

Paper for the PhD Master Class (30.4.2007)

Marie Curie European Summer School on Earth System Governance

Annukka Berg, M.Soc.Sc

University of Helsinki, Department of Social Policy, Environmental Policy

annukka.berg@helsinki.fi

European Forerunners of Sustainable Consumption and Production Programmes - Challenges and possibilities in an emerging environmental policy field

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the idea, preliminary results and future plans of my PhD project. The work has been started full-time in May 2006 and the plan is to complete it in four years. As a big part of the material is still to be analysed, there is plenty of room for changes as regards e.g. theories and methods. Therefore, I would be grateful for all kinds of comments. Of particular interest would be the views about the idea to compare the three pioneering SCP programmes and their implementation on descriptive level and to analyze more in-depth the case of Finland.

The topic of my PhD project is sustainable consumption and production (SCP). It is a broad field of environmental governance that has emerged particularly after *Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development* in 2002. In Johannesburg, countries agreed to promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national SCP initiatives. The responsibility to take the lead was given to the developed countries.¹

Some forerunning countries have already drawn up their national SCP programmes. This PhD research project focuses on three European pioneers, *Finland, Sweden and UK*. It analyses and compares the *themes, actors and policy tools* taken up in the context of SCP. In addition, the case of Finland is analysed more in depth by using deliberative policy process analysis. Here, *discourses, dramaturgy and deliberation* stand at the core of the analysis. The aim is to learn about the possibilities and challenges there exist for successful SCP policies not only in the chosen case countries but also in the industrialised world in general.

The structure of the article is the following: In the following chapter (2), I introduce the policy field of sustainable consumption and production. In chapter (3), two different angles of analysis, deliberative policy process analysis and comparative perspective, are taken up. Meanwhile, chapter (4) describes the research material, the programmes and the interviews. An analysis of the materials is conducted in chapters (5) and (6) and the results are summarised in chapter (7).

¹ Johannesburg Plan of Implementation 2002, Chapter III, articles 14–19

2 Sustainable consumption and production and the pioneering countries

2.1 The concept and international process of sustainable consumption and production

The concept of sustainable consumption and production has been on the international agenda since the early 1990s. However, practical tools and methods for implementation are only now evolving. The Rio Summit² represented a watershed in the international community's way of thinking on environment and the focus of environmental policy was shifted from the mere production to consumption and production. In Johannesburg Summit, the development and promotion of a 10-year framework of programmes (10 YFP) was agreed. The actions outlined included the development of policy tools and measures, awareness-raising programmes, monitoring mechanisms and technology transfer.

Progress in developing the framework is taking place on international, regional and national levels. On national level, some countries such as Finland, Sweden and the UK have already drawn up their SCP programmes and also EU is going to present a first draft of its SCP action plan in 2007. Meanwhile, the international process is heading towards the 2010 and 2011 meetings of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development where a proposal for 10YFP will be presented and reviewed.

2.2. Finland, Sweden and UK from the sustainability perspective

Finland, Sweden and UK are the case countries of this study. They are not only forerunners in making national sustainable consumption and production programmes but also countries with long tradition in strong stakeholder involvement and strategic thinking in (ecologically) sustainable development³. While Finland and Sweden have usually been categorised as Nordic welfare states where government involvement and planning traditionally play central roles, UK is said to have taken pride in "muddling through" environmental challenges⁴. Times have, however, been changing and for example Finland has during its years in EU⁵ changed its environmentally proactive policy style more toward pragmatic realism⁶.

If we look at some international environmental rankings they give a bit ambiguous picture about where Finland, Sweden and UK stand in terms of sustainability. In the latest Environmental Sustainability Index⁷, Finland ranked

² The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 1992

³ Niestroy 2005, 105, 253, 257

⁴ According to Jordan & al. (2003a, 181) voluntarism, discretion and practicability were the words that were used to characterise British environmental policy particularly during the 1970s and 1980s.

⁵ From the year 1995 onwards

⁶ Sairinen 2003, 73–77

⁷ The Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) aims to benchmark the ability of nations to protect the environment over the next several decades. It does so by integrating 76 data sets – tracking natural resource endowments, past and present pollution levels, environmental management efforts, and the capacity of a society to improve its environmental performance – into 21 indicators of environmental sustainability. Esty et al. 2005

first, while Sweden was fourth and UK 65th. On the other hand, the latest Ecological Footprint estimates⁸ show Finland having the third biggest footprint in the world, while Sweden is 8th and UK holds the 14th position.

In this study, the reason for choosing Finland, Sweden and UK is not only based on the interesting features of their country profiles but also on their active role in international SCP circles. Actually it was these three countries⁹ that were among the initiators of Johannesburg's SCP provisions and they have also retained their active position in the UN by e.g. leading the international Task Forces on different themes central to SCP¹⁰. The high profile in SCP discussion means that the practices and policies these countries manage to develop on national level might be spread also to wider circles.

2.3 The SCP programmes of the pioneering countries

Finland: Getting more and better from less

In Finland, the working process for national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production began in November 2003 and it was concluded in June 2005. The task was to “prepare for the Council of State a proposal for a programme on ecologically, socially and economically sustainable manners of production and consumption”¹¹. The process was lead by the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). A committee was set up to do the job.

The making of the programme was *broadly participative*. During the one and a half years of work, there were 38 persons who participated to the work either as Committee or Secretary members or as permanent experts. In addition, almost 50 specialists contributed to the work in the hearings or working groups. The members represented various ministries but also other stakeholders of SCP such as business and industry, labour unions, environmental organizations and research institutes.¹²

The finalised paper “Getting more and better from less – Proposals for Finland’s national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production” was *unanimously accepted* in June 2005. It includes a vision until the year 2025 as well as goals and action points for 11 fields that were considered important in promoting SCP. There are 73 action points introducing in total 93 *proposals*. Some examples of the proposals are establishing a material efficiency service centre, defining long-term policy guidelines to reshape the taxation system and initiating material- and energy efficiency dialogues. Almost a year after the programme had been published, the

⁸ The Ecological Footprint measures humanity’s demand on the biosphere in terms of the area of biologically productive land and sea required to provide the resources we use and to absorb our waste. The Footprint is estimated per person and by country. Living Planet Report 2006, 14

⁹ Accompanied by Denmark, Honkasalo 11.10.2006

¹⁰ 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production: The Marrakech Process 2006

¹¹ Ympäristöministeriö 2003

¹² Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon toimikunta (KULTU) 2005; Nikula 2006

Government of Finland discussed the outcomes of the SCP programme in one of its informal meeting and decided to start negotiations on financial support for a material efficiency service centre.¹³

Sweden: Think twice!

