in contrast find out if a municipality is categorized as a user of the competitive negotiation strategy by searching for words and arguments pointing at a winning-losing approach. Further, indicators of a competitive negotiation strategy are also when the problem being negotiated about is seen as a fixed pie, where you struggle to get the most out of the negotiation.

Further, when looking at the attitudes towards the other party, we are looking for words and arguments that indicate trust or suspicion. Here, we are searching for words and arguments treating beliefs about whether the opposite party is viewed as honest or not, earlier or present displeasure with certain negotiations or arguments stressing the importance of trust in a

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<sup>130</sup> Kvale:1996 p.192

negotiation. For instance, municipalities are categorized as users of a collaborative strategy if they stress the importance of trust, are pleased with the negotiation and view the opponents as honest. If instead, dissatisfaction, unimportance of trust and a level of dishonesty are common, it instead indicates suspicion and hence a competitive negotiation strategy.

When looking at tactics we search for words and arguments that indicate whether the municipalities use a more aggressive tactic, where extreme offers, threats and ambiguity are present. In contrast, if municipalities use a more submissive tactic, where the other municipalities' needs are taken into consideration and where there is a curiosity to know the view of the opponent, they are categorized as users of a competitive negotiation strategy. If municipalities' strategy is aggressive, where they emphasize extreme offers, the municipalities can be viewed as having a competitive negotiation strategy. Instead, municipalities stressing discussions, creative offers and where a curiosity towards the other opponents' interests are advocated, they can be viewed as having a collaborative negotiation strategy.

When looking at relationship of the municipalities in the negotiation process, we search for indicators stating whether or not they view the relationship as brief, immediate and task-oriented or if they view it as ongoing, both social- and task-oriented and with a long-term potential. Results that can indicate that a negotiator possesses the latter form of view are arguments stating that the negotiation climate is important and that they want to find solutions which foster the relationship between the parties. Further, results indicating signs of the competitive negotiation strategy are statements about that there is no need to have a personal relationship with the opponent because the relationship is only about fulfilling the task set out.

Let us now present our indicators in a table in order to get a convenient overview for quicker and better understanding. The meaning categorization will be done by looking at the indicators of each main category and see where the answers fall into. This is also an overview to strengthen the content validity; that the indicators reflect the concept of the theory.<sup>131</sup>

<b>Operationalization scheme</b>	<b>Competitive</b>		<b>Collaborative</b>	
	<i>Basic attributes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Basic attributes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>

<sup>131</sup> Gschwend:2007 p.89, Esaiasson:2007 p.64

<b>Basic position</b>	Win-lose	Struggle to get the most out of the negotiation where all the decisions have to be of importance to their own municipality. A natural result of a negotiation is when one party wins and the other loses.	Win-win	Will to understand the other's interest and where communication and an open dialogue are frequent components. The decisions have to entail benefits for all parties.
	Fixed pie		Expanding pie	
	Self-benefit		Mutual benefit	
<b>Attitude and tactics</b>	Suspicion	Have the assumption that the other parties are dishonest and tries to benefit their own interest.	Trust	Believe that the other parties are honest about their interests and have the same basic position as they do.
	Aggressive	Practical actions as threats, promises, deadlines and extreme offers are common components.	Submissive	Practical actions as exploring alternatives, inviting proposals, asking many questions and creative solutions are common components.
<b>Relationship</b>	Task-oriented	The focus is on completing the task, and relationship is not paid attention to. Quick solutions to end the negotiation and finish the contact as fast as possible are	Task- and social-oriented	Believe that reaching a successful negotiation is obstructed without a good and long-lasting relation. They foster the relationship by avoiding stepping on the

		strived for.		opponents' toes.
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So far, we have operationalized the indicators of the negotiation strategy and classified the organizational culture of the four different municipalities. Let us now put all this empirical knowledge into use. In the next section we will categorize each municipality's use of negotiation strategy and see if it is their ability for joint action which affects the use of negotiation strategy.

# 6. Results and analysis

## 6.1 Introduction

Recall section 3.2.2.2 where we classified each municipality’s organizational culture. In that section, we argued that organizations with a strong ability for joint action should use a collaborative negotiation strategy, and that organizations with a weak ability for joint action should use a competitive negotiation strategy. As mentioned earlier, we use different labels for the municipalities studied; Strömstad is now “Municipality of team players 1” and Tanum is “Municipality of team players 2”. Sotenäs is “Municipality of loners 1” and Munkedal is “Municipality of loners 2”. The reason why we do not merge the municipalities into one common label, creating just “Municipality of team players” and “Municipality of loners” is simply due to that the negotiation strategy being used varies, even between municipalities with the same label. As a consequence, 1 or 2 is put after each label; illustrated in the table below.

<b>Ability for joint action</b>	<b>Strong</b>	Strömstad = <u>Municipality of team players 1</u>  Tanum= <u>Municipality of team players 2</u>
	<b>Weak</b>	Sotenäs = <u>Municipality of loners 1</u>  Munkedal= <u>Municipality of loners 2</u>

Further, recall the specified question of this thesis; “Does the cultural attribute of organizational culture (ability for joint action) of the municipalities in “Tillväxt Bohuslän” affect the negotiation strategy in the negotiation process?” To answer our specified question, this analysis contains three steps.

First, we start off with the basic position of the negotiation strategy. Here we see if the municipalities are categorized as users of a collaborative or a competitive strategy. Then follows a discussion if the basic position of the negotiation strategy is influenced by which organizational culture the municipalities possess. Second, we use the same structure to analyze the attitude and tactics used. Third, we do the same with their view on relationship.

