

Discourses and Power in Sustainable Consumption and Production debates

An application of Foucault's methodologies

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List of abbreviations

- CI – Consumers International
- CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
- DTIE – UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
- EEA – European Environment Agency
- EU – European Union
- GRIP – Norwegian Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production
- GPP – Green Public Procurement
- IGO – International Governmental Organisations
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- NGO – Non-governmental organisations
- OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- SCP – Sustainable Consumption and Production
- SCORE! – Sustainable Consumption Research Exchange
- SIFO – National Institute for Consumer Research
- SPP – Sustainable Public Procurement
- UN Guidelines – United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (1999)
- UNCED – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
- UNCSD – United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
- UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
- UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
- UNEP SC Programme – UNEP Sustainable Consumption Programme
- WBCSD – World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- WWF – World Wildlife Fund

1 – Introduction

People's everyday lives and lifestyles, especially in industrialised countries, are being considered not only as the major cause of the global warming, but also as the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment (UNCED 1992¹; UNDP 1998). Achieving sustainable consumption patterns and levels is thus one of the main strategies to deal with climate change and to reduce global environmental stress. The first set of recommendations that officially targeted the promotion of sustainable consumption on the international level was the UNCED action plan, Agenda 21, in 1992². Although the document does not introduce a definition of sustainable consumption, its chapter 4 '*Changing Consumption Patterns*' highlights policy recommendations centred mainly on new technologies and efficiency in the use of energy and resources, and minimisation of waste. Agenda 21 promotes the implementation of national policies, including the use of economic instruments, eco-labelling and government procurement, as well as social awareness and information.

In 1994, the Oslo *Symposium*³ developed a working definition on sustainable consumption:

'...the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations'.

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) officially adopted this working definition in 1995, and it is still regarded as the authoritative one in the international arena.

In the same year, a ministerial roundtable in Oslo explicitly noted that a focus on eco-efficiency would not provide a sufficiently comprehensive framework for identifying, understanding, and changing unsustainable consumption patterns (Fuchs &

1 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2 Zacarias (2000) highlights that even though the term 'sustainable consumption' appeared on the international agenda for the first time in the Earth Summit (1992), this concern is not new. It was first mentioned in the 1960s along with the concept of Ghost Acres developed by Georg Brogstrom (The Hungry Planet, 1968). The concern about consumption has its roots in the 1970s with the well known publications 'Limits to Growth' (1972) and the alternative 'Blueprint for Survival' (1972). Both pointed out the finite nature of natural resources, questioning the assumption that economic prosperity could continue to grow indefinitely. This concern was also reflected in the 'Brundtland Report' (1987).

3 The Soria Moria Symposium: Sustainable Consumption and Production, January 1994, Oslo, Norway.

Lorek 2005). The *1995 Oslo Ministerial Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption*⁴ report states:

*'Getting the world onto a sustainable consumption trajectory will take decades. Current capital stocks of physical infrastructure, for example in housing, energy, transportation and waste management, can lock societies into unsustainable patterns of consumption over which individual consumers have little influence. Furthermore, many unsustainable patterns of consumption are deeply rooted in cultural habits, despite increasing evidence that many citizens are now ready to re-examine their lifestyles. As a result, action to develop infrastructures and cultural norms that enable rather than constrain sustainable consumption choices will have to take place gradually, with the full participation of all stakeholders'*⁵.

UNCSD formally adopted the 1995 Oslo Ministerial Roundtable international work programme. However, when actual political work on the issue started, as a number of actors, in particular international governmental organisations (IGOs), addressed sustainable consumption, the perspective of the Ministerial Roundtable' programme with its more broad approach to the issue was dropped from the political agenda (Fuchs & Lorek 2005).

Already in 1995, the OECD Rosendal Workshop concluded that eco-efficiency was the more promising strategy towards sustainable consumption and production. Since then, much of what has happened in terms of global sustainable consumption and production agenda has been framed within this perspective.

The point of departure of this research is that this approach has not been as effective in stimulating changes in consumption patterns as expected. Even though sustainable consumption requires an increase in the efficiency of consumption, which can be reached via technological improvements (Fuchs & Lorek 2005), research on the so-called 're-bounce' effect (UNEP 2001) has documented that achievements based on economic and technological factors alone are recurrently outweighed by a growth in consumption volumes (EEA 2005). Moreover, the focus on information strategies, combined with regulatory, economic, and technological tools, as the main instruments for changing people's attitudes and lifestyles is nowadays considered as an overestimated strategy⁶. In consequence, researchers and policy makers are confronted

4 Notice that at that time the focus was so much on eco-efficiency, that the title of the Roundtable emphasises the aspect production first (SPC) instead of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) as it is known today.

5 <http://www.iisd.ca/consume/oslo004.html#top>

6 This statement was repeatedly reaffirmed during presentation of papers and discussions at the first SCORE! (Sustainable Consumption Research Exchange) workshop in Copenhagen, April/2006.

with a need to put forward another approach in the global sustainable consumption agenda that can provide sufficient conditions for achieving sustainable consumption.

1.1 – Objectives

This thesis is composed of two analytical steps, each one addressing one research question. The first analytical part aims to identify the main discourses in the conceptualization of consumption change within the government policies regarding sustainable consumption and production (SCP). Discourse is understood here as a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment (Foucault 1972). Each discourse acts as basic knowledge systems when actors put forward sets of policies to steer SCP. A coherent group of discourses unified by a regularity of discursive practices that is, in its turn, determined by a set of rules, characterizes a discursive formation.

The general objective of this analytical part is, through discourse analysis, to unpack the discursive formation that have determined what has been possible to think, say and experience within the ‘archive’ sustainable consumption. This is made possible through the archaeological method developed by the French philosopher Michael Foucault (1972), in which archive is defined as a set of discursive relations, power relations and institutions that determine what can and cannot be spoken in a given historical era. The main research question of the archaeological analysis is:

‘Which discourses are international governmental organisations (IGOs) and governments relying on in order to establish sets of policies towards sustainable consumption and production?’

After having identified these discourses, a research sub-question would be then:

‘Which discourse is prevailing in influencing policies towards SCP within the international agenda?’

Through discourse, researchers and policy-makers define what kind of policies are the most appropriate, which changes are necessary to undergo and who will carry out the concrete measures, imposing therefore a political economy of truth within the archive sustainable consumption. This is the power of discourses, and the object of study of the second analytical step. Following Foucault (1976), a genealogical analysis will be conducted in order to understand how discursive power struggles have been

performed in the international sustainable consumption and production political agenda, and how this knowledge could contribute to build a more robust SCP strategy. The main research question of the genealogical analysis is:

‘Are the discursive power struggles undertaken in the international scenario producing a new ‘régime’ of truth within the archive SCP?’

The political, economic, and institutional regime of the production of truth is essential to the structure and functioning of a society. Within the SCP archive, it frames the debate and determines the power effects over the sets of policies. In a circular relation, the power effects, produced by the regime of truth, are responsible to sustain truth. It is this circular system that Foucault calls ‘régime’ of truth (Foucault 1980:133).

This thesis does not have a primary objective of engaging in judgements or evaluation of effectiveness of any discourse. Rather the principal purposes of archaeological and genealogical analysis are 1) identifying the different SCP approaches, and 2) locating the power struggles within the archive SCP in order to make use of this knowledge tactically, i.e. pointing towards a more robust sustainable consumption and production political strategy built on the knowledge of different SCP discourses.

1.2 – Methodology

The research body of this thesis is organised in two parts. The first part – Archaeology – consists of an archaeological discourse analysis aiming to identify the discourses that have defined the strategies towards sustainable consumption. I will analyse three actors in the light of the Foucaultian archaeological framework: the European Environment Agency (EEA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Norwegian government. The choice of these three actors was made based on the crucial influence that they have exerted on the global sustainable consumption agenda.

The EEA, whose slogan is ‘Information for Improving Europe’s Environment’, is responsible to provide information on environmental issues to policy-making agents and the public. Its work ‘includes collecting and analysing shared environmental data from the European Commission services, the EEA member countries, international organisations, conventions and agreements, producing policy relevant advice and

making this information widely available'⁷. Considering that 'developed countries should take the lead in achieving sustainable consumption patterns'⁸, EU has a strategic role in setting the SCP political agenda. The ongoing European Union enlargement is a driving force for political and economic changes in Europe as well, allowing EU to extend its environmental standards and policies across the wider European region.

Another actor studied in this thesis is UNEP. Its Sustainable Consumption Programme was launched in 1999, and as it stated on its website⁹, it focuses on understanding the forces that drive consumption patterns around the world and how to translate those findings into tangible activities for business and other stakeholders. Since 2002, the UNEP SC Programme is responsible to coordinate the implementation of the Marrakech Process, 'a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production'¹⁰. The Marrakech Process is a follow-up of the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, and it is nowadays the main international strategy on sustainable consumption and production.

EEA and UNEP are regarded as the two main IGOs that bear the 'official' knowledge of sustainable consumption, which is adopted in international conventions and which is followed by national governments. Their reports are also internationally quoted as the official source for data and on elaboration of policies.