In Sweden there has been work going on for *two separate parts* of a national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production. The first part is about household consumption and it was published and presented to the Parliament of Sweden in the spring 2006. “Think twice! – An action plan for sustainable household consumption” was written by the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. The preparation work was conducted by the *Ministry and an inter-departmental working group* that consisted of representatives from basically all ministries.

After a ministerial memorandum on the topic was finalised, it was sent for a stakeholder *consultation* for three months. Among the stakeholders were, for example, different official bodies, trade unions, NGOs, communities and regional authorities. After the consultation, the programme was re-written and sent to the Parliament for approval.

The approved SCP programme contains 55 points for action. However, only 17 of the proposals can be categorised as clearly new meanwhile 38 of them relate to policies that are already in process. The new provisions include deciding on regulation for the energy efficiency of housing, making an inquiry about individual recordings of hot running water and electricity, and hosting a recurring Forum on Sustainable Household Consumption

UK: Changing Patterns & One Planet Economy

The SCP policy of UK consists of two parts. First there is “Changing Patterns – UK Government Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production” that was co-published by Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2003. Changing Patterns is – as its name already reveals – a *framework*. It contains background text about the scientific, political and market context where the SCP policy takes place and informs the reader about Government’s SCP relevant action under way. The politically most important part of the paper is the Next Steps chapter where some 20 proposals for action are proposed.

The second part of UK’s SCP programme consists of the sustainable consumption and production *chapter* “One Planet Economy” of *UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)*¹⁴. Meanwhile Changing Patterns is more like a report of the Government on SCP, the preparation process of the SDS included substantial input from different stakeholders. The consultation took place in 2004 and a wide range of consultation mechanisms were especially designed and used to engage with stakeholders at all levels¹⁵.

¹³ Valtioneuvoston Viikko 2006

¹⁴ HM Government 2005

¹⁵ Government’s Sustainable Development Unit 2004

However, despite the emphasis on participative preparation process, the level of novel proposals in One Planet Economy is lower than in Changing Patterns. It makes some 12 commitments that on the basis of reading the strategy text can be interpreted as clearly new. In total, the new provisions of UK's SCP programme include Sustainable Consumption and Production Business Task Force¹⁶, a new Sustainable Design Forum¹⁷, and a proposal to develop a Trade Union Sustainability Strategy.

3 Deliberative policy process analysis and the comparative perspective

3.1 Comparison of the SCP programmes

As regards the *SCP programmes* presented above, my aim has been to find some of their relevant provisions and to compare them. I have tried to find the special character of the programmes by analysing their important themes, actors and policy tools. The idea is that the provisions each country takes up in its SCP programme reveal something important about the way the topic is politically defined and approached.

The comparisons have been made by asking the following questions:

- (i) What *themes, actors and responsibilities* each SCP programme emphasises? What things stand out from the tables of contents, titles, forewords, summaries and the programme texts? Who is expected to do what, when and with what resources?
- (ii) What are the *policy tools* the programme takes up? Using the categories provided by Jordan & al. (eds) (2003), what are the shares of (1) regulatory tools, (2) market-based instruments (MBIs), (3) voluntary agreements (VAs), (4) informational devices, and (5) organisational arrangements?

In the future, the aim is to deepen the analysis of the SCP programmes by using expert and *stakeholder interviews*. In Finland, the interviews have already been conducted and the plan is to realise them within a year in Sweden and UK. The idea is that the interviews will help in reading between the lines of the programmes and also in learning about their implementation. Still, the comparative analysis of the three SCP programmes and their follow-up is, and will be, rather factual and superficial. The more thorough, constructivism-orientated analysis will be made only about Finland's SCP process. The deliberative policy process analysis used for the purpose will be described in the following.

3.2 Deliberative policy process analysis

Maarten Hajer¹⁸ has stated that today's world is full of situations where decisions are made in networks marked by *unclear rules* as to how to arrive to a legitimate decision. In the policy making process of Finland's SCP

¹⁶ The Task Force will be resourced to develop ideas for practical action on key aspects of sustainable consumption and production.

¹⁷ The idea of Sustainable Design Forum is to champion and educate in eco-design, and promote best practice tools and approaches that can be adopted by designers.

¹⁸ Hajer 2005

Committee, deliberation took place in a network of 38 stakeholders. My aim is to take a close look at this process and its context and – in that way – complete the broad but more superficial picture got from the comparisons of the SCP programmes and their implementation. The method used is called deliberative policy process analysis.

Hajer¹⁹ has noted that e.g. the mere participation to a network often does not lead to authentic exchange of views. Thus, if we want to know what a policy process is all about we need to look closer at the practices, mediations and languages of the situations where participation takes place. Hajer suggests that particularly three dimensions of a policy process should be considered: *discourses, dramaturgy and deliberation*. In practice, this means asking more “how” than “what” questions and evaluating e.g. the deliberation by using the angles of access, exchange, learning and commitment in the analysis.

Discourses refer to markers, structures and patterns in a discussion. In other words, “(d)iscourse is an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations through which meaning is allocated to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced in an identifiable set of practices”²⁰. The concept of discourse and the methods for making discourse analysis are both well-established so they form a firm ground to rely on.

On the other hand, to be able to use the concepts of dramaturgy and deliberation I have tried to elaborate them a bit. Putting things as simple as possible, my understanding is that dramaturgy refers to the structures and players of a process in different times. As dramaturgy is the context where interaction takes place, discourses can be seen also as a part of it. Meanwhile, deliberation happens within these structures and among the players. Moreover, the concept of performance refers to the whole process as understood by the characters.