Analytical scheme	Competitive	Collaborative
<b>Basic position</b>	Municipality of team players 1	Municipality of loners 2, Municipality of loners 1 Municipality of team players 2
<b>Attitude and tactics</b>	Municipality of team players 2	Municipality of team players 1 Municipality of loners 2 Municipality of loners 1
<b>Relationship</b>	Municipality of team players 1	Municipality of team players 2 Municipality of loners 2 Municipality of loners 1

The analytical scheme above was conducted after analyzing the transliteration of the interviews by using the operationalization scheme and its indicators established in section 5.2.2. It shows which negotiation strategy the cases studied are categorized into when looking at the basic position, attitude and tactics, and relationship. What is interesting here is that there is no common pattern in the use of negotiation strategy; instead every municipality falls into both a competitive and a collaborative use of strategy. We will return to this interesting issue, and what we believe that it indicates, in the empirical findings in this thesis.

### 6.2 Basic position

As established in the theory section (3.2), the basic position refers to whether the negotiators see the negotiation as a situation where there can only be one winner (win-lose) or where all parties involved can be winners (win-win). It also refers to whether the municipalities view the resources that ought to be negotiated for as a fixed pie or as an expanding pie. Finally, it also refers to if the municipalities try to maximize their own benefit, regardless the consequences for other parties, or if they seek to maximize the benefit for all parties involved.

As shown in the analytical scheme, there were only two municipalities categorized as “pure” users of collaborative or competitive strategies. “municipality of team players 1” is categorized as a competitive negotiator and “municipality of team players 2” is categorized as a collaborative negotiator. The other two municipalities are in the middle because they gave answers that categorize them as users of both a competitive and a collaborative negotiation strategy.

## 6.2.1 Collaborative strategy

Despite the fact that two out of the three municipalities that we categorize as users of a collaborative negotiation strategy, show tendencies of being users of a mixture of the two strategies, there is consensus among them that there should be some kind of win-win situation in a negotiation.

*“Yes, it [the negotiation] should end with that everyone are pleased...Both [parties] should feel as winners. Because one will certainly enter a negotiation again eventually, and then one should feel that it has been an honest negotiation and ‘well, I did not get everything but I got a great deal.’”<sup>132</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

This indicates that the municipalities see the negotiation as a win-win situation where everyone should be satisfied with the outcome. Further, an argument which was frequently used by all the three municipalities which are classified as collaborative was similar to this quote:

*“A good end of a negotiation results in that you shake each other’s hands and agree and that you feel that this will be good for our municipalities.”<sup>133</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 1”**

The argument that each parties involved should feel that they have gotten something out of the negotiation is an indicator of the importance of maximizing the mutual gain of the municipalities.

What is interesting with the two municipalities which are categorized as users of both a collaborative and a competitive strategy is that they both are contradictive. For example when asking the respondents how they would reason if they had ”won” something as a result from a negotiation and would get the most benefits, but it would be better for the municipalities of Northern Bohuslän as a whole if another municipality got it, answers like this occurred:

*“I believe that when it concerns Northern Bohuslän, you probably would... it depends on what it is... It is all about survival... If negotiating about a big company-establishment one would... then I believe that one would act very egoistic and keep it. It depends on what it is as well. Sometimes you have to see the bigger picture. And I believe that one does that pretty often. I believe so! When it comes to roads and things like that. Yes!”<sup>134</sup>*

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<sup>132</sup> ”Ja, den (förhandlingen) ska sluta med att alla är nöjda... båda(parterna) ska känna sig som vinnare. För man går säkert in i en förhandling igen så småningom va, och då ska man ju känna att det har vart en ärlig förhandling och ’jaa, jag fick inte allt men jag fick en hel del.’ ”

<sup>133</sup> ”En bra förhandling slutar med att man tar varandra i hand, är överens och känner att detta kommer bli bra för våra kommuner.”

<sup>134</sup> ”Jag tror att när det gäller Norra Bohuslän, så skulle man nog det ... beror ju på vad det är... det handlar ju massor om överlevnad... Om förhandlingen handlar om en stor företagsetablering så skulle man nog ... då tror jag nog att man skulle vara väldigt egoistisk och behålla det. Sen beror det ju på vad det är också. Ibland måste man se

- **“Municipality of loners 2”**

What is interesting with this kind of argument is that it says a lot about the situation of the small municipalities. As the respondent put it, it is a question of survival and if it comes to for example arguing for the establishment of a new company, they would act egoistic, trying to maximize their own benefit. But at the same time, as the respondent put it, they have to be able to see the bigger picture when it comes to bigger projects, such as roads, and then they act cooperative. This because they have to become a force of influence in order to receive beneficial infrastructure for example. This sort of arguments continues in the next section as well.

### 6.2.2 Competitive strategy

Continuing on the argument from the last section; the two municipalities that are classified as users of both strategies continued this relatively competitive argument. When again asking them how they would reason if they had ”won” something as a result from a negotiation and would get most benefits, but it would be better for the municipalities of Northern Bohuslän as a whole if another municipality got it, similar answers were found:

*”...if we do not have that much to lose on it one could agree on making concessions, and try to do one’s share, that is for sure. But we fight until the very end to reach our [own] goal. I do not believe that there is any “compassionate thinking” towards the region, it absolutely is not...”<sup>135</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 2”**

This argument further shows the contradictoriness that exists in the two municipalities in the middle, “municipality of loners 2” and “municipality of loners 1”. They are willing to cooperate “if they don’t have that much to lose” but at the same time they show a tendency to think as self-benefit maximizers, something that the theory has established as a sign of the competitive negotiation strategy.