Finally, the Norwegian government was chosen as a research object in this thesis based on two premises. Firstly, Norway, in the follow-up to UNCED 1992, has actively promoted sustainable consumption both through a series of meetings with international policy makers¹¹ and through funding for research programmes. Secondly, because Norway does not belong to the European Union, it is interesting to analyse how its policies and discourses follows and resembles the international discursive trend. Norway takes part in the EU work on sustainable consumption and production and in workgroups such as that on integrated product policy. Moreover, the Norwegian

7 It is stated on the EEA website: www.eea.europa.eu

8 Agenda 21, Chapter 4 – 'Changing Consumption Patterns'

9 www.unep.org/pc/sustain/

10 Ibid

11 Sustainable Consumption Symposium (Oslo/1994), Oslo Ministerial Roundtable (Oslo/1995), The Nordic Roundtables on Business Relations and Sustainable Consumption and Production in a Global Perspective (2005, 2006).

government is also collaborating in the UNEP/CSD efforts on the Marrakech Process, with special emphasis on greener procurement chains.

The discourses of these actors will be analysed based on official documents that most mirror the respective institutional conception of sustainable consumption and change. Structured and open-ended interviews with the official representatives of the sustainable consumption departments of EEA and UNEP, and key policy-makers and researchers that deal with the issue within the Norwegian government are a second source of qualitative primary data. The interviews and interviewees contribute to the understanding of SCP discourses. In a Foucaultian perspective, the interviewees are not subjects articulating discourses themselves. They subject is only an instrument to give voice to discourses.

The second part of the research body of this thesis is a genealogical analysis. It has archaeology as its methodology. Genealogy allows the detection of possible changes in relation to the predominance of some discourses within the SCP political agenda. If it is the case that such discursive prevalence is happening within the archive sustainable consumption, how can a group of discourses that has not had an impact in the sustainable consumption political agenda, at some point start to be seen as a viable political alternative?

Performing a genealogical analysis demands a change of my own position as an investigator. As an archaeologist, I perform the role of a ‘detached spectator of mute-discourses’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:103). However, as a genealogist, I find myself involved in – and to a large extent produced by – the social practices that I have been immersed in, like making interviews, and especially, participating in international SCP seminars. As a genealogist, the changes I am aiming to point out lie ‘in surface practices, not in mysterious depths’ (ibid:106). It is in the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and sub contours (ibid) that a genealogist will find the changes of power relations.

Summary of the methodological approach

Documents that bear the concept of sustainable consumption and changes adopted by the EEA, the UNEP and the Norwegian government will be analysed in light of the archaeological discourse analysis developed by Michel Foucault. Interviews with individuals that occupy job positions which allow them to circulate power will

contribute to the understanding of the SCP discourses. Foucault's genealogical analysis will be applied to detect possible changes in the balance of power between discourses within the archive SCP.

1.3 – Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework of the two analytical processes that will be undertaken in this thesis: Archaeology and Genealogy. The methodological steps concerning each analysis will be detailed. Given the complexity of Foucault's methods and his habit of attributing new meanings to words that have another significance in our daily language, examples concerning sustainable consumption will illustrate, when possible, the methodological practices in an attempt to facilitate the understanding of the analytical process.

The archaeological method of discourse analysis will be developed in chapters 3 to 6, aiming to identify the discourses that international governmental organisations (IGO) and national governments are relying on while establishing sets of policies towards sustainable consumption and production. Each chapter will approach one theoretical aspect of the rules governing the SCP discursive practices.

Based on the results of the archaeological analysis and on the identification of SCP discourses, a genealogical analysis will be performed in chapter 7. Genealogy aims to uncover the power struggles exerted by the discourses to attain SCP, and to establish the power effects produced by the political economy of truth imposed by certain discourses.

Concluding, chapter 8 will highlight the insights reached through the archaeological and genealogical analysis. It will also point out the policy implications that could follow from the argument developed through out this thesis, as well as recommendations for a future sustainable consumption and production research agenda.

A glossary with the principal Foucaultian concepts is organised at the end of this thesis. Even though all terms developed by Foucault are conceptualised while performing the analyses, a glossary will allow a more dynamic rhythm of the reading.

2 – Discourse Analysis as applied methodology

In the international sustainable consumption and production arena, governmental policies are defined on the basis of expert language, concepts, rationalities and research practices that are, in their turn, redefined and developed within different fields of knowledge. Discourses regarding sustainable consumption and production frame how sustainable consumption is understood, communicated and which policies should be put forward. Engaging in discursive analysis allows one to problematize what conventional policy analysts take for granted: the linguistic, identity and knowledge basis of policy making. Moreover, discourse analysis can draw attention to marginalized discourses which offer alternative policy options.

From the wide range of practices that classify themselves as discourse analysis, Feindt and Oels (2005:163) highlight seven strengths of discourse analysis: 1) a particular awareness of the role of language in constituting policies, politics and political; 2) a sceptical attitude towards claims of a single rationality and objective truth; 3) an inclination to regard knowledge as contingent and principally contestable; 4) an interest in bias effects of dominant types of language and knowledge; 5) a shared understanding that language and knowledge need to be understood as aspects of power and as exerting power effects; 6) an interest in practices (i.e. professional and everyday practices) as constitutive of power relations and knowledge systems; and 7) a strong emancipatory motive and an interest in democratizing knowledge production and policy making.

Considering the history of the sustainable consumption international agenda, a Foucaultian perspective on discourse is an appropriate methodological tool to comprehend the sets of knowledge and rationalities that have been applied to frame and to prevail in SCP political options. Foucault is interested in discourse as the societal process of understanding and self-definition. His research concentrates on the way discourses are organised and, more specifically, on who gets to participate and contribute, and who is excluded. Thus, the focus is on the productive function of discourses.

2.1 – Discourses and Archaeology

Foucault defines discourse as an ensemble of statements whereby the term statement is not limited to speech acts but is meant to include texts, tables and arrangements of things, such as architecture (Feindt and Oels 2005:164). Depending on the conditions in which it emerges and exists within a field of discourse, and depending on the scope of the ‘field of use’ in which it is to be analysed, anything from a scientific chart to a sentence to a novel can be a statement. Stahl points out that researchers who refer to Foucault’s view of discourse tend to recognise that it is not a precise definition of the term that is of interest to him but rather the procedures and social interactions that shape communication (2004:4330).

The Foucaultian analysis of discourse rigorously ignores any fundamental dependence on anything outside of discourse itself; discourse is never taken as a record of historical events, an articulation of meaningful content, or the expression of an individual or collective psychology. Instead, it is analyzed strictly at the level of ‘things said’, the level at which statements have their ‘conditions of possibility’ and their conditions of relation to one another. Thus, discourse is not just a set of articulated propositions, nor is it the trace of an otherwise hidden psychology, spirit, or encompassing historical idea; it is the set of relations within which all of these other factors gain their sense (their conditions of possibility).

The term archaeology suggests an interpretative strategy:

‘This term [archaeology] does not imply the search for a beginning... It designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive’ (Foucault 1972:131).

Archaeology is a description of what has already been said at the level of its existence. It is a ‘theory-free’ description, ‘if by theory is meant the deduction from a certain number of axioms, of an abstract model applicable to an indefinite number of empirical descriptions’ (Foucault 1972:149). The archaeological analysis’s premise is that the production of scientific truth cannot be separated from the discourse formations of scientific disciplines. Particularly relevant to discourse analysis is Foucault’s insistence on a reversal of the subject-statement relationship: the subject does not

articulate a discourse himself. The subject is only an instrument to give voice to discourses.

2.2 – Archive

In Foucault's framework, an archive is composed of multiple and varying discourses. It is 'the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events' (1972:129). The archive sustainable consumption and production is constituted of multiple and varying discourses: sustainable development, economic development, rational consumer choice, technological development, adjusted expectancy-value, moral and normative conduct, social development, the matter of habit, sociality and self, social practices, social learning, environmental development etc. These discourses can be clustered in different unities if they follow a complex group of relations that function as a rule. Whenever a group of discourses can be characterized by a regularity of discursive practices, this group is defined by Foucault as a discursive formation. Unpacking discursive formations, which determine what it is possible to think, say and experience in a particular field of knowledge, is made possible through the Foucaultian archaeological method.

Archaeological analysis is thus applied in this thesis with twofold objectives: 1) to identify the possible existence of sustainable consumption and production discursive formation(s) in the light of the discourses chosen to be analysed; and 2) to determine which group of discourses the actors studied here rely on when they formulate their policies.

2.2.1 – Discursive formations

I will now examine the requirements for nominating a group of discourses as a discursive formation. However, before introducing the regulatory principle which makes it possible to distinguish a discursive formation from another, Foucault carries out a discussion of what is, and what is not a requirement for a unity of a discursive formation.

Firstly, to refer to the same object 'does not enable one to individualize a group of statements and to establish between them a relation that is both constant and describable' (Foucault 1972:32). Even though the discourses that constitute the

sustainable consumption discursive formation make reference to the same object – sustainable consumption –, it is not possible to derive its coherence through it because sustainable consumption does not possess a pre-discursive identity, but rather is constituted by the discursive framework in which it is implicated (McNay 1994:67). Therefore, sustainable consumption is the result of the different discourses that take it as an object of study.