In the Figure 1, I have tried to visualize the *dimensions of dramaturgy* in a policy process. Setting is the physical situation and scripting refers to the characters that are brought to place to interact. Staging means the way the interaction is organized in different situations and over time. The field where the interactive performance takes place is discursive. Thus, the quality of deliberation is dependent on both the dimensions of dramaturgy and the understandings of the performance itself that – again – might affect the dramaturgy and produce new social realities.

¹⁹ Hajer 2003, 179 - 190

²⁰ Hajer 2005, 448

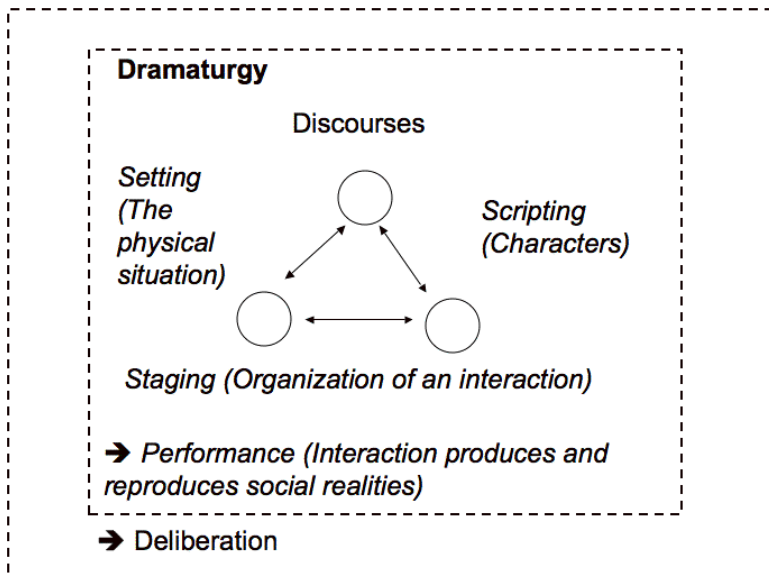


Figure 1: The dimensions of dramaturgy

With *deliberation*, Hajer²¹ refers here to the *democratic quality* of a discussion. According to him, deliberation can be analysed by focusing attention on several points of the process. I have grouped those concepts together and taken into the model some new ones. Figure 2 visualizes the results, the four dimensions of deliberation. Although the dimensions of deliberation are pictured here as happening neatly one after the other, in reality they take place simultaneously.

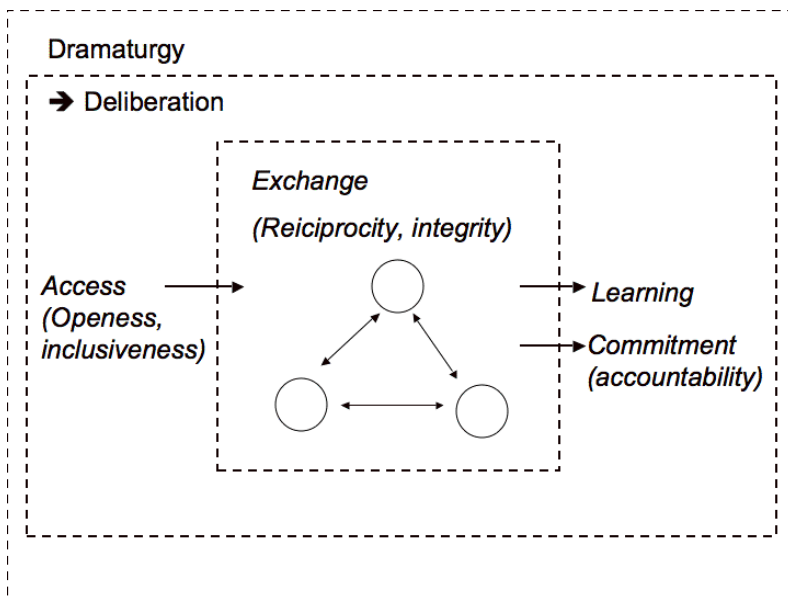


Figure 2: The dimensions of deliberation

When the democratic performance of deliberation is considered, access is the first aspect to be evaluated. Here, it is important to pay attention to the openness and inclusiveness of the process. That means seeing that there are no unnecessary barriers present and that everyone with a stake can have a say. In the actual exchange or dialogue, reciprocity and integrity are the aspects to be evaluated. This means that in the argumentative exchange, the

²¹ Hajer 2005, 250

arguments of all sides are heard and responded to. In this process, honesty is required. What the exchange might yield is learning and possibly commitments to the process at hand. The extent to which learning is happening and commitments are made could be one criterion for evaluation.

4 Research materials: programme texts & focused interviews

In my PhD project, two kinds of research material have been and will be used. First of all, I have studied meticulously the *national SCP programmes* that were already described above. They have been analysed qualitatively in terms of themes and actors and quantitatively as regards the policy tools. Secondly, research material gathered by *focused interviews* has been used for getting a picture about the SCP policy process of Finland. In the near future, the aim is to conduct focused interviews also in UK (in June 2007) and Sweden (in autumn/winter 2007/2008) to get a better picture about their programmes.

When it comes to SCP programmes as research material in comparative analysis, one problem is clearly that the SCP programmes of Finland, Sweden and UK are *different as regards their scope and status*. As Finland's paper includes "proposals for national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production" Sweden has an "action plan for sustainable household consumption". Meanwhile, UK's programme consists of two parts, of a Government framework and a chapter of the national sustainable development strategy.

Also interviews made in different countries will be only partly congruent. In Sweden and UK, the aim is to conduct just 5–10 interviews with stakeholders central to the SCP policies. In the interviews, the idea is to concentrate on the *evaluation of the programmes and their implementation*. Meanwhile, in Finland I have already conducted 20 *focused interviews* with the members of the SCP Committee, its Secretariat and permanent experts.²² In these interviews, the focus has been broad. In addition to evaluating the programme and its implementation the aim has also been to get a better picture about the *policy making process* and the *discursive field* where the deliberative policy process takes place.