Further, it prevail consensus among the municipalities that are categorized as users of the competitive strategy that a self-beneficial thinking comes naturally:

*“... There is of course an embedded egoism. Well, first we shall benefit our own municipality, that is my task. I think that view is equivalent to the others’ views as well.”<sup>136</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 1”**

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det större än sig själv. Och det gör man ganska ofta. Det tycker jag! När det gäller vägar och såna saker. Ja!”

<sup>135</sup> ”... har vi inte så mycket att förlora på det så kan man ju vara med och göra eftergifter, försöker att dra sitt strå till stacken, det är klart. Men vi fajtats in i det längsta för att nå vårt [egna] mål. Jag tror nog inte det finns något barmhärtighetstänkande mot regionen, det gör det absolut inte.”

<sup>136</sup> ”... det finns såklart en ”inbyggd egoism”. Alltså, först ska min kommun dra fördelar, det är min uppgift. Jag tror att den synen gäller för de andra också.”

This is an interesting quote because it further emphasizes the confusion of these municipalities' position. These two municipalities stated the importance of a collaborative view in the sense that everyone should feel as winners, that is striving for a win-win situation, and it is important to contribute to the other parties by making concessions. At the same time they argued the naturalness in thinking of what is best for their own municipality.

The municipality which is categorized as a "pure" user of the competitive strategy even put it like this:

*"One has to know that as a municipal politician you are first and foremost responsible for your voters. It is a problem sitting here and decide where a new establishment in the neighboring municipality should take place. It is not possible! Every politician should fight for his/her own. That is the way it is! You cannot return home and say that you have won, but the actual establishment was put in the neighboring municipality. That makes it problematic! That is the problem with cooperating between municipalities."*<sup>137</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 1"**

This is a good argument demonstrating the problematic situation that these municipalities operate in. The same municipality further strengthened its position as a user of the competitive negotiation strategy, by stating that they have to strive for maximizing their individual gain:

*"[if we reach an agreement]...then everyone wants that agreement to contribute with something to his/her own municipality. We operate under our own municipality's mandate. They [all agreements] demand establishment on the home ground in all municipalities."*<sup>138</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 1"**

### 6.2.3 Discussion

What the first part of this analysis shows is that when examining the municipalities' negotiation strategy one can say that they are users of both the collaborative and the competitive strategy, though some municipalities have more indicating tendencies towards one of the two strategies than others. There are, as discussed, only two of the municipalities which are classified as using either a "pure" collaborative or a competitive negotiation strategy; "municipality of team players 1" is competitive and "municipality of team players 2" is collaborative. When looking at their organizational culture, both are classified as having a strong ability for joint action, which the

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<sup>137</sup> "Samtidigt måste man veta att varje kommunpolitiker är ju först och främst ansvarig för sina väljare och de har man på hemmaplan. Så det finns en problematik i det här med att sitta ner och bestämma att en stor ny etablering ska ligga i grannkommunen... jag vill påstå att det är en omöjlighet. När det kommer till just typen av etableringar och annat, då ska varje kommunordförande slåss för sitt det är bara så. Man kan inte komma hem och säga att man vunnit och lagt den i grannkommunerna, för det blir ju fel. Så det är lite problembilden i att samverka mellan kommuner."

<sup>138</sup> "[om vi når en förhandling]... så vill ju alla att den överenskommelsen ska ge någonting till just sin egen kommun. Vi sitter på vår egen kommuns mandat... De [alla beslut] kräver ju förankring på hemmaplan i alla kommuner"

theory has established as an attribute that increases the will to cooperate. However, despite the fact that these two municipalities are classified as having the same organizational culture, they did not use the same negotiation strategy when considering their basic position. In this case; the assumption that an organization with the ability for joint action would be more willing to cooperate and thus use a collaborative negotiation strategy does not comport with reality. The municipalities which are classified as having a weak ability for joint action, the “municipalities’ of loners” would according to the theory be classified as users of the competitive negotiation strategy. Contractively, they were classified as a mixture of both negotiation strategies.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion is that, when looking at the basic position, the ability for joint action does not affect which negotiation strategy the municipalities use.

### **6.3 Attitudes and tactics**

Referring to the theory section of this thesis, attitudes and tactics deal with how the parties perceive and act towards their opponents. They can perceive their opponents as honest and trustful, using a submissive tactic where exploring alternatives, inviting proposals, lots of questioning and creative solutions are common components. They can also use an aggressive tactic, where practical actions such as extreme offers, threats or promises are used. All municipalities studied are categorized as users of a collaborative strategy, except for one. “Municipality of team players 2” is a mixture of the two negotiation strategies when attitude and tactics are considered.

#### **6.3.1 Collaborative strategy**

Even if “municipality of team players 2” is a mixture of both negotiation strategies, a lot of focus will be put on the first strategy, the collaborative, where all municipalities reached consensus. Similar answers like the following quotation were found when questions about what is seen as important in a negotiation were asked:

*“Honesty! Because if you are not honest it will sooner or later be revealed that you have been bluffing and have been withholding the truth. That is a bad thing!”<sup>139</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

Municipalities which treasure trust and honesty are considered to be users of the collaborative negotiation strategy. Honesty was an aspect which all municipalities regarded as highly

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<sup>139</sup> ”Ärlighet! För om du inte är ärlig, så kommer det så småningom fram att du har bluffat och undanhållit sanningen. Det är inte bra!”

important. If you are not honest it will reach the public eye, leading to a negative effect on trust, an effect which is undesired for a collaborative negotiator.