Regarding objects, Foucault explains that the unity of a discursive formation would be ‘the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time’ (1972:33). Far from there being a consistent ‘sustainable consumption’, there is only a broad range of statements whose relations define the development of successive versions of sustainable consumption. To describe a discursive unity is then to describe those relations.

Secondly, it is inappropriate to define a group of statements by a certain style, a certain constant manner of statements between them (rather than by what they refer to), a certain ‘way of looking’, or a similarity in vocabulary or metaphor. The discourses gathered in the sustainable consumption discursive formation are characterized 1) by certain assumptions about what drives and influences human behaviour, and what should be the strategies to change consumption patterns; and 2) by a discursive similarity claiming for a multidisciplinary approach that presupposes the adoption of different methodologies, the involvement of many actors, by the concern for the next generations, and the need of a long term perspective approach.

Thus, if there is a unity, it is not based on a simplistic idea of the similarity of statements. Rather, its principle is based on the coexistence of dispersed and heterogeneous statements; ‘the system that governs their division, the degree to which they depend upon one another, the way in which they interlock or exclude one another, the transformation that they undergo’ (Foucault 1972:34).

Thirdly, a unity of a discursive formation cannot be derived from concepts and their use in a specific discourse, since they are not always logically connected. Concepts are often heterogeneous and even incompatible with other concept used in a given field (McNay 1994:67). Different disciplines that deal with sustainable consumption conceptualize sustainable consumption differently; they also attribute diverse and divergent functions to the same concept.

Any discursive unity must encompass these very transformations and incompatibilities, the simultaneous or successive emergence of concepts, and the variable differences that separate statements. The analysis must be based on the interplay of their appearances and dispersions.

Lastly, it is a wrong hypothesis to seek the principle of the unity of a discursive formation in the existence of the identity and persistence of themes directing ‘research from afar’ (Foucault 1972:35). Foucault asserts that ‘it is legitimate in the first instance to suppose that a certain thematic is capable of linking, and animating a group of discourses’ (ibid). The same theme may occur in different discursive formations and contradictory themes may be employed in the same discourse. For instance, it could be consistent to put all discourses on sustainable consumption in just one discursive formation. However, the same theme may occur in different discursive formations: for instance, SCP is approached in the progressive religious discursive formation as well.

Concerning sustainable consumption discourses, what could their unity therefore be? Foucault argues that the unity of a discourse is related to describing the dispersions themselves; of discovering whether, between these elements, is possible to discern a regularity. Such an analysis would describe systems of dispersions.

‘Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion; whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity... we are dealing with a discursive formation’ (ibid:38)

2.2.2 – The system of dispersion

The system of dispersion is the regulatory principle with makes it possible to distinguish one discursive formation from another. The conditions of which the elements of the system of dispersion are subjected are called rules of formation. The rules of formation are ‘conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division’ (ibid:38). Foucault expresses the relation between the rules and a discursive formation in the following way:

‘[a] dispersion itself... can be described in its uniqueness if one is able to determine the specific rules in accordance with which its objects, statements, concepts, and theoretical options have been formed: if there really is a unity, it does not lie in the visible, horizontal, coherence of the elements formed; it resides, well anterior to their formation, in the system that makes possible and governs that formation’ (ibid:72).

A – The formation of objects

When one describes the formation of the objects of a discourse, one tries to locate the relations that characterise a discursive practice. Actually, discursive practice is the place in which ‘a tangled plurality... of objects is formed and deformed, appears and disappears’ (ibid:48). Foucault warns for the mistake ‘to see discourse as a place where previously established objects are laid one after another like words on a page’ (ibid:43). Objects, in fact, arise as a result of particular relations used in a given discursive practice:

‘[T]he object does not await in limbo the order that will free it and enable it to become embodied in a visible and prolix objectivity; it does not pre-exist itself, held back by some obstacle at the first edges of light. It exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relation.’ (ibid:45).

If we take the archive sustainable consumption as an example, these relations are established between international agencies, governments, institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lifestyles, citizens, developed countries, behavioural patterns, market, systems of production, poverty, technology, retail, design, etc. Foucault points out the importance of distinguishing these discursive relations 1) from ‘primary’ relations that exist between institutions, governments, etc. independently of all discourse or all objects of discourse, and 2) from ‘secondary’ relations that are formulated in discourse itself.

The specificity of the system of the discursive relations is that: 1) they are not internal to discourses; 2) they are not exterior to discourses; and 3) they do not connect concepts or words with one another. As Foucault defines it:

‘They are, in a sense, at the limit of discourse: they offer it objects of which it can speak, or rather... they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc.’ (ibid:46).

A discursive formation is identified, as far as its objects are concerned, by a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification. For instance, international development agencies may relate SCP and poverty reduction within the context in which developed countries are pointed out as responsible to transfer technology. These kind of discursive relations are at the core of discourse analysis since they characterize discourses as practices. These practices systematically form the objects of which they speak.

B – The formation of enunciative modalities

The set of rules of formation pertaining to the enunciative modalities determines the positioning of the subject within a discursive formation. The archaeological method is developed to counter approaches to knowledge that privilege a ‘sovereign’ subject anterior to discourse (McNay 1994:68). Foucault stresses that the meaning of a discourse is not transmitted by ‘a thinking, speaking subject’, rather it is the discursive formation that provides an arrangement of ‘subject positions’ which individuals may occupy. A certain regularity of various positions of subjectivity or enunciative modalities, will be one of the unifying principles of a discursive formation.

Foucault establishes three analytical steps to be taken in the identification of enunciative modalities. First, one must ask ‘who is speaking’: ‘Who, among the totality of speaking individuals, is accorded the right to use this sort of language? Who is qualified to do so?’ (Foucault 1972:50). Within the archive sustainable consumption and production, for example, it may be that only individuals with 1) academic background – researchers, economists, social scientists, designers –, 2) political and market power (policy makers, journalists, and businessmen), and 3) with environmental activism experience, are allowed to give voice to the SCP discourses. These actors may be the ones which have the status, the knowledge, the power and the experience to claim validity for, and wisdom of, their statements. Foucault stresses that this analytical procedure also involves a system of differentiation and relations with other individuals or other groups that also possess their own status (ibid). In a sustainable consumption discursive formation, for instance, it may be that groups that are allowed to give voice to discourses, relate to citizens. The citizens would have thus the status of 1) consumers, 2) object of study, and 3) those that must carry out policies. Moreover, consumer groups also have the right to give voice to certain discourses.

The second step consists in describing the institutional sites from which a given discourse derives its legitimacy and efficacy. In the archive sustainable consumption, for example, these sites are research institutes and agencies, universities, NGOs, business community, consumer councils, international agencies, governmental institutions etc. Each discursive formation will talk from and make use of different institutional sites. These institutional sites should be analysed in terms of their own internal structure as well as in terms of the position they occupy in an external network of social and institutional relations (McNay 1994:68).

Finally, one must identify the situations that are possible for the subject to occupy in relation to the object or domain of knowledge. According to a certain ‘grid of explicit or implicit interrogations’ (Foucault 1972:52), it is possible for the subject to occupy the role of a listening subject, an observing subject, a questioning subject, etc. For instance, if the academics in sustainable consumption discourses research, question, observe behaviours and habits, lecture in seminars, write books, and participate in groups of discussion with policy makers, it is because a whole group of relations is involved. Naming just a few: relations between the field of immediate observations and the domain of acquired information; relations between universities and institutions of research themselves, and between those and governments. Foucault underlines the importance of these relations in identifying a discursive formation:

‘it is [discourse], as a practice, that establishes between them all a system of relations that is not ‘really’ given or constituted a priori; and if there is a unity, if the modalities of enunciation that it uses... are not simply juxtaposed by a series of historical contingencies, it is because it makes constant use of this group of relations’ (ibid:54).

These various enunciatives modalities – the various statuses, the various sites, and the various positions that a subject can occupy or be given when it gives voice to discourses – manifest the dispersion of the subject. The subject is thus a discontinuous category composed of a dispersion of positions within a specific discursive formation (McNay 1994:69). Foucault emphasizes that if there is a link between these discontinuities, it is not established by the subject, ‘but by the specificity of a discursive practice’ (Foucault 1972:55):

‘Thus conceived, discourse is... a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed’ (ibid).

C – The formation of concepts

Following the same rationality as the two previous rules of formation, a system of conceptual formation is also constituted by a group of relations: ‘... what properly belongs to a discursive formation and what makes it possible to delimit the group of concepts, disparate as they may be, that are specific to it, is the way in which different elements are related to one another’ (Foucault 1972:59). Therefore, the analytical task is to describe the organisation of the field of statements where successive or simultaneous emergence of disparate concepts appear and circulate. This organisation involves firstly

forms of succession; secondly forms of coexistence; and lastly the procedures of intervention.

Forms of succession of statements can involve various orderings of enunciative series, various types of dependence of the statements and various rhetorical schemata according to which groups of statements may be combined. The last relates to how descriptions, deductions, and definitions – whose succession characterizes the architecture of a text – are linked together. Successive series of statements can also follow types of dependence like hypothesis/verification, assertion/critique, etc. (ibid:57).