In Finland, *four themes* have been dealt with in the interviews: the SCP policy process and participation, the content of the SCP programme, its implementation and the general politics of SCP. Apart from the three first ones, the interviews were mainly conducted more than one and a half years after the end of the SCP Process.²³ The choice of the interviewees was made by trying to pick the most *active and influential members* while retaining the balance of the group. The plan is to make full transcriptions of the interviews and to analyse them. Here, however, only the *preliminary analysis* is provided on the basis of the interview notes.

²² As there were 38 persons who participated to the Committee work, the sample is approximately half of the whole group.

²³ The discussions took mainly place between the end of January 2007 and the mid-March 2007. The length of the interviews varied from approximately one hour to two hours.

5 Comparing pioneering SCP programmes

5.1 Programme texts is focus

For the first sight, the SCP programmes of Finland, Sweden and UK resemble each other in many ways. One of the clearest similarities is the strong adoption of *common principles* such as life-cycle thinking, co-operation with the market, stakeholder participation and the use of different policy tools. In addition, the view that *mobility, housing and food* are the three biggest contributors to unsustainable patterns of consumption is widely shared in all three programmes.

As regards the positive notions, it can be stated that all compared countries have their *innovative provisions*. On the other hand, they also seem to have many weaknesses in common. As regards social sustainability, Finland and Sweden are clearly more socially sensitive than UK but the angle remains rather weak in all the programmes. The most severe problem in common is, however, the *level of concreteness*. Particularly the programme of Finland lacks timetables and priorities and also the new proposals of Sweden and UK fall short of funding and guidelines for implementation. This can be seen to be due to the fact that SCP is a new field. Still, more concrete programmes would have had better changes to be well implemented.

Focuses: research in Finland, consumers in Sweden, business in UK

Some of the clearest results of this study are the *differences of focus* in the compared SCP programmes. What was found out in the analysis was that whereas in Finland's SCP programme there is an emphasis on research and negotiation, Sweden's action plan relies on consumers' sustainable choices and Government's support for them. Meanwhile, the programme of UK focuses on business. It speaks clear language about Government's leadership but in realising this task business stands as a close co-operation partner.

"Meeting the long-term challenges of sustainability is not possible with today's levels of technology. More progressive technologies are needed, together with new types of services and other innovations that increase energy- and material efficiency."

- Getting more and better from less (FIN), p. 18

Above, the example taken from Finland's programme is interesting as it says very clearly that SCP won't be even possible if technology is not developed further. Finland is also the only country that has taken technology up to the level of chapter titles²⁴. Also the name of the programme "Getting more and better from less" can be seen to reflect the efficiency principle often associated with environmentally friendly technology. In the same way, the name of the Sweden's SCP strategy "Think twice!" emphasises consumers' role and responsibility. The Swedish viewpoint – one that seems to be a bit critical towards the reforms of technology and economy – can be read from the following example:

²⁴ The chapter 11 of the Finnish programme is called Technology and innovation for sustainability.

“As for the utilisation of natural resources, e.g. to heat houses, technological development has brought with it several gains, including some with respect to energy consumption. - - The increased consumption space has to a large degree been used for increased unsustainable consumption, which counteracts sustainable development.”

- Think twice! (SWE), p. 4

Actors: responsibilities in policy process and implementation

As already the analysis above shows, different countries have interestingly brought forward various sectors or actors of society that they think should play an important role in solving SCP related problems. The concreteness of the Finnish SCP programme was extraordinary good as regards the definition of different actors that should bear responsibility in *implementing* the programme. The implementation was designed to be participative also for actors beyond the government: In a majority, 60 %, of the action points presented by Finland, there was at least one non-governmental actor mentioned as a party involved in implementation.

In UK and Sweden, implementation was not designed in the same way. In these countries, it seemed that the Governments still wanted to show they were in a leading position:

“The UK government is determined to take a lead in tackling these damaging impacts. Our actions, at home and abroad, must strengthen the synergies between our economic, environmental and social agendas.”

- Changing Patterns (UK), p. 3

The role of *business* in SCP programmes varied a bit from one country to another, but it had the biggest role in UK 's programme and the smallest one in Sweden. Actually the style of UK's programme texts with serious looking graphs, proposal for SCP Business Task Force, and a four page long attachment about the Role of Business in Sustainable Development made the package look as if it would have been especially made to inspire business.

When the programmes dealt with the responsibilities of implementing SCP programmes, one of the most interesting aspects was the role of *citizens and consumers*. In Sweden, the task to understand consumption was taken seriously. The following quote clarifies the Swedish standpoint that includes also a broad socioeconomic analysis:

“Our consumption patterns are integrated with, and develop in accordance with, the infrastructural, technical, cultural, historical, geographical and socioeconomic conditions that apply in the society in which we live.”

- Think twice! (SWE), p. 6–7

On the contrary to Finland and also to some extent UK, Sweden's attitude towards SCP seemed to be that we already know enough - now it's time to take action. This was shown e.g. by the 38 action points presented in the programme that were already in process. Still, none of the SCP programmes could be labelled as a really radical

one. Rather, the programmes analysed here reflect the fact that the SCP process is still in its beginning. A summary of the main findings of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: A summary of the analysis of the SCP programme texts: The main focuses and most important actors in the programmes of Finland, Sweden and UK.

Countries	<i>The main focus</i> of the programme	The most important actors in <i>making</i> the programme	The most important actors in <i>implementing</i> the programme
Finland	Research and technology; cooperation	The preparation committee with members from ministries and stakeholder groups	Different ministries but also a wide range of stakeholders
Sweden	Consumption	Government	Government and consumers
UK	Economy and business	Government but also widely consulted stakeholders	Government and business

Policy tools: Informational devices top the ranking, regulation at the bottom

The variety and shares of different policy tools proposed in each SCP programme were found out by categorising them. Here, I used the fivefold typology of Jordan & al. (eds.) (2003) that includes (1) regulatory instruments, (2) market-based instruments (MBIs), (3) voluntary agreements (VAs), (4) informational devices and (5) institutional arrangements. It is important to notice that a policy proposal may belong to more than one category. For example, proposals for studies on ecological tax reform have been categorised both as MBIs and informational devices.