Another municipality put it similarly stating that:

*"Well, all sort of cooperation is built on trust. If you do not feel trust towards each other then it will sooner or later fall apart. There is cooperation which has been stalemated because one has not felt trust."*<sup>140</sup>

- **"Municipality of loners 1"**

Again, the argument is put in a similar way to the quote above stating that trust is very important and without it the whole cooperation would fall apart. This trust-oriented attitude is, as we have learned so far, one of the components of a collaborative negotiation strategy.

To further strengthen the consensus among municipalities regarding their views of the importance of honesty and trust, the following statement was also made:

*"I expect them to follow it [the agreement]. And if one cannot keep it, or if it occurs any changes, it is important to keep openness and an ongoing dialogue so one can operate differently due to those changes...one puts the card on the table, there should not be any secrets."*<sup>141</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 1"**

Consequently, according to all municipalities, trust is seen as important. You should be open, and discuss why agreements were not followed. All cards should be put on the table and secrets are not desired, therefore honesty is essential. This importance of trust and honesty are important pillars in a collaborative negotiation strategy.

When it comes to the tactics the municipalities use there is also consensus, but with some variety when looking at the municipality which is categorized as a user of both strategies; "municipality of team players 2". Let us present some interesting quotes to prove the consensus. One of all similar answers was put like this:

*"For me it is very important to understand why my opponent is against me. Very often I ask questions like 'How do you think in that way? Can you explain? I do not understand how you think?' I really aim to put myself in the situation to understand why they do as they do. It might be something I have not had a thought of myself."*<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> "Alltså, allt sorts samarbete bygger på förtroende. Har man inte förtroende för varandra så kommer det krackelera förr eller senare. Det finns samarbete som har gått i sto också på att man inte kunnat haft förtroende."

<sup>141</sup> "Jag förväntar mig att dom håller den[överenskommelse]. Och kan man inte hålla den eller att det blir förändringar så är det viktigt att man håller en öppenhet, och en dialog pågående så att man kan styra utifrån de förändringarna... och det är samma inför en överkommelse; man lägger korten på bordet, det ska inte finnas några hemligheter."

<sup>142</sup> "För mig är det väldigt viktigt att förstå varför personen är emot mig. Jag ställer ofta frågor som 'Hur tänker du då? Kan du förklara? Jag förstår inte riktigt hur du tänker?' Jag vill gärna sätta mig in i varför personen gör som de

- **“Municipality of loners 1”**

If we refer back to the tactic used in a collaborative negotiation strategy, it should contain the importance of understanding and discussing. To clarify this prevailing consensus even further, this statement was also made:

*“You have to twist and turn things even if you feel that ‘...well, this is not really good.’ You go back another round and consider it one more time. Because even though you think that the purpose is good, maybe the solution is not good. Then you might come back with something creative so you together reach the aim and the goal.”<sup>143</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 2”**

Even here, discussions and creative solutions are advocated in case you do not agree in the first place. This corroborates that the collaborative negotiation strategy is used.

### 6.3.2 Competitive strategy

As discovered from the last section, the municipality that was a mixture of both a collaborative and a competitive user of negotiation strategy advocated the importance of honesty, but at the same time also expressed suspicion against other municipalities. The following quotation was a result of the answers that occurred when asking about what they think would happen if all four municipalities could not solve the question of where a new establishment would be set up.

*“...it would probably occur loads of tricks behind [each other’s] backs and that you ally [with others] in order to reach benefits... I think so... it is not that trustful.”<sup>144</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

The quotation above shows these suspicious perceptions against the other municipalities, giving signs of a competitive negotiation strategy, where suspicion about that the opponents want to maximize their own interests, is an important component. This argument was also made:

*“... I cannot say that we have a continuous, good and trustful relationship that makes us play with open cards, I do not think so... we do not play with open cards.”<sup>145</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

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gör. Det kanske är någonting jag inte har tänkt på.”

<sup>143</sup> ”Man måste vrida och vända på saker även om man tycker... Nja, detta är nog inte riktigt bra. Man går tillbaka en runda till och verkligen tänker till. För även om de tycker att vårt syfte är bra, men vår lösning inte är bra. Då kanske de kan komma tillbaka med något kreativt, så att man tillsammans når syftet och målet.”

<sup>144</sup> ”... det kommer säkert bli spel bakom ryggen [på varandra] och att man allierar sig kanske för att nå fördelar... det tror jag... så förtroendefullt är det ju inte.”

<sup>145</sup> ”... jag kan ju inte säga att vi har ett ständigt, gott och förtroendefullt förhållande som gör att vi spelar med öppna kort, det tror jag inte... vi spelar inte med öppna kort.”

Whether this municipality plays with open cards or not is not possible to extract from this quote, but the suspicion towards other parties and the belief that the opponents are dishonest is easily identified. This gives us further reasons to why this municipality is considered as a mixture of both a collaborative and a competitive strategy, since they both believe in openness and honesty, but at the same time show suspicion towards other municipalities.