Forms of coexistence consist of three fields: of presence, of concomitance, and of memory. The field of presence involves all statements that are brought up to the level of a discourse, acknowledged to be truthful, or criticized, discussed, judged, rejected, and even excluded. In this field, the type of relations established between groups of statements is, for instance, logical validation, mere repetition, commentary, the analysis of error, etc. The field of concomitance, in its turn, is characterized by relations between different fields of knowledge. For instance, they may serve either as analogical confirmation, as general principle, or as models that can be transferred to other contents, and so on. Lastly, in the field of memory are statements that – even though they are no longer accepted or discussed – can establish relations of filiations, genesis, transformation, continuity, and a possible historical discontinuity can be established in relation to them (ibid:58).

Lastly, procedures of intervention are not the same for all discursive formations. These procedures may appear in techniques of rewriting; in methods of transcribing statements; the modes of translating quantitative statements in qualitative formulations and vice versa; the way in which one delimits once again the domain of validity of statements or transfers a type of statement from one field of application to another; the methods of systematizing propositions that already exist, but in a separated state, etc. (ibid:59).

The formation of concepts is thus a system of relations between different kinds of elements that characterize the organisation of fields of statements, like rules of formal construction, rhetorical practices, the internal configuration of a text, modes of relations and interference between different texts, and so on. Foucault emphasizes, for instance, the way in which ‘the ordering of descriptions or accounts is linked to the techniques of rewriting; the way in which the field of memory is linked to the forms of hierarchy and

subordination that govern the statements of a text; etc.’ (ibid:60). However, Foucault argues that the description of such a system could not be valid for a direct, immediate description of the concepts themselves:

‘My intention is not to carry out an exhaustive observation of them... to measure their internal coherence, or to test their mutual compatibility. I do not wish to take as an object of analysis the conceptual architecture of an isolated text... One stands back in relation to this manifest set of concepts; and one tries to determine according to what schemata... the statements may be linked to one another in a type of discourse’ (ibid).

Once more, Foucault demystifies the ‘sovereign’ subject anterior to discourse by reaffirming that the rules of formation of concepts operate not only in the mind or consciousness of individuals, ‘but in discourse itself; they operate, therefore, according to a sort of uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field’ (ibid:63).

D – The formation of strategies

Strategies are defined by Foucault as themes or theories which are formed by certain discursive organisations of concepts, certain regroupings of objects, and certain types of enunciation produced by discourses. Strategies are neither anterior to discourses nor the expression of a world-view expressed in words. They should rather be described as ‘systematically different ways of treating objects of discourse, of arranging forms of enunciation, of manipulating concepts’ (ibid:69).

The first step of the analysis of the formation of strategies is to identify the ‘points of diffraction’ of a discourse. These points are characterized by the existence of two incompatible objects, concepts, or types of enunciation 1) having the same conditions of emergence and 2) trying to occupy the same discursive space (they form an alternative, an ‘either/or’ situation). The points of diffraction of a discourse derive from one another, regulate one another, and are involved with one another. Nevertheless, their basis is formed by the same coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts. Often, whole discursive ‘sub-groups’ are attached to these incompatible elements. The second analytical step has the task to describe the specific authorities that are guiding the choices among all the dispersions identified within the systems of formation of objects, enunciations, and concepts.

A discursive formation will thus be unified if systems of formation of different strategies can be defined, i.e. 'if one can show how they all derive (in spite of their sometimes extreme diversity) from the same set of relations' (Foucault 1972:68).

E – The definition

A unity of a discursive formation presupposes a dispersion of elements. This dispersion can be described in its uniqueness if one is able to determine the specific rules in accordance with which its objects, statements, concepts, and theoretical options have been formed. If there really is a unity, it resides well anterior to the formation of the elements, in the system that makes possible and governs that formation:

'...the strategic choices do not emerge directly from a world-view or from a predominance of interests peculiar to this or that speaking subject; but that their very possibility is determined by points of divergence in the group of concepts; ... concepts were not formed directly against the approximative, confused, and living background of ideas, but on the basis of forms of coexistence between statements; and... the modalities of enunciations were described on the basis of the position occupied by the subject in relation to the domain of objects of which he is speaking.' (Foucault 1972:72).

What Foucault wants to emphasize is that not all the positions of the subject, all the types of coexistence between statements, all the discursive strategies, are equally possible, but only those authorized by anterior levels. Each level relates to the others, drastically limiting the possibilities of its formation; when we find something out about the functioning of one area of discourse, we are well on our way to describing the other areas:

'By system of formation, then, I mean a complex group of relations that function as a rule: it lays down what must be related, in a particular discursive practice, for such and such an enunciation to be made, for such and such a concept to be used, for such and such a strategy to be organized. To define a system of formation in its specific individuality is therefore to characterize a discourse or a group of statements by the regularity of a practice' (ibid:74).

It is this system of rules that must be put into operation if an object is to be transformed, a new enumeration appear, a concept be developed, or a strategy be modified without ever ceasing to belong to this same discourse. However, it is again this same system of rules that must be analysed if a change in other discourses (in other practices, in institutions, in social relations, and in economic processes) is to be transcribed within a given discourse, thus constituting a new object, giving rise to a new strategy, giving place to new enunciations or new concepts (ibid).

2.3 – Discourses and Genealogy

Foucault changes his focus when developing the method of genealogy. Discourses are not seen anymore as isolated objects governed by a system of rules. Rather discourses become the dangerous and precious objects of political struggle (O'Farrell 1989:96), implying a conception of power as constitutive and productive. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) assert that the development of the genealogical analysis does not presuppose a rejection of the archaeological method. What Foucault abandons are both the attempt to work out a theory of autonomous rule-governed systems of discursive practices and his reduction of the subject to a function of discourse. Nevertheless, Foucault preserves the structural technique of focusing on both discourse and the speaker as constructed objects 'as a necessary step to free himself from taking the discourses and practices of this society as simply expressing the way things are. As a technique, archaeology serves genealogy. As a method of isolating discursive objects, it enables Foucault to raise the genealogical questions: how are these discourses used? What role do they play in society?' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:xxii, xxiii).

Foucault's own position as an investigator undergoes a radical transformation with the development of genealogy as well. A genealogist is no longer 'the detached spectator of mute-discourses' (ibid:103), but he is involved in, and to a large extent produced by, the social practices he is studying. Foucault introduces genealogy as a method of diagnosing and grasping the significance of social practices from within them. 'The genealogist is thus a diagnostician who concentrates on the relations of power and knowledge in modern society' (ibid:105).

2.3.1 – Discontinuity

'How is it that at certain moments and in certain order of knowledge, there are these sudden take-offs, these hastenings of evolution, these transformations which fail to correspond to the calm, continuist image that is normally accredited?', asks Foucault (1980:112) while introducing the concept of discontinuity. These changes are, Foucault explains, the sign of a modification in the rules of formation of statements of what is accepted as scientifically true. It does not mean that it is a change of content, nor a change of theoretical form. Foucault points out that it is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of

propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and ‘hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures’ (ibid). Actually, Foucault is presenting a problem of the politics of the scientific statement:

‘At this level, it’s not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, what constitutes, as it were, their internal regime of power, and how and why at certain moments that regime undergoes a global modification’ (1980:112-113).

This is the aim of the genealogy: to seek out discontinuities where others found continuous development. Dreyfus and Rabinow indicate that genealogy avoids the search for depth. Instead, it seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours. A genealogist sees things from afar:

‘[A genealogist] finds that the questions which were traditionally held to be the deepest and murkiest are truly and literally the most superficial. This certainly does not mean that they are either trivial or lacking in importance, only that their meaning is to be discovered in surface practices, not in mysterious depths. The methodological point is that, when viewed from the right distance and with the right vision, there is a profound visibility to everything’ (1982:106).

However, a theoretical clarification must be undertaken here. For the genealogist, there is no subject, either individual or collective, that moves history: ‘No one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:109). The notion of interstice means that the play of forces in any particular historical situation is made possible by the space which defines them (ibid). In Archaeology, Foucault introduces the notion of space in which subjects and objects occur, but then the space was governed by a system of rules. In genealogy, however, Dreyfus and Rabinow emphasize that this space is understood ‘as the result of long term practices and as the field in which those practices operate’ (ibid). It means that what takes place in this space is not simply exchanges of speech acts, but ‘social manoeuvres of great consequence for those involved’.

‘The genealogist thus studies the emergence of a battle which defines this space. In this space, subjects do not first pre-exist and later enter into combat or harmony. In genealogy, subjects emerge on a field of battle and play their roles, there and there alone. The world is not a play which simply masks a truer reality that exists behind the scenes. It is as it appears. This is the profundity of the genealogist’s insight’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:109).

2.3.2 – Power

Foucault understands power as a web of force relations made up of local centres of power around which specific discourses, strategies of power and techniques for the appropriation of knowledge cluster (1976:98,99). In Foucault's point of view, power relations are present in all form of social interaction: 'Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (1976:93). Foucault consents, however, that one needs to be nominalistic: 'Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (ibid). Its effect is then not primarily the maintenance and reproduction of the system of relations, but is above all a relation of force. The questions to be posed would then be these (Foucault 1980:89): 1) If power is exercised, what sort of exercise does it involve? 2) In what does it consist? 3) What is the mechanism?