In general, the most important categories of the analysis are MBIs, VAs and informational devices. The category of MBIs comprises all the political promotion of SCP by using market mechanism as a tool. It includes a broad scale of instruments from congestion charges to public procurement of clean technologies. Meanwhile, as VAs have been categorised tools that use voluntary schemes and cooperation as the means to make difference. Some examples of this category include recommendations for environmental standards at workplace and promotion of regional co-operation in planning. Moreover, informational devices refer to production and delivery of information as means to make change. Under this category belong research & development projects, promotion of ecological labelling and standards as well as environmental education.

As research material served the proposals for new SCP related action provided in each programme. The quantities of these action points were the following²⁵: Finland 93, Sweden 17, UK 32 (20 in Changing Patterns, 12 in One Planet Economy). A summary of the results of the policy tools' analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: A summary of the results of the policy tools' analysis: The total number of new proposals in each SCP programme and the quantitative and percentage shares of different policy tool categories.

Country	Total no. proposals	Regulation	MBIs	VAs	Informational devices	Institutional arrangements	Other/No tools
Finland	%	0	25	17	47	2	25
	93	0	23	16	44	2	23
Sweden	%	6	12	0	65	6	12
	17	1	2	0	11	1	2
UK	%	6	22	9	16	9	38
	32	2	7	3	5	3	12

MBIs = market-based instruments; VAs=voluntary agreements

When analysing the policy tools, it soon became clear that *informational devices* were the most popular ones of the different tools suggested. In the programme of Finland, 44 proposals, that means nearly a half, contained at least one reference to informational devices. In the case of Sweden and UK, the percentage shares were 65 % and 16 % respectively.

The results above can be interpreted as telling that the pioneering SCP programmes define the lack of information and communication as one of the biggest problems in the field. Following this logic, the next important things would be getting the market work in a sustainable way and making voluntary schemes within and between different sectors a high priority. For example, in the Finnish SCP programme *market-based instruments* were mentioned at least 23 times. This means that more than a quarter of the proposals had something to do with using market as a tool. To compare, Finland has far more emphasis on market than Sweden that suggests MBIs in 12 % of the proposals. In UK's programme, market related instruments are almost as popular as in Finland and the share of them is as big as 22 %.

The special character of each SCP programme might have influenced the policy tools suggested. One of the most surprising results of the analysis is, however, that among Finland's 93 SCP action points, there is not even one proposal for traditional *governmental regulation*. In the cases of Sweden and UK, the situation is not much different. Although it is difficult to find clear answer to the absence of regulation from the programmes, the following quote might explain the general ambient:

²⁵ The number of proposals that were categorised could not been directly seen from the programmes as among the 55 action points presented by Sweden the majority was already in process and therefore ineligible for the analysis. Meanwhile in the case of Finland, 93 proposals for new action could be found from the list of 73 action points.

” - - although Government regulation has a clear and vital role to play in ensuring that markets operate efficiently excessive and unnecessary regulation can obstruct efficient functioning of the market.”

- Changing Patterns (UK), p. 24

5.2 Follow-up of the pioneering SCP programmes and their implementation

Later on, an analysis will be made on how SCP policies have been implemented. Here, the SCP programmes of Finland, Sweden and UK will be analysed once again. In practise, making of the analysis includes follow-up of the programmes by interviewing SCP experts and stakeholders and getting familiar with the material provided by the responsible authorities of each country. Some important questions to be answered include the following: What policy proposals and tools have been well implemented? What actors have done their share? In which fields the implementation has been effective and which fields are lagging behind?

6 Deliberative policy process analysis and Finland’s SCP programme

In the context of a PhD project, it is difficult to get in-depth knowledge about the context of three different policy programmes. To be able to gain even some understanding about the challenges that exist when making policies on sustainable consumption and production, I have chosen to take Finland as a case country that will be analysed more in detail. The working of Finland’s SCP Committee and the social context for making SCP policies have been studied by interviewing the Committee members, its Secretariat and permanent experts. As a framework, I have used deliberative policy process analysis where the theoretical angles of discourse, dramaturgy and deliberation play central roles.

6.1 SCP discourses as a context for policy-making

Maarten Hajer²⁶ defines discourses as specific ensembles of *ideas, concepts, and categorizations* that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities. Thus, discourse analysis can be seen as a possibility for getting a *holistic picture* of a policy field, the socially defined challenges and possibilities that lay within. When analysing discourses related to sustainable consumption and production, interesting questions include the following: How the concept is defined? What topics, actors and policy tools are considered important? What seems less important or irrelevant from the actors’ point of view?

The 20 interviews about the SCP programme and politics in Finland seem like fruitful material for analysing discourses. They make up the main research material to be studied. In addition, it is possible to track discourses from the Finnish SCP programme text. In the study, the focus will be in understanding the discursive heterogeneity and its roots in sustainable consumption and production. What we actually talk about when we

²⁶Hajer 2005, 448

discuss SCP, its problems and the ways to meet these challenges? It is likely that the analysis will reveal some interesting hegemonic SCP discourses as well as discursive conflicts.

6.2 Dimensions of dramaturgy

Deliberative policy process analysis encourages us to look at the strategic games on the micro level of policy making. In this case, it is challenging as the material got about the process is to a large extent interviews conducted one and a half years after the process ended. In the theory chapter above, I developed a model for analysing the dimensions of dramaturgy in a policy making process. Among the dimensions mentioned are: scripting, staging, setting and discourses. Of these dimensions, scripting and staging will be dealt more in detail in the following.

Staging: organization of the interaction

With staging, Hajer ²⁷ refers to the “deliberate *organization of an interaction*, drawing on existing symbols and the invention of new ones, as well as to the distinction between active players and (presumably passive) audience”. From this perspective, there were basically two things that awoke discussion in the interviews: the meaningfulness of the expert presentations and the character of the discussions among the Committee.