### **6.3.3 Discussion**

As shown, only one of the four municipalities was not classified as a “pure” user of the collaborative negotiation strategy when considering attitudes and tactics. This entails that the reality looks different compared to the theoretical assumptions.

The theoretical assumption points out that the “municipality of loners” should use a competitive negotiation strategy. However, the reality looks completely different, in the sense that they instead use a collaborative negotiation strategy. On the other hand, “municipality of team players” should use a collaborative negotiation strategy for the theory to be valid. However, “municipality of team players 2” is categorized as a being a user of both negotiation strategies. Neither in this case, the theory comports with reality in the sense that only one municipality is categorized as a “pure” collaborative negotiator. Further, the “municipalities of loners” were both categorized as collaborative negotiators, completely the opposite from the theoretical assumption.

To conclude, when taking attitudes and tactics into consideration, the ability for joint action does not affect which negotiation strategy the municipalities use.

## **6.4 Relationship**

As discussed in the theory section of this thesis, relationship deals with the importance of relationships in negotiations. A short-term relationship is advocated in a competitive negotiation strategy and a long-term relationship is advocated in a collaborative negotiation strategy. Moreover, if quick solutions and the task itself are seen as important, municipalities are categorized as users of the competitive negotiation strategy. In contrast, if they instead treasure relationship, and see it as both task-oriented and social-oriented, municipalities are categorized as users of the collaborative negotiation strategy.

### **6.4.1 Collaborative strategy**

All the three municipalities that are categorized as users of a collaborative strategy when considering relationship agree that a good social relationship eases the negotiation:

*"...a social network between politicians is something that I believe is very important in order to be able to work professionally. I am totally convinced about that."*<sup>146</sup>

- **"Municipality of loners 2"**

This quotation shows that the municipality believes that a good relationship between the negotiators eases the negotiation in the sense that it enables the negotiators to act professionally. The same municipality further strengthened its position as a user of a collaborative negotiation strategy by stressing the importance of a good social environment when negotiating:

*"A negotiation should always end with a handshake. If you have not agreed, you should at least agree that you have not agreed. Then you have something to further build on."*<sup>147</sup>

- **"Municipality of loners 2"**

By saying that the negotiations should always end on good terms, because then you have something to further build on, also indicates their belief of that the relationship between negotiators is long lasting; entailing a collaborative negotiation strategy. To further strengthen the consensus among the municipalities that are categorized as collaborative negotiators, another municipality reasoned like this:

*"In order to have good cooperation, I believe that you have to know each other, because you cannot feel trust towards someone you do not know."*<sup>148</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 2"**

The importance of trust is established here, and the municipality argues that in order to be able to trust someone you need to have a relationship. The fact that the municipality considered the negotiation as something that should be social-oriented is clear. Another municipality continued with this kind of argument, that a social relationship eases the process, by saying that:

*"The negotiation would probably proceed easier [if you have a relation]. I guess it would be that way. Because then you would probably know how that person would have reasoned and then it would be easier to reach an agreement. People that you do not know at all and that you sit down at the negotiation table with, you might have to sound out a bit before in order to you know where they stand."*<sup>149</sup>

- **"Municipality of loners 1"**

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<sup>146</sup> "... ett kontaktnät rent socialt politiker emellan tror jag är jätteviktigt för att man ska kunna arbeta professionellt. Det är jag helt övertygad om."

<sup>147</sup> "En förhandling ska alltid sluta med ett handslag. Är man inte överens, så ska man ändå ha kommit överens om att man inte är överens. Då har man något att bygga vidare på."

<sup>148</sup> "För att få ett bra samarbete tror jag att man måste känna varandra, för du kan inte känna förtroende för någon du inte känner."

<sup>149</sup> "Förmodligen så skulle ju förhandlingen gå lättare [om man har en relation]. Det antar jag att den skulle göra. För då hade man ju känt till då kanske hur den personen hade resonerat och då hade det varit lättare att komma fram till en överenskommelse. Människor som man inte alls känner som man sätter sig vid förhandlingsbordet med måste man kanske känna på pulsen lite innan för att veta var de står."

This municipality advocates the importance of a social-oriented negotiation because it will result in a more effective negotiation if you know the other party and know their position right from the start.

### 6.4.2 Competitive strategy

The municipality which is categorized as a user of the competitive negotiation strategy argued like this:

*"It is like this in these small municipalities that we all know each other, but that does not have to mean that we always are pleasant. We are after all here on the behalf of our [municipal] citizens."*<sup>150</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 1"**

This is a clear statement stressing the importance of completing the task and further, there is no attention paid to foster the relationship between parties involved. These are attributes of competitive negotiators' view on relationship. The same municipality strengthened its position as a user of the competitive negotiation strategy by claiming that:

*"That is what a negotiation is all about. That I get as much out of the negotiation to my voters. That is how it works. It is like a business relationship."*<sup>151</sup>

- **"Municipality of team players 1"**

When stating that the relationship is like a business relationship is interpreted as seeing the relationship as merely task-oriented.

### 6.4.3 Discussion

Again, we can see that municipalities' ability for joint action does not affect which negotiation strategy they use when taking relationship into consideration. First of all, the negotiation strategies used by "team player municipalities" are different; one uses the collaborative negotiation strategy and the other uses the competitive negotiation strategy. For the theoretical assumptions to be valid, both "team player municipalities" should be categorized as collaborative negotiators. Municipalities with a weak ability for joint action should, as established in the theoretical approach, use a competitive negotiation strategy. However, both "loner municipalities" are categorized as collaborative negotiators. To conclude, municipalities' ability for joint action does not affect which negotiation strategy that is used when considering relationship.