Discourses produce power and '[i]ndeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (Foucault 1976:100). For this reason, Foucault conceives discourse as 'a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable' (ibid). To be more precise, Foucault argues that 'we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies' (ibid).

Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also 'a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy' (1976:101). Foucault goes further: 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (ibid). Having said that, Foucault states that there is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it:

'Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses, within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy' (1976:102).

Foucault is interested in the criteria according to which 1) specific views are considered legitimate contributions, and 2) individuals are allowed to participate or not. Internal relations become a question of power, of who controls this level and by what

means. Therefore, discourses are conceived as the site of tensions and struggles concerning power and knowledge.

Foucault stresses, however, that power and knowledge are not identical with each other. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982:203) emphasize that Foucault does not seek to reduce knowledge to a hypothetical base of power nor to conceptualize power as an always coherent strategy. Rather, Foucault attempts to show the specificity and materiality of their interconnections: ‘There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations’ (1979:27,28). If sustainable consumption, for instance, was constituted as a field of knowledge, this was only possible because relations of power had established it as a possible object. Conversely, ‘if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it’ (Foucault 1976:89).

2.3.3 – Methodological precautions

Genealogy is a radically new interpretation of both power and knowledge: ‘one that does not see power as a possession that one group holds and another lacks; one that does not see knowledge as objective or subjective, but as a central component in the historical transformation of various regimes of power and truth’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:117).

The tasks to be performed are the following. First, one should identify discursive formations, its history, and its place in the larger context of power in order to be able to evaluate its claim to describe reality. This is the task of archaeology. However, Dreyfus and Rabinow stress that ‘since archaeology has bracketed truth and meaning, it can tell us nothing more’ (1982:117). Thus, as a second step, one should then promote a genealogical analysis, and examine the historical and political roles that these discursive formations play in the larger context.

In order to undergo a genealogical analysis of power relations, Foucault points out five methodological steps that are in fact, cautionary prescriptions to be pursued. Firstly, the analysis in question should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate, and the continual effects of these. ‘On the contrary, it should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with

those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions' (Foucault 1980:96). Power must therefore be located at the extreme points of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character.

A second methodological precaution urges that the analysis should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision; that it should not attempt to consider power from its internal point of view. Foucault warns that an analysis of power relations 'should refrain from posing the labyrinthine and unanswerable question: Who then has power and what has he in mind?' (1980:97). Instead, Foucault insists that power should be studied at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. 'What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where [power] is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there – that is to say – where it installs itself and produces its real effects' (ibid).

A third methodological precaution relates to the fact that power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. Foucault stresses that power is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it:

'Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application' (1980:98).

The fourth methodological precaution refers to not attempting some kind of deduction of power, starting from its centre and aimed to the most molecular elements of society. Foucault underlines that one must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power, starting from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history and trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been 'invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination' (1980:99). The final aim must be to show how these mechanisms of power, at a given

moment, in a precise conjuncture and by means of a certain number of transformations, have begun to become economically advantageous and politically useful.

Finally, Foucault disregards the idea that the major mechanisms of power have been accompanied by ideological productions: ‘I do not believe that what has taken place can be said to be ideological. It is both much more and much less than ideology’ (1980:102). In fact, Foucault believes that the mechanisms of power are the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge – methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control: ‘All this means that power, when it is exercised through these subtle mechanisms, cannot but evolve, organise and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather apparatuses of knowledge, which are not ideological constructs’ (ibid).

Following these methodological steps/precautions will allow a genealogist to combine ‘erudite and popular knowledge in order to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today’ (Foucault 1980:83). In this thesis, genealogy will be used to identify the discursive power struggles within the archive sustainable consumption.

2.3.4 – Documents and interviews

Performing a genealogical analysis implies first to undertake the archaeological method of discourse analysis in order to identify SCP discourses. The documents that bear the official SCP discourses of the institutions analysed in this thesis and which will be object of an archaeological scrutiny are:

EEA 2005. *‘Household Consumption and the Environment’*.

UNEP 2004. *‘Tracking Progress: Implementing sustainable consumption policies’*. 2nd edition. It is a global review of implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

Norwegian government 2002. *‘National Strategy for Sustainable Development’*.

Ministry of the Environment 2005. *‘The Government’s Environmental Policy and the State of the Environment in Norway’*.

GRIP 2004. *Sustainable Consumption and Production – Practical, profitable and proactive innovation’*,

Ministry of Children and Equality 2006. *‘Consumer Policy in Norway’, ‘The Norwegian action plan to reduce commercial pressure on children and the young people’.*

SIFO. It’s website¹², since it would be inadequate to take only one paper written by one researcher as the one representative of the theoretical framework of this organisation. It is on SIFO’s website where one can find statements about the institution rationality.

Interviews with SCP professionals that are considered agents of power, or vehicles of power, since they occupy jobs position that allow them to circulate power, will be used to help with an understanding of the SCP discourses. They are:

Lars Mortensen, EEA – Group leader of the Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme.

Bas de Leeuw, UNEP – Head of the Strategy Unit, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch.

Adriana Zacarias, UNEP – Associate Programme Officer, responsible for the Marrakech Process.

Paul Hofseth, Ulla Hegg, and Grethe Torrissen, Ministry of the Environment. Paul Hofseth and Ulla Hegg are senior advisers of the Department of International Cooperation. Grethe Torrissen is senior adviser of the Department of Pollution Control and responsible for the Norwegian participation on the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) as part of the Marrakech Process.

Martin Standley, GRIP – Adviser and co-founder of GRIP.

Jacob Bomann-Larsen, Ministry of Children and Equality – Senior adviser.

Harald Throne-Holst, SIFO – Researcher and member of the board.

¹² www.sifo.no

3 – The Formation of Objects

If there is one Foucaultian statement that summarizes the reason in identifying discursive relations it certainly would be: ‘One cannot speak of anything at any time’ (Foucault 1972:44). It is the discursive relations that determine the group of relations that discourses must establish in order to speak of this or that object at a particular historical period. In the beginning of 1990s, for instance, it was impossible to talk about sustainable consumption and production (SCP) because it did not exist as an object. In fact, when one describes the formation of the objects of a discourse, one tries to locate the relations that characterise a discursive practice. These relations therefore, ‘characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice’ (ibid:46).

The process of identifying discursive relations involves finding out the surfaces of emergence, the authorities of delimitation, the grids of specification, and the relations established between them. In this case, surfaces of emergence is concerned with how sustainable consumption and production discourses find a way of limiting their domain, of defining what they are talking about, of giving them the status of an object – and therefore of making it manifest, nameable, and describable (ibid:41). The authorities of delimitation are those that limit, designate, name, and establish sustainable consumption and production as discursive objects. Lastly, the grids of specification are the systems according to which sustainable consumption and production discourses are built up, divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, and derived from.

In the next three sections, I will analyse the documents referred on the previous chapter, looking for the discursive relations that were established in order to form sustainable consumption and production as discursive objects. Quotations will be used to illustrate the discursive relations; fragments of the interviews will proportionate a more comprehensive access to discourses.

3.1 – Surfaces of emergence

This analytical inquiry aims to map the first surfaces of SCP emergence, i.e. the fields in which SCP, as discursive objects, first arose. It also relates to new fields of emergence

in which new discursive relations are practiced. These fields can be world summits, international agreements, a specific political framework, etc. Moreover, these fields allow SCP discourses to define what they are talking about, thereby creating apparently definite objects of discourse.

Sustainable consumption and production discourses refer to Agenda 21 Chapter 4 launched at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro as its *conceptual* framework. The agreement to develop a framework of programmes on SCP at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg is regarded as its *strategic* framework, ‘which marked a renewed global policy-focus’ (EEA 2005:12). ‘Over the years most of the work on sustainable consumption has shifted from discussing concepts and strategies to defining policy options’ (UNEP 2004:9). Nevertheless, the conceptual framework stated in the Chapter 4 ‘Changing Consumption Patterns’ – which highlights the need for reorienting consumption patterns towards sustainability, and presented strategies for achieving the goals – has strongly limited and defined the relations established within sustainable consumption discourses until today.

Sustainable consumption and production was therefore conceptually and strategically framed in world summits on sustainable development. Since the 1987 Brundtland report ‘*Our Common Future*’, the concept of sustainable development has entered the political arena. Its most common definition reads, ‘Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’¹³. This definition contains within it two key concepts: ‘1) the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and 2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs’¹⁴.

In 1991, the then Business Council for Sustainable Development was looking for a single concept to sum up the business end of sustainable development. In partnership with the Green Working Environment, they launched the expression eco-efficiency that, in simple terms, means creating more goods and services with ever less use of resources, waste and pollution.

¹³ World Commission on Environment and Development and G. H. Brundtland 1987:43.

¹⁴ Ibid

Today, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) states that ‘eco-efficiency is achieved by the delivery of competitively-priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life-cycle to a level at least in line with the earth’s estimated carrying capacity’ (2000:4).