Finland’s SCP Committee assembled 23 times. The meetings took usually place in the Ministry of the Environment but there were also some special sessions organized outside the ordinary venues. There were at least 37 expert presentations given during the working of the Committee. The majority of them were given during the first year of the working of the SCP Committee when the meetings usually began with hearings.

While it was a very widely shared opinion that the *beginning* of the SCP policy making process was somehow “*slow*”, the attitude towards expert presentations varied. While some felt that they had learned from the presentations, others were sceptical and doubted the balance of the experts. Some also thought that the expert inputs were not connected to the general discussions and that there would have been the need to change the hearings to more dialogical settings. What was clear, as well, was that the staging in expert hearings made the Committee members an audience and some of the members experienced this as an odd situation.

If discussions were thought by some to be the best part of the process many also criticized them. Even though it was viewed positively that everybody had the chance to get his or her voice heard many were frustrated about the old *polarized discussions* that took place in the meetings. Many felt that everybody just said what they were expected to say in their position. New information, good arguments and the methods of deliberation used were not able to move the frontiers.

²⁷ Hajer 2005, 449

If we try to sum up the important features of Finland's SCP process from the perspective of staging, *intensive, demanding, time-consuming but rewarding* were the adjectives commonly used to describe the process. The process was intensified particularly towards the end as the Chair was not willing to postpone the deadline given to the Committee. In addition, several actors - The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation at the forefront - were considering leaving dissenting opinions to the programme text. However, the Chair appealed to the Committee and negotiated with the members that no dissenting opinions would be left. Still, one and a half years after the end of the process there were still some interviewees who would have preferred that dissenting opinions would have been allowed in.

Scripting: characters and cues for appropriate behaviour

Hajer²⁸ defines scripting as “those efforts to create a setting by determining the *characters in the play* - - and to provide cues for *appropriate behaviour*”. In the SCP Process, the characters of the play were chosen when the leading Ministries MoE and MTI were contacting the participating organizations and asked them to name their representatives. The Committee members, its Secretariat and permanent experts formed a group of 38 people. Approximately 40 % of them came from and 60 % beyond the Government. There were 8 representatives from the organizations of business, industry and farming, 5 from the environmental and consumer non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 3 people representing research institutes.

In the interviews, the *widely-based structure* of the Committee was perceived both as a weakness and as a strength. Its strength was the ability to reflect various viewpoints and to bring more input into the process. At the same time, among its weaknesses were the heterogeneity of opinions and contradicting viewpoints that made it difficult for the Committee to take any bigger steps.

How were the dynamics of working in the SCP Committee? In the process, the task taken particularly by the environmental NGOs was to try to make *progress* in the field of sustainable consumption and production. Meanwhile, the role business and industry had taken for themselves – and this was also explicitly told in the interviews – was to *hinder radical changes*. Thus, this tension between progressive and conservative forces was a central part of the dynamics in the Committee. Of the actors, the Ministry of Finance was the one that was commonly seen as having *most power*. As it was also a part of the more conservative forces, the chances of the progressive ones were rather limited.

When scripting a political performance, the *role of the chair* is an important one. Also in the SCP Process, the positively perceived role taken by the Chancellor of the University of Helsinki, Kari Raivio, was often spontaneously mentioned in the interviews. It was seen as a good thing that the Chair came from outside the SCP circles and from a high position. His approach was described as balanced, neutral, precise and progressive. He spurred the Committee to negotiate, find compromises and reach consensus. His character was seen as eminent

²⁸ Hajer 2005, 449

which made the Committee members involved try to find better arguments and ways to negotiate a commonly acceptable paper.

6.3 Dimensions of Deliberation in the SCP Process

According to Hajer²⁹, deliberation refers to the “*democratic quality of a discussion*” and the point of a proper deliberation is to allow people to transform pre-given opinions into new preferences in a collective exchange. In this chapter, I’ll look the deliberation by using four angles sketched previously in this paper. These dimensions of deliberation are: (1) access, (2) exchange, (3) learning and (4) commitment.

Inclusive and open access

With inclusiveness Hajer³⁰ means that in debates it is required that *stakeholders are made part* of the argumentative exchange. Meanwhile, with openness it is emphasized that the way in which the debate is staged and conducted must *avoid unnecessary barriers*. With the term access, I have referred to the both of these qualities.

As regards access in the SCP Committee, the story most commonly told in the interviews regarded its working as *inclusive and open*. However, the members with affiliation to the *social sector* saw that their branch was poorly present. While there were three representatives from environmental NGOs, there was not a single representative from e.g. welfare or health organizations.

Although the distribution of power varied among the members, everybody had their chance to speak out. According to the interviewees, there were no unnecessary barriers related e.g. to knowledge or language that would have hindered the participation. Different thing was, however, what kind of consequences the speak acts of different players had. As was mentioned when the scripting of the process was analyzed, it was generally assumed that the comments of some of the members such as the Ministry of Finance had *more weight* than those of some others. Therefore the mere balanced access should not be regarded as the balance of power.

Weak reciprocity of exchange

While inclusiveness and openness were generally perceived qualities of the SCP Process, reciprocity was not seen to be at that high level. Reciprocity means that discussions must be conducted through an argumentative exchange, *hearing both sides*, and responding to one another’s arguments. To assess the quality of deliberation, Hajer emphasizes also the meaning of integrity. Integrity underlines the importance of honesty and *avoidance of double play* in a debate.³¹ Both reciprocity and integrity can be seen as qualities of exchange.

²⁹ Hajer 2005, 450

³⁰ Hajer 2005, 450

³¹ Hajer 2005, 450

The problem related to reciprocity that many saw in the SCP process was already taken up in the context of staging: Too often discussions in the Committee involved performative repetitions where different *players remained behind the old front lines*. As many of the Committee members had worked with the questions related to sustainable development for years or even tens of years, they were familiar with the people and arguments of different organizations. In addition, they also knew the basics of the sustainability debate. Therefore, it was easy for them to shut their ears and concentrate on defending their position.