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<sup>150</sup> "Det är ändå så i de små kommunerna att vi känner varandra, men det behöver inte betyda att vi alltid är trevliga. Vi sitter ju ändå på våra [kommun]medborgares uppdrag"

<sup>151</sup> "Det är ju det som en förhandling går ut på. Att jag ska få ut så mycket som möjligt av förhandlingen till mina väljare. Så fungerar det. Det är som en affärsrelation"

## 7. Empirical findings

Even if the answer to our specified question was negative, we still explored some interesting findings. This study has shown that it is not the organizational culture of these municipalities that affect which negotiation strategy they use. However, this research has detected the problematic situation that these municipalities operate in.

First of all, the municipalities agreed that they have to cooperate. There are several different reasons. As one municipality reasoned:

*“We feel that we can proceed further... if we do something together instead of that each of us struggle alone. We are too small municipalities. If we were a bigger municipality we would probably be able to live on our own qualifications... but I do not believe that we can.”<sup>152</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

The argument here shows that they are too small municipalities to struggle on alone and that they feel that they can do much more if they join forces. Another municipality continues with this kind of reasoning and gave further reasons to cooperate:

*“We need to cooperate in order to help one another. The government has also pushed us towards cooperation pretty hard since they do not distribute grants to projects unless we cooperate over the municipality border. So there is that pressure as well.”<sup>153</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 2”**

The reasoning here is that they also need to cooperate in order to receive grants from the government. Another reason to cooperate is because these small municipalities can become a force of influence if they cooperate:

*“An aspiration we have is to solve questions we have in common for us here, which are hard to get paid attention to alone from the government or from the EU. A very good example is the question to keep our beaches clean. Regarding this, we have a project called ‘Attractive shore’, an EU-project ...where we have been in the EU making some lobbying to get attention to this questions we have in common.”<sup>154</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 1”**

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<sup>152</sup>”Det är ju att vi känner att det går att komma någonstans.. längre om vi gör någonting tillsammans än om vi är var och en som trögar på här. Vi är för små våra kommuner. Om vi var en större kommun skulle vi nog kunna leva på egna meriter.. men det tror jag nog inte att vi kan.”

<sup>153</sup>”Att vi behöver samarbeta för att hjälpas åt. Sen har ju staten tryckt på ganska hårt nu också i och med att man inte delar ut bidrag till projekt osv. om man inte samarbetar över kommungränsen. De ställer sig negativa till ansökningen om man inte göra det. Så där har vi den påtryckningen också.”

<sup>154</sup>”En strävan vi har är att lösa speciella frågeställningar som är gemensamma för oss här uppe, som är svåra att få gehör för uppe i regeringen eller gentemot EU. Ett jättebra exempel är frågan om att hålla våra stränder rena. Där vi har drivit ett projekt som heter ”Attraktiv Kust”, ett EU-projekt, och vi har varit nere i EU och gjort lobbying för att uppmärksamma och sätta fart på denna fråga som vi har gemensamt.”

The fourth municipality agreed with the three other, that cooperation over the municipality borders is important, but put it a bit differently:

*“I believe that it [cooperation] is very important, I however believe that it shall be based on increasing the quality. I am as much interested in cooperating with Lerum as Munkedal if it is about the right things. We should not tie ourselves to the municipalities in Northern Bohuslän, I think it is a disadvantage that we do that. We isolate ourselves to a small corner of Northern Bohuslän, and that does not work.”<sup>155</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 1”**

This municipality believes that cooperation between municipalities is important, however, they argue that it should not necessarily be over the border lines, as long as it increases the quality of the municipalities. They further argue that it is a disadvantage that they isolate themselves to only cooperate with the municipalities in Northern Bohuslän. The fact that all the municipalities agreed on the fact that cooperation between municipalities is important has been presented from this discussion. However, at the same time that the municipalities advocated cooperation between the municipalities they also pointed out the problematic situation they operate in:

*“We work to administer our citizens’ collective assets. When we operate in the positions that we do, it is not ‘me’ who sits here but I play the part of representing my voters. And that is something you have to keep in mind at all times.”<sup>156</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 1”**

Even though the municipalities stressed the importance of cooperation and a “give and take” mentality, they at the same time have to act on behalf of their own municipal citizens and strive to satisfy their needs in the first place.

*“... the question of what matters. I think we would have had a hard time bargaining away for example a police station. I can say that for sure ... some questions are harder to bargain away ... but in general you have to think what’s best for Northern Bohuslän.”<sup>157</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 1”**

The municipality above also believes that it is important to cooperate and negotiate over the municipality borders but at the same time, they cannot bargain away everything. The municipality

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<sup>155</sup> Jag tror att det [samarbete] är väldigt viktigt, men jag tror också att det ska bygga på kvalitetshöjning. Jag är precis lika intresserad av att samarbeta med Lerum som Munkedal om det är rätt saker, vi ska inte binda oss till de fem kommunerna i Norra Bohuslän, det tycker jag är en nackdel att vi gör. Vi isolerar oss till ett litet hörn i Norra Bohuslän, det funkar inte..”

<sup>156</sup> ”Vi är satta för att förvalta våra invånarens gemensamma tillgångar. När man sätter sig i dom här positionerna som vi befinner oss så är det inte ” jag” som sitter här utan spelar ju en roll utifrån ett företrädandeskap. Och det måste man ha med sig hela tiden.”