Having being conceptualized within the sustainable development framework, sustainable consumption discourses are consequently related with issues such as respecting nature’s tolerance limits, meeting the basic needs of humanity, bringing better quality of life, and producing within the principles of eco-efficiency. The ‘official’ concept of sustainable consumption itself confirms these discursive relations. Coined by the Oslo Symposium in 1994, and adopted by the UN-CSD in 1995, it states:

‘Sustainable consumption is the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations’.

The principles of this definition have been incorporated in the SCP international discourses. UNEP states: ‘Sustainable consumption includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable’ (2004:64).

Another set of discursive relations points out that growth in consumption and ‘unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialised countries’ (Agenda 21) are consigned as responsible for the degeneration of the global environment and poverty. This discursive relation is presented in all documents under analysis:

‘Growth in consumption has benefited the standard of living of the average citizen in the EU-15 and in the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland). However, millions of Europeans, both in the new Member States and in the EU-15 are still living in poverty, are unemployed or partly excluded from our consumption society’ (EEA 2005:18).

‘World consumption expenditures, private and public, have expanded at an unprecedented pace, doubling in real terms in 25 years to reach US\$ 24 trillion in 1998. This expansion has propelled considerable advances in human development. Unfortunately, however, the negative impacts have been similarly resounding. The problems include unequal distribution of consumption, environmental damage (deforestation, soil degradation, desertification, water stress and loss of biodiversity) and social impacts that deepen inequalities and social exclusion’ (UNEP 2004:8).

'Since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro the environmental health of the world has deteriorated in many ways rather than improving. We are consuming our natural capital, not just its yield, which is contrary to the principles of sustainable development. Despite the high rate of consumption, one-fifth of the world's population is still living below the poverty line, while another fifth is enjoying unprecedented material prosperity, and the gap between rich and poor is continuing to grow' (Norwegian government 2002:5).

Global responsibility, the worldwide aspect of environmental degradation, and economic growth compose another set of relations established within the discourses addressing sustainable consumption and production. In both world summits (1992 and 2002), industrialised countries were called to take the lead in changing unsustainable patterns of consumption. This set of discursive relations has been widely accessed in the process of shaping SCP as objects of discourse:

'The negative environmental effects of our consumption do not only occur in Europe, but also in other regions of the world. This is mainly a result of resource extraction, production, processing and transportation of the goods we consume in Europe carried out in other regions' (EEA 2005:15).

'Other important elements that need to be addressed through sustainable consumption include decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and the theme of 'common but differentiated responsibility' (UNEP 2004:9).

'Many countries are still dependent on substantial economic growth to be able to satisfy their people's basic needs. At the same time, we know that the global environment cannot sustain a continuing worldwide rise in consumption at the same rate and following the same patterns as we have seen until now in the rich part of the world. The Government added that people in the industrialised countries will have to realise that any future improvement in the quality of their lives both can and must be based on considerably lower consumption of resources' (Norwegian government 2002:16).

'One of the greatest, and most difficult, challenges of our time is creating the conditions for welfare in all countries without undermining world climate, ecosystems and human health. The influence on the environment of unsustainable consumption and production of goods and services represents such a threat. Focus on consumption and production patterns is therefore a precondition for sustainable development' (GRIP 2004).

Summarising, the discursive relations established in order to access SCP as discursive objects are heavily framed by sustainable development discourses. They relate to needs of the present and future generations, needs of the world's poor, environment capacity and eco-efficiency. Growth in consumption, especially in industrialised countries, and inefficient productive processes are presented as the major cause of the deterioration of the global environment.

3.2 – Authorities of delimitation

Specific international and national actors have the authority to establish discursive relations in the process of framing objects of discourse. Based on the discursive relations described above, it is possible to infer that the key actors responsible to form sustainable consumption as discursive objects are the European Union, UNEP, and governments, especially from industrialised countries. In this section, I will investigate how the actors in this analysis delimit SCP through discursive processes. I will start with the EEA.

The EEA targets acidification, air quality, climate change, noise, waste, and chemicals as environmental issues that the agency deals with, but it does not nominate sustainable consumption as a specific environmental problem in its website yet. The group leader of the EEA Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme, Lars Mortensen, explains why.

‘We’ve just established our group of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) two months ago (February/2006). It has not been reflected on the website yet. It will be, of course. In the past, our work on SCP was basically looking on specific sectors, but not using the word sustainable consumption and production as the theme, but doing it as a part of our analysis on sectors. Then, last year, we decided that we want to focus more specifically on SCP, therefore we created a group, that I am leading now, which has a focus on SCP. So we are in a kind of process of framing our work, we are trying to find out what to focus on while we are working with SCP, and how we are going to do our work.’

Aiming to provide input for European policy-making related to sustainable consumption and production, the EEA is now focusing its work on analysis of the environmental effects and the environmental sustainability of household consumption in Europe. The EEA’s recent established SCP group is concentrating on consumption as part of the consumption and production chain, as Mortensen affirms:

‘The consumption aspect as part of SCP chain is the least developed. Most people discuss and make analysis of SCP focusing on the production angle. We decided to focus not only in consumption, but the emphasis will be on consumption, consumers, their behaviour, and the environment impacts. That is our approach.’

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is another actor which has been carrying out the work of defining policy options on SCP at the international level since the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, the focus was on the production side. As a follow up of the 1992 UNCED, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were raising conceptual questions such as ‘does SCP mean less consumption or different consumption? Does it have something to do with individual foot-prints?’ They were also developing indicators that could measure how far countries are implementing sustainable consumption policies. The head of the Strategy Unit, Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, Bas de Leeuw, elucidates the UNEP’s role at that time:

‘UNEP as such was a little bit absent on that development, because in 1989, UNEP had initiated the concept ‘cleaner production’, concentrating therefore on the production side of sustainable development. It focused more on environmental issues and green production than on sustainable production. It was a very successful program, but not holistic on the technical sides.’

In 1997, several countries agreed that UNEP should also join the debates on activities of sustainable consumption. ‘So they send me to Paris with the task, in two years, to initiate the programme sustainable consumption. The first thing I did was to link sustainable consumption with the clean production programme, in order to include business into the sustainable consumption framework’, explains de Leeuw. At that time, de Leeuw also learned that developing countries were regarding sustainable consumption as an issue to be dealt primarily by Europe and USA. ‘They used to say, ‘we are poor, we should consume more, this agenda is not for us’’, remembers de Leeuw. When the UNEP Sustainable Consumption programme was finally launched in 1999, it aimed to concentrate on the business agenda through a sustainable perspective, and on making the concept attractive for developing countries as well. Today, the SC Programme has the mission of better understanding the forces that drive consumption and using the findings to inspire governments, businesses and non-governmental organisations to take action. However, UNEP’s main priority is to influence national governments.

‘Sustainable consumption is the result of billions of individual consumer decisions. Only they decide how to buy and how to use it. The total results, of course, can lead to environmental damage and exploitation of people in developing countries. So in order to change that, governments should facilitate a process in which the total damage of consumption goes down. It is the government that have to promote alternatives. UNEP do not have the wish to reach individual citizens all over the world. We want of course to reach them with environmental messages, what sustainable consumption is, but we would like to do it through national governments. It means, for instance, developing tools and knowledge to national governments that can help them to inform their people.’ (Bas de Leeuw, UNEP)

So far, we have seen that while the EEA is delimiting its SCP approach to household consumption, the UNEP is focusing on national governments as the instrument to steer SCP in political and practical terms, especially through working close with business community. Actually, the sustainable consumption political frame that UNEP wants to promote towards national governments is the extended version of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection (1999).

'The extension of the Guidelines to include sustainable consumption provided an important opportunity both to update consumer protection policies to include environmental protection and sustainable development, and to strengthen the linkage between consumer interests and sustainable consumption, thereby stimulating national policy making to promote more sustainable consumption' (UNEP 2004:11).

The UN Guidelines are intended to be used by governments in developing and strengthening national consumer protection legislation and regulation. 'They are not formal obligations or even recommendations, but rather a set of elements governments can draw upon in developing such policies' (ibid).

Within the worldwide scope of national governments that UNEP wants to reach, the governments of industrialised countries play a special role: 'Industrialised countries are generally further advanced in the implementation process and should therefore share knowledge and experiences with developing countries. Industrialised countries should support developing countries with direct knowledge transfer' (UNEP 2004:62).

The discursive relations established between SCP, industrialised countries, and developing countries direct us to the third key authority on shaping and delimiting SCP as discursive objects: the governments of developed countries. Norway is approached in this thesis as an example of how an industrialised country deals with the challenge of combining its national interests with the guidelines presented by the international SCP discourses. In this Nordic country, a sustainable consumption framework is outlined within the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development* (2002). The strategy has a clear focus on the use of natural resources and the production side of the SCP chain.

'Norway's sustainable development strategy must reach far beyond its own borders. Environmentally hazardous substances and other forms of pollution are not stopped by national borders, and we are dependent on natural resources that we exploit jointly with others. Forty per cent of the Norwegian economy is based on the exchange of goods with other countries, and we are increasingly subject to the same rules and conditions as the rest of the world' (Norwegian government 2002:10).