However, the interviews also revealed that at some points the opinions of many players were surprisingly close to each other. For example, the global challenge of sustainable consumption and production as well as the principles such as eco-efficiency were perceived in rather similar ways. When talking about these *less-politicized* themes, it seemed that the people also got encouraged to speak about their own thoughts and worries that necessarily were not things they were bringing up in official discussions. Even if these personal opinions were heterogenic too, they also revealed new chances for finding common ground.

Learning through dialogue

Hajer writes about learning that it should happen through an iterative process in which *knowledge is mobilized and enriched through confrontation* with a variety of stakeholders and experts. When the interviewees were asked about learning, the answers varied to some extent. Many thought that *they had learned at least something*, usually something from outside their own core expertise. For many it was, however, difficult to remember or point out what it was they had exactly learned. When specified, the learned thing could be related to many aspects of the SCP Committee's working. For some, the learning experiences were related to the process while others felt they had learned most about the participating organizations or about the SCP topic itself.

A difficult question here is what should be the *value given to learning* in the working of the SCP Committee. How big importance should be attached merely to it? As in many interviews the value of the Process was emphasized more than its result, what would have happened even without the SCP programme? And if the learning is the main reason why something is happening, how this learning could be enhanced? To take a step further from the current setting: Would it be more honest to invite the participants to learn and not to make a programme if that is not the point? And would the participants be motivated for a mere educative process?

Making commitments

Hajer³² defines accountability in a policy processes by stating that “those involved are *accountable to political bodies and to the public* at large, also with regard to the degree to which the rules as laid out have been guaranteed”. In the focused interviews, I asked about making commitments and that is also the concept used in the framework for analysis developed above. In both cases – in making commitments and being accountable – the question is about taking responsibilities in a policy process.

³² Hajer 2005, 450

Most of the interviewees reacted positively to the question on whether they and their organization *can be committed* to the SCP programme. What some of them added a bit surprisingly was that they could easily be committed to it because “it was not very dangerous”. This can be interpreted to reflect the fact that as such the programme was not about to take many things further and that the real work to process things to realizable form was still ahead. In addition, it gives strength to the earlier notion that some of the actors had actually joined the process with the aim of slowing it down. Therefore, committing to the programme *did not mean taking too big responsibilities*.

In Finland’s SCP programme, the responsibilities for implementation were not only given to Governmental agencies but also to organizations outside the Government. However, many actors *did not recall* the responsibilities they were given. In addition, many saw that in the implementation their role would mainly be to participate - should the Government initiate something. In this sense, the perception about their role in implementation was *not very pro-active* but rather one of a watchdog. These questions related to committing to the process will be dealt more in detail in the following chapter.

7 Summary and conclusions

7.1 Summary of the results: Comparing the SCP programmes of Finland, Sweden and UK

Some of the most important findings as regards the pioneering SCP programmes were the differences and similarities in the ways sustainable consumption and production have been approached in Finland, Sweden and UK. According to the analysis, the programmes have many characters in common such as the reference to life-cycle analysis, stakeholder participation and the use of a wide range of policy instruments. However, also clear differences exist between the current SCP forerunners.

In Finland’s SCP programme, the emphasis is put on research and technology. Meanwhile, Sweden counts on consumers and UK believes in business. As regards the policy tools, *informational devices* were by far the most popular ones in all the SCP programmes. Also other ‘new’ environmental policy instruments such as market-based instruments (MBIs) and voluntary agreements (VAs) were proposed particularly in Finland and UK. Meanwhile, *regulation* was highly unpopular in all the SCP programmes analysed.

The results should not be seen as a *whole* picture of different countries’ SCP relevant ideas and policies. Instead, they should be seen as indicators about the ways these pioneering countries have tried to interpret and bring into practice the ideas of SCP in their own political contexts. Moreover, the picture about the programmes will become clearer in the future when the interviews of Sweden and UK have been conducted and all the interviews duly

analysed. As the case countries are forerunners in the field, their examples are most probably going to be followed also in other industrial countries and within the EU³³.

7.2 Summary of the results: deliberative policy process analysis of Finland’s SCP programme

Of the three pioneering SCP processes, the case of Finland was chosen as the one to be looked at more in detail. In this paper, Finland’s SCP process was analysed particularly from the point of view of dramaturgy and deliberation. The results reveal that the process was staged in a way that in many meetings the Committee members were made an audience to experts. After that, the intensive and sometimes polarized discussions began. The polarizations were partly due to the fact that the Committee had been scripted as a broadly-based one where the progressive and conservative forces of the SCP field met. Here, the role of the Chair coming from outside the SCP field was seen as important and constructive one. A summary about the dimensions of the deliberation in the Process can be found from the Box 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of the results as regards the dimensions of deliberation

Dimensions of deliberation	Assessment on the basis of the interviews
Access	Open and inclusive access apart from the social sector
Exchange	Reciprocity low due to the old polarizations. Still, both sides made compromises.
Learning	Learning important part of the process. Questions remain whether learning is the most important outcome of the process.
Commitment	Commitments made partly because the programme is not thought to have effects. Many did not recall the tasks given to them in the programme. NGOs are making own projects loosely connected to the theme. Government seen as the agency to implement the programme.

7.3 Reflections on the outcomes

As the picture as regards the SCP programmes is still very much in process, there are not that many outcomes to reflect upon. A point I have been considering on the basis of the current state of the programme text analysis is the hypothesis that SCP brings along *outsourcing of environmental politics*. What I mean is that in many sense the multi-stakeholder environmental governance as presented e.g. in Finland’s SCP programme³⁴ resembles the model of public service privatization: The goal is to get things happen as effectively as possible, market-based instruments are utilised and the influential decisions are made on scattered basis. On the other hand, the risks can also be similar to the problems of privatization with the win-win cases leaving the low-benefit projects and

³³ The need to make an action plan on sustainable consumption and production was mentioned in the Presidency Conclusions of Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers, 14.–16.7.2006 Turku, Finland

³⁴ The Finnish SCP governance model featured things such as political negotiation outside Government. There were great numbers of policy tools based on flexibility, negotiation, provision of information and expertise as well as voluntary action. In addition, actors outside Government were expected to be partly responsible also for the implementation of the programme.

controversial questions aside. In addition, a question arises whether multilevel-governance could also leave the governments itself uncommitted.