<sup>157</sup> ”... det beror på vad det gäller. Jag tror vi skulle ha svårt att förhandla bort en polisstation till exempel. Det kan jag verkligen säga ... en del frågor är svårare att förhandla bort ... men generellt måste man tänka på vad som är bäst för Norra Bohuslän.”

below continues with the same kind of argument; that it is important to have an overall picture and to cooperate but at the same time it is a part of their job to work to benefit their own municipality:

*“Sometimes we maybe look too much to what is best for our own municipality. It is a part of our assignment. But that is why municipal cooperation is created today; to lift your gaze. But it is enormously hard. It is hard to have a very overall and objective picture.”<sup>158</sup>*

- **“Municipality of team players 2”**

The last municipality, when asked what they believe that the municipal cooperation had contributed to their municipality, said:

*“Yes... pretty much I guess. A lot of contacts and cooperation opportunities that we can continue with. Even though we, at the moment, believe that it focuses much on the sea. It is a lot of focus on the sea and the tourism. Very little giving back to our municipality. The municipalities we cooperate with have never achieved to turn their attention to our municipality ever. But at the same time I believe in the work model, I do!”<sup>159</sup>*

- **“Municipality of loners 2”**

The fact that this municipality does not border to the sea is important to mention in order to understand the quotation above. Again, the argument that cooperation over the borders is important is stated, but at the same time, when it does not give anything back to their own municipality, they become discontent.

The fact that the municipalities operate under a paradoxical situation where they balance between their need of cooperation and their need for thinking of what is best for their own municipality is clear. This can also be strengthened by the analytical scheme presented in section 6.1, where we categorized all the municipalities' negotiation strategy. There is no pattern on what strategy they use, but there is a mixed use of both the collaborative and the competitive negotiation strategy. This indicates that they do not know how to act in a negotiation situation across the municipality borders, without challenging the municipal democracy.

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<sup>158</sup>”Ibland blir det väl så att man kanske ser för mycket till sin egen kommuns bästa. Det ligger ju litegrand i uppdraget också. Men det är ju därför det idag bildas kommunalsamarbeten; för att lyfta blicken. Men det är ju oerhört svårt. Det är svårt att ha en sån där väldigt övergripande och objektiv bild.”

<sup>159</sup>”Ja... ganska mycket tror jag. Även om vi just nu tycker att det riktar sig mest bara mot hav. Det är väldigt mycket fokus på hav och turismen. Väldigt lite givande tillbaka till vår kommun. Våra samarbetskommuner har aldrig lyckats vända fokuset någon gång tillbaka till vår kommun. Men samtidigt tror jag på arbetsformen, det gör jag!”

## 8. Conclusion

As the analysis section showed, the attribute of organizational culture, the ability for joint action, does not affect the negotiation strategies used when municipalities negotiate and cooperate. Thus, to answer our specified question, *“Does the cultural attribute of organizational culture (ability for joint action) of the municipalities in “Tillväxt Bobuslän” affect negotiation strategy in a negotiation process?”*, the answer is no.

The aim of this thesis was to study if organizational culture affects the negotiation strategy used in a negotiation process between municipalities in Sweden. The aim has been fulfilled in the sense that we have studied the negotiation process between the municipalities and seen if the attribute of their organizational culture affects which negotiation strategy they use. Our findings show a very clear result; the assumptions tested are not valid. Having a strong ability for joint action, which should lead to a collaborative negotiation strategy, is not at all a prerequisite for having that negotiation strategy. We do not believe that our significantly clear result occurred by accident and it would be unrealistic with fully different results among other municipalities. Therefore, we believe that this study is able to generate valid results even when applied somewhere else. In that sense we have reached our aim when answering our specified question because the results can be generalized to other small municipalities in Sweden.

Although this thesis demonstrated a zero result, the ability for joint action does not affect negotiation strategy, some new interesting aspects were found. What this thesis has emphasized is the paradoxical situation that these municipalities operate in. They have to cooperate in order to survive, but at the same time they do not want to cooperate if it does not benefit their own municipality and they act competitive. This knowledge has been gained from this thesis.

As discussed in the literature review, previous scholars have mostly looked at three different forms of cooperation. The form which this thesis has focused on is the inter-organizational cooperation which occurs between organizations. We have in this thesis considered the cooperation which occurs between municipalities as inter-organizational; however, it has proven to be a bit more complicated than that. First of all, municipalities act under mandate from their voters, which is a part of the municipal democracy. Consequently, they have to take them into consideration when cooperating and negotiating across the municipality borders. Second, some municipalities have to cooperate across the borders due to for example economic reasons or regarding their emergency services. Other organizations do not have to take these issues into consideration. What this argument is trying to say is that organizations and municipalities are in

many ways similar, but at the same time completely different. The implication of this is that previous scholars might have missed a fourth important form of cooperation; inter-municipal cooperation.

Prior scholars of the municipal research have focused on municipal independence, democracy issues, economical aspects and cooperation within the municipalities. They have however forgotten that municipalities have to cooperate across the municipality borders. There are many aspects about the effectiveness of cooperation and negotiation *between* municipalities which at present time are yet unknown. Further, we argue that this field of research needs to adapt and be studied in a different manner. As the literature review showed, there are no thoroughly done research about the organizational culture and its effect on negotiations between municipalities. This is a gap in this field of research which is important to recognize and essential to fill.