Two Norwegian Ministries are responsible for defining sustainable consumption and production policies: the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of the

Children and Equality. The former quotes sustainable consumption and production as a ‘cross-cutting issue’ of the key priorities of Norwegian environmental policies, together with environmental technologies, greening public procurement, environmental policy at local level, and the development of a knowledge-based environmental policy (Ministry of the Environment 2005:12). Within this political frame, sustainable consumption and production means ‘to reduce the environmental pressure caused by production and consumption in Norway’ (ibid:16).

The Norwegian Ministry of the Environment frames the political means to achieve results in SCP as: 1) encouraging Norwegian companies to focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR); 2) play an active role in international cooperation in green public procurement; 3) give priority to analyses of, and develop indicators to monitor the environmental impacts of production and consumption in Norway; and 4) develop a strategy for sustainable management of state-owned buildings (ibid).

Exercising its authority in delimiting and shaping SCP as discursive objects, the Norwegian government is paying special attention in green public procurement (GPP) as ‘one of the most promising instruments for the implementation of SCP’ (GRIP 2006:7). Green public procurement has been part of Norwegian strategy towards SCP since November 1992, when the Public Procurement Act¹⁵, aiming to impact the government’s own operations, entered into force. It requires public authorities to take life-cycle costs and environmental impacts into account when planning new investments:

‘Central, municipal and county-municipal authorities and legal persons mentioned in ... shall when planning each procurement have regard to the resource implications and environmental consequences of the procurement’

In 2003, the total value of goods and services purchased by the Norwegian public sector was almost NOK 240 billion, of which NOK 96 billion was in the central government sector and NOK 70 billion in the municipal sector (Ministry of Environment 2005:18). ‘This means that there is a substantial potential for reducing the environmental impact of the public sector’ (ibid).

The Norwegian Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (GRIP) is today the Norwegian foundation responsible to develop and carry out the Green Public Procurement (GPP) program, in close dialogue with the Ministry of the Environment.

¹⁵ odin.dep.no/nhd/norsk/p10002767/p10002770/024081-990048/index-dok000-b-n-a.html

The Ministry commissions the GPP-program and it is also the major source of financing (GRIP 2005:3). The aim of the Norwegian GPP-program ‘is to encourage and enable public procurement officers to take environmental considerations, save money and improve their organisation’s profile’ (ibid).

The idea is that by setting higher environmental standards, the public sector can force suppliers and manufacturers to produce greener products, impacting therefore the market regarding environmental sound goods and services.

‘In the government’s opinion, the public sector has a special responsibility to lead the way, given its size and the fact that it is responsible for managing public funds. Public-sector agencies should be aware of the environmental impacts of their purchases, set environmental standards, and choose the best solutions in environmental terms within the constraints of price and quality. The government wishes the public sector to be a driving force in efforts to shift the pattern of consumption in Norway in a more sustainable direction’ (Ministry of the Environment 2005:18).

GRIP’s adviser and co-founder, Martin Standley, argues that ‘regarding green public procurement, the biggest effect is not actually the change in consumption choices by the procurement officers. The biggest effect is the signals that are sent to the suppliers. When making their products, after have been questioned through some procurements, the suppliers can think, ‘ah, people are going to prefer that product instead of this one’. Therefore, they will make new products. This is probably the biggest effect. I mean, we are talking about NOK 240 billion of purchases per year. If we can move this market just a little bit, then the suppliers will have to follow.’

In accordance with this governmental way of shaping SCP as discursive objects, Norway decided to take part in the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP)¹⁶ as part of the Marrakech Process¹⁷. Norway, together with the

16 The Marrakech Task Force (MTF) is a voluntary initiative lead by a country – in cooperation with other partners – committed to carry out a set of activities that support the implementation of specific projects of the Marrakech Process. The Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement is lead by Switzerland. The countries and partners participating are Ghana (Africa), China, Philippines and Indonesia (Asia), Argentina, El Salvador and Brazil (South America), USA (North America), UK, Norway, Czech Republic, and Austria (Europe), and UNDESA, UNEP, ICLEI, European Commission, ILO; OECD, in consultation with WTO and World Bank.

17 The Marrakech Process is a response to the call, in Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Chapter III, for actions at all levels to develop a 10-year framework of programmes for SCP: ‘Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, delinking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste. All countries should take action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the

other countries and partners that are participating in the Marrakech Task Force on SPP, are broadening the scope of the green public procurement by extending the environmental criteria with social criteria, leading therefore to the concept of sustainable public procurement (SPP).

The Norwegian authoritative role in limiting and designating SCP as discursive objects is also exercised by the Ministry of Children and Equality. This Ministry is responsible for the consumer policy in Norway, especially regarding information, and eco-labelling. The Ministry also represents Norway in the co-operation for a Nordic eco-labelling system, *The White Swan*, which was established through an initiative by the Nordic Consumer Ministers in 1989.

The six main objectives for the Ministry's consumer policy are: 1) secure consumer rights; 2) secure relevant and correct information to consumers; 3) contribute, through education and legislation, to the aim that the households shall be able to handle their economic situation; 4) prevent consumers from being subject to risks to life and health; 5) stimulate consumer behaviour that contributes to a sustainable consumption; and 6) produce and outspread knowledge on consumer matters.

‘There is a need for new education in schools and kindergartens, so that when people grow up, they have new ideas on what good life is, what is good to aspire to. Green consumer education is part of it. And one instrument of green education, which we are responsible for, is eco-labelling, ‘The Swan’. However, this instrument alone will not change very much, but together with others like education, tax changing, tax policies, it can be very important.’ (Jacob Bomann-Larsen, Ministry of Children and Equality)

An affiliated agency of the Ministry of Children and Equality, which has played an active role in shaping SCP as discursive objects, is the National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO – *Statens institutt for forbruksforskning*). SIFO is the only institute in Norway solely concerned with consumer research, and as such is responsible for developing national expertise on the relevant fields.

Giving scientific endorsement to the Ministry of Children and Equality discursive practices, SIFO's projects approach the relationship between consumption and the environment within a broader consumer culture perspective. The researches are

development needs and capabilities of developing countries, through mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries’ (Chapter III, §15).

divided in five areas: consumption and economy; market and politics; technology and the environment, digital media and product testing. The research on consumption and economy covers living conditions and consumer economy (attitudes towards food, Christmas presents, fashion, food consumption, gender, housework, laundry and laundry habits, mealtime patterns, washing), and youth and children. Within this frame, researchers are concerned with the consumption of social and individual meaning.

*'On the one hand products and services are viewed as symbols of communication with added meaning. On the other hand articles of consumption also have an aspect of use, and can be seen as tools capable of changing the day to day schedule and interaction between people.'*¹⁸

The research on market and politics focuses on the modes of provision, on distribution of products and services (consumer attitudes, influence and patterns, environmental consciousness, shopping behaviour), and trust and consumer politics. The researchers seek to understand how 'the image of the consumer' materialises, and is incorporated into the product, the production process and the market strategies. They also focus on how the consumers themselves try to influence their own choices by the power of being purchasers and complainants in the market, or as voters and expressers of opinions in political processes (e.g. reader's letter).

Finally, the research on technology and environment works with information and communication technology (ICT), and test of products. 'The relationship between consumption and the environment, in the broadest perspective, is the base of the environmental research at SIFO' (ibid). Consumption then includes acquisition, use and disposal. A common feature for this research is in what manner products and services are incorporated into the consumers' everyday life. Emphasis is put on how the products are used and interpreted.

Summarising, in this section, I have identified the ways in which key authorities are limiting and defining SCP as discursive objects. The EEA focuses on household consumption of millions of Europeans consumers, their behaviour and the environment impacts of consumption. The UNEP concentrates on national governments since they are responsible for providing the legal framework within which business community and relevant organisations of civil society can operate. The discursive practices of developed countries were approached through Norway. The Norwegian SCP framing is twofold.

18 SIFO website: www.sifo.no

From the production side, the focus is on green public procurement as an instrument of impacting the government's own operations and driving the market regarding the production and demand of environmental sound goods and services. From the consumption aspect, SCP is approached through eco-labelling and the social aspects in a broader consumer culture perspective: habits, social practices, individual and social meaning, modes of provision, and technological power of shaping and changing practices. In the next section, I will identify the discursive systems and their organizing principles in which the authorities base their sustainable consumption and production discourses.

3.3 – Grids of specification

The grids of specification are the discursive material on which discourses about sustainable consumption and production are built. Based on different discursive material, it is possible to establish different systems, i.e. frameworks, of SCP. These systems may be compared and contrasted or related to each other; they may be derived from each other, or even contradict each other. In fact, these systems are the foundation of the delimitations of the object SCP established by the discursive practices of the authorities described above. In this section, I will perform a brief sustainable consumption literature review, in order to facilitate the process of detailing each system, each grid of specification, below.

3.3.1 – The consumer as the unit of analysis

A first system revolves around the basis that consumers play the core role in promoting changes of unsustainable patterns of consumption. It regards, for instance, the consumption of millions of households as the major contributors to environmental problems such as climate change, air pollution, water pollution, land use and waste (EEA 2005:5). The individual is, therefore, the unit of analysis, and changing individual consumption behaviour is the ultimate target as a means to attaining more sustainable consumption and production patterns, consequently reducing the environmental impact (Hobson 2003). Lars Mortensen, the group leader of the EEA Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme, explains the link between consumers and environmental impacts:

‘If we change our consumption using less electricity in our homes, we contribute less to the gas emissions and climate change. If we buy and drive cars that are more energy efficient, it contributes to less climate change and less air pollution. If, when we are tourists in another part of the world, we consume less water, less electricity, and produce less waste, we contribute to less environmental impacts in those countries.’

3.3.2 – Changing values and ethical conversion

A second system of principles on which SCP discourses are built, is related to the first system described above. It claims that achieving sustainable consumption may imply changing lifestyles, and therefore, a change of values is regarded as a necessary step in solving environmental problems. Moreover, ethical conversion is perceived as a ‘tool’ of persuading people away from consumerism and materialistic values towards ecological concerns. In this perspective, individual action informed by new ethical concerns for the environment – engagement in green consumerism, the adoption of ecological lifestyles, or voluntary simplicity, for example – could also remedy environmental problems and reframe individual lifestyles in a more sustainable way (Jackson 2005a). Jacob Bomann-Larsen, senior adviser of the Ministry of Children and Equality explains why a changing in lifestyles is necessary:

‘Sustainable consumption means a different lifestyle for most people, consuming less of many natural resources, but also consuming differently. Resource consumption per capita level in Norway and other rich industrialised countries are too high, beyond the carrying capacity of the Earth. It means that our ecological footprint is very high. But we are using an economic development model which means that more and more material things is considered better and better. UNEP, for example, has stated in the report Global Environmental Outlook 2000 that the rich industrialised countries should reduce the consumption level of natural resources as much as 90% compared to the present level. This is a lot, but it is probably possible. Through technological development, it is possible to increase resources productivity. But is this enough? Is it possible that the purchase in power for all groups can grow forever in a sustainable way? I doubt it, but all policies are based on the belief that income and the purchase in power of all groups will increase. But can that go on forever? In fact, what we need in industrialised countries are new directions of development, trying to find other ways and values, which are less materially oriented. Look more for the relationship between people instead of just having more and more material things.’

3.3.3 – The responsibility of governments and business

In our search for the discursive material on which SCP discourses are based, it is possible to identify a third system, which in fact enables the two systems described above. This third system of discursive material is based on the notion that national

governments and business community have active roles in setting the stage that empower consumers to make rational, sustainable choices, and to change lifestyles. Public authorities are regarded as being responsible for setting up the legal and fiscal framework within which business and consumers should function. The business community, in its turn, is expected to produce sustainable goods and services throughout their entire life-cycle. Together, these two actors are thus responsible to make available all tools necessary for consumers to rationally choose to adopt a sustainable consumption behaviour and lifestyle. Mortensen, from EEA, lays out the rationality of this discursive system:

‘Consumers, business and governments have an interlink and need to change together. However, they have different roles. The governments have the role to put a framework to enable changes. They have to give information to the consumers. If they want to change something, governments can put taxes on the prices or remove subsidies; thereby they can steer the market and the change on the right way. The businesses also have a big responsibility, because the majority of the impacts of consumption are actually indirect impacts from the production. If I consume a bottle of apple juice, the impacts do not come from me drinking this juice; all the impacts are from producing, transporting, etc. However, the consumers also have responsibility because they are the ones that make it change. Without the consumers consuming differently, it doesn’t happen. So there is an interplay between all of them and all this.’

The UNEP’s discursive approach to SCP is essentially based on this system, focusing on the relation between, and the roles of the governments and the business community, as Bas de Leeuw explains:

‘If you, as a consumer want, maybe conscious or not, to change consumption, those products have to be there. So this is related with producers. Governments influence by means of tax systems, legislation, to some extent what kind of products can be developed and produced, etc. Retailers have a very interesting and important role in shops, because they are the bridge between consumers and producers. The way how they communicate about the products is very important. If they have such an environmental friendly section way down on the shops, it doesn’t help. So they have a very important role.’

3.3.4 – Green public procurement

A fourth discursive system on which SCP discourses are built is part of the set of the systems described above. However, it highlights the responsibility of governments and business community in changing and influencing their own consumption patterns. Green public procurements are regarded as one essential tool in driving sustainable consumption changes in the market:

'Governments and international agencies should take the lead in introducing sustainable practices in their own operations, in particular through their procurement policies. Government procurement, as appropriate, should encourage development and use of environmentally sound products and services' (UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, UNEP 2004:Appendix 1).

Martin Standley, from GRIP, explains that it is the responsibility of the government to support businesses by providing a regulatory framework that ensures that all companies follow environmental and social regulations, because 'SCP is the consumption being made by organisations':

'So it is very connected to the procurement acts that we are working with, i.e. what should be taken in account of all the different parts of the procurement chain. It starts out with finding out if the company really needs to buy what they are buying, and why. Then it goes down to finding out what types of suppliers the company has, and what type of environmental sustainability profile the different suppliers have. Then down to products and specifying what environmental criteria the companies are going to use, and both from the point of view of minimal requirements, but also which criteria one will be using when selecting a product to buy. Then it goes to after doing the purchase, to how the company build up internal maintenance routines and routines for running it. It is related to the use-phase, making sure that people internally know how to use the product in the right way. It also relates to what kind of relationship the company establishes with the supplier, because we found out that when one builds up a good relationship with the supplier, it is not just influencing him before buying, but also after the procurement, when you start to give feedback, which allows them to develop new products which can be more environmentally friendly. Then it relates to the phase of disposal, i.e. getting rid of the product in the end. So that is for us the whole consumption process. It is a long cycle.'

3.3.5 – Rational choice model

In fact, the sum of these four discursive systems described above can be grouped together in just one system, based on the 'rational choice model'. Jackson (2005) highlights the rational choice model as having drawn heavily on the intellectual underpinnings of classical economics, even though economics does not have the monopoly on rational choice. Nevertheless, the rational choice model constitutes the core of the economic theory of consumer behaviour. Within this model, consumption is viewed as a matter of personal choice exercised by autonomous consumers making relatively unconstrained lifestyle choices. It also stresses the individual as the unit of analysis: it is the individuals who make choices based on rational deliberations.

The assumed 'rationality' of consumer choice implies an individual making reasoned choices that maximise his/her expected utility over the set of possible purchases. This utility maximisation can only be achieved if consumers possess the right

set of information about the goods available and their prices. Thus, rational choices are only possible in the context of ‘perfect’ market information (Jackson 2005:30). This discourse is considered in the Norwegian governmental discourses in approaching SCP:

‘The Government will give high priority to ensuring that everyone has access to environmental information, and particularly that it is an integral part of the education of children and young people. Environmental information must also be an element of lifelong learning and play a part in influencing people’s attitudes. Information must be used to encourage participation in decision-making processes in society and to provide a basis for making environmentally friendly choices on a day-to-day basis’ (Ministry of the Environment 2005:19).

In the rational choice model, price, income (and perhaps product quality) are the only determinants of consumer behaviour allowed, with ‘tastes’ treated as a residual factor (McNeill 1992). Tastes and preferences are assumed to be exogenous to consumer choice. In fact, the most that can be said about the structure of individual or collective preference in economic models is signaled through the actual decisions that rational consumers make in the market place.

Having identified four discursive systems heavily influenced by the rational choice model, I will turn now to another discursive system on which SCP discourses are built.

3.3.6 – Social practices

The fifth discursive system contradicts conceptually the first two ones – consumer as unity of analysis and changing values and ethical conversion as remedy to environmental problems – but enlarges the instrumental strategic frame of all the former four systems. This discursive system approaches sustainable consumption through the social world in which the consumer’s motivations are often seen as embedded in a variety of ordinary, routine and habitualised behaviours. In this system, individuals are considered to be active social agents, having contextualized and shared ideas and practices about routines and habits related with comfort, convenience, and cleanliness (Wilhite and Shove 1998; Shove 2002, 2003a, 2003b). Harald Throne-Holst, researcher and member of the board of SIFO explains:

‘What many would see as choices in everyday life is really routines. You go into the supermarket and pick the usual goods. You don’t think. You don’t make an active choice; every time you go into the supermarket, you don’t think actively about everything. You develop routines. And it is also a challenge for environmental concerns, to wake people up from the routines. It is part of the information overload problem. If you are going to have active choices all day, in all your shopping, in your

entire consumer activities, it is tend to be tiring. It is in human nature to routinize your activities, because you cannot think actively about all your acts in one day. When you brush your teeth, you don't think how you do it. We have to understand how the habits are formed, and how they can be changed.'

These behaviours patterns are heavily influenced by social norms and practices and constrained by institutional contexts. Far from being able to exercise free choice in the selection of goods and services, consumers often find themselves 'locked-in' specific consumption patterns by a variety of social, institutional and cognitive constraints, like infrastructures (particularly transport), and commercial marketing (Southerton, Warde and Hand 2004:35). Changes in the physical conditions of the houses promoted by the building construction industry also channel choices of consumption. Adriana Zacarias, associate programme officer of the UNEP SC Programme and responsible for the conduction of Marrakech Process within UNEP, exemplifies these forms of constraints:

'It is very interesting