As regards the programme of Finland, the hypothesis is that the programme suffers from the syndrome of *politics of lowest common denominator*. What I mean with that is a bunch of problems that appear when consensus is sought in a broadly-based group with dissenting opinions and conflicting interests. Even though the quest for consensus might bring the opinions of conservative and progressive forces closer, the consent might have a high price. Among the sacrifices could be the capability of the programme to propose something substantial, its potential to boost discussion and inspire change.

I think that the problems of politics of lowest common denominator should be taken seriously. However, I'm not trying to say that an unanimously accepted programme would not have value. A consensual proposal is a firm basis for the future work as was also noted by the parties who gave their statements to the SCP programme³⁵. It is something that can be safely referred to and relied upon. However, it could be worth considering that a processes such as the SCP process of Finland would yield three kinds of outcomes to get the best results: first there would be the commonly agreed things, then the parts where opinions are divided and last but not least the new and potentially fruitful but still underdeveloped ideas that should be taken further.

8 References

Commission on Sustainable Development (2003)

Multi-Year Programme of Work for CSD: 2004/2005 to 2016/2017,

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd11/CSD_multityear_prog_work.htm, 14.8.2006

Environmental Sustainability Index (2005)

<http://www.yale.edu/esi/>, 25.10.2006

Esty, Daniel C. & Levy, Marc & Srebotnjak, Tanja & de Sherbinin, Alexander (2005) *2005 Environmental*

Sustainability Index. Benchmarking National Environmental Stewardship, New Haven: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy

Government's Sustainable Development Unit, UK (2004)

Taking it on. Developing UK sustainable development strategy together, Summary of responses, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/finalsummary.pdf>, 25.10.2006

Hajer, Maarten (2003)

Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void, Policy Sciences 36: 175-195, Kluwer Academic Publishers

Hajer, Maarten (2005)

Rebuilding Ground Zero. The Politics of Performance, Planning Theory & Practice 6: 445-464, Routledge

Hildén, Mikael & Ilomäki, Mika (2005)

Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon toimikunnan (KULTU) ehdotuksesta kansalliseksi ohjelmaksi 2005 annetuista lausunnoista laadittu lausuntoanalyysi, Suomen ympäristökeskus, <http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=49858&lan=Fi>, 1.4.2007

HM Government, UK (2005)

One Planet Economy. Sustainable Consumption and Production, a chapter of *Securing the Future - UK Government sustainable development strategy*, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/Chap%203.pdf>, 25.10.2006

Honkasalo, Antero (2006)

Interview 11.10.2006, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002)

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIChapter3.htm, 3.8.2006

Jordan, Andrew & Wurzel, Rüdiger K.W. & Zito, Anthony R. (eds.) (2003)

'New' Instruments of Environmental Governance? National Experiences and Prospects, London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass

Jordan, Andrew & Wurzel, Rüdiger K.W. & Zito, Anthony R. & Brückner, Lars (2003)a

³⁵ Ilomäki & Hildén 2005

Policy Innovation or ‘Muddling Through’? ‘New’ Environmental Policy Instruments in the United Kingdom, in Jordan, Andrew & Wurzel, Rüdiger K.W. & Zito, Anthony R. (eds.) (2003) ‘New’ Instruments of Environmental Governance? National Experiences and Prospects, London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass

Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon toimikunta (KULTU), Finland (2005)
Vähemmästä enemmän ja paremmin. Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon toimikunnan (KULTU) ehdotus kansalliseksi ohjelmaksi 2005, Helsinki: ympäristöministeriö, kauppaja- ja teollisuusministeriö,
<http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=36844&lan=fi>, 14.8.2006

Living Planet Report (2006)
http://www.wwf.fi/wwf/www/uploads/pdf/living_planet_report_2006.pdf, 29.10.2006

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, Sweden (2005)
Think twice! An action plan for sustainable household consumption, Government Communication 2005/06:107,
<http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/65719>, 25.10.2006

Niestroy, Ingeborg (2005)
Sustaining Sustainability. A benchmark study on national strategies towards sustainable development and the impact of councils in nine EU member states, EEAC series, Background study no.2, Utrecht: Lemma

Nikula, Taina (2006)
Interview 2.6.2006, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Presidency Conclusions (2006)
Going global on eco-efficiency – towards a new generation of environmental policy, Presidency Conclusions, Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers, 14.–16.7.2006, Turku, Finland,
<http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=53856&lan=sv>, 31.10.2006

Sairinen, Rauno (2003)
The Politics of Regulatory Reform: ‘New’ Environmental Policy Instruments in Finland, in Jordan, Andrew & Wurzel, Rüdiger K.W. & Zito, Anthony R. (eds.) (2003) ‘New’ Instruments of Environmental Governance? National Experiences and Prospects, London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass

The Committee on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Finland (2005)
Getting more and better from less. Proposals for Finland’s national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production, <http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?contentid=149254&lan=en>, 25.10.2006

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006)
Division for Sustainable Development, Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD),
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/aboutCsd.htm>, 14.8.2006

Valtioneuvoston Viikko (2006)
Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon ohjelmaa viedään eteenpäin, Valtioneuvoston Viikko 16, 15.4. - 21.4.2006,
<http://www.valtioneuvosto.fi/toiminta/vnviikko/vnviikko/viikko.jsp?toid=134882&c=0&moid=143237&oid=153814>, 14.8.2006

World Economic Forum (2006)
Global Competitiveness Report 2006–2007,
<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Global%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm>, 31.10.2006

Ympäristöministeriö (2003)
Kestävien tuotanto- ja kulutustapojen edistämisen kansallista ohjelmaa valmisteleva toimikunta, Asettamis päätös, YM048:00/2003.

10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production: the Marrakesh Process (2006),
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/consumption/Marrakech/conprod10Ytaskforces.htm>, 1.5.2007