More studies about specific municipal cooperation need to be done in order to identify other causal variables affecting the cooperation, foremost about municipalities' organizational culture and the effect that it has on the negotiation strategies the municipalities use. This is important to recognize, since the need to, and significance of cooperation seems to have increased. Due to this increase of the importance for municipalities to cooperate, negotiation constantly occurs. Consequently it is significant and, from what we have learned in this thesis, necessary to know how municipalities negotiate and what the reasons are for their negotiation strategy. New findings within this field might facilitate cooperation problems and detect cooperation problems before they occur by examining the organizational culture of municipalities and the effect on negotiation strategy in a negotiation process.

New questions that should be raised are for example to study how municipalities can balance the paradoxical situation they operate in. They have to become more collaborative when negotiating and cooperating across the municipality borders. The implication for politics is that more knowledge about this issue would ease the decision makers' situation in the municipalities; this by learning how to balance their situation and cooperate with other municipalities, without challenging the municipal democracy in which they operate.

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## Front page picture:

[http://www.google.se/imgres?imgurl=http://www.mynetresearch.com/Newsletters/Graphics/collaboration.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.mynetresearch.com/Newsletters/Newsletter9-14-08.htm&usq=\\_\\_3PAJmUW58o9-1A4p0-2T7wde0UM=&h=1050&w=1050&sz=108&hl=sv&start=4&zoom=1&tbnid=914kuMungGaZJM:&tbnh=150&tbnw=150&ei=5CrETdCUF4fQsgbt5\\_jIDw&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dcollaboration%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dsv%26sa%3DX%26rlz%3D1G1ASUT-SVSE430%26biw%3D1366%26bih%3D667%26tbn%3Disch&um=1&itbs=1](http://www.google.se/imgres?imgurl=http://www.mynetresearch.com/Newsletters/Graphics/collaboration.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.mynetresearch.com/Newsletters/Newsletter9-14-08.htm&usq=__3PAJmUW58o9-1A4p0-2T7wde0UM=&h=1050&w=1050&sz=108&hl=sv&start=4&zoom=1&tbnid=914kuMungGaZJM:&tbnh=150&tbnw=150&ei=5CrETdCUF4fQsgbt5_jIDw&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dcollaboration%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dsv%26sa%3DX%26rlz%3D1G1ASUT-SVSE430%26biw%3D1366%26bih%3D667%26tbn%3Disch&um=1&itbs=1) ,( 2011.05.06)

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## 10. Appendix

### Interview guide (Swedish)

Vilka förhandlar ni med?

Hur går förhandlingarna tillväga?

Hur går Ni tillväga inför en förhandling?

Vilka generella mål sätts upp inför och under en förhandling?

Vad förväntar ni av motparten i en förhandling? Vad motiverar i en förhandling?

Vilka är lättare/svårare att förhandla med? Varför? Vad är positivt/negativt?

Hur är förhandlingsklimatet?

Upplever du att alla kommuner är ärliga?

Vad är er relation till kommun X?

Har det någon gång hänt att Ni eller motparten i förhandlingen lämnat bordet? Varför?

Hur brukar förhandlingarna sluta?

Hur viktigt är samarbete för X- kommun?

Vad har ”Tillväxt Bohuslän” gett er kommun?

Hur tror du framtiden för ”Tillväxt Bohuslän” ser ut?

**Scenario 1:** Det har beslutats att en ny gymnasieskola skall byggas i regionen. I vilken kommun är dock fortfarande oklart. Baserat på dina upplevelser gällande liknande projekt, hur ser förhandlingen ut?

**Scenario 2:** Vid ena sidan av förhandlingsbordet sitter du och på andra sidan av bordet sitter en som du har en relation med. Hur påverkar det synen på förhandlingen?

- Hur skulle det påverka sättet att förhandla?
- Skulle generella målsättningar eller motivation ändras?

**Scenario 3:** Låt oss säga att Ni och en annan kommun kommer överens i ett beslut. Din kommun får av detta beslut mest förmåner, men det vore bättre för regionen i stort ( tex. samarbetskommunerna) om den andra parten i förhandlingen istället fick det. Hur skulle förhandlingen sluta?

### **Interview guide(English translation)**

With whom do you negotiate?

How do the negotiations proceed?

How do you proceed prior to a negotiation?

What general goals are set up before and during a negotiation?

What do you expect from the counterpart in a negotiation? What motivates you?

Which municipalities are harder/easier to negotiate with? What is positive/negative?

How is the negotiation climate?

Do you perceive that all municipalities are honest?

What is your relation to municipality X?

Have you or the counterpart "left the negotiation table", that is refused a decision? Why?

How do the negotiations usually end?

How important is cooperation for X-municipality?

What has "Tillväxt Bohuslän" contributed to your municipality?

What do you think about the future of "Tillväxt Bohuslän"?

**Scenario 1:**

It has been decided that a new upper secondary school will be established in the region of Northern Bohuslän. The accurate location is not yet decided though. Based on earlier experiences of similar establishments, how would the negotiation proceed?

**Scenario 2:**

You are sitting at one side of the negotiation table and your counterpart on the other. You have a good relation to the counterpart. How does this relationship change your view on the negotiation?

- How would that affect the way of negotiation?
- Would general goals or motivation change?

**Scenario 3:**

Imagine you and another municipality agree on a decision. Your municipality would benefit the most from it, but it would be better for the region (the cooperation municipalities) if the counterpart instead got it. How would the negotiation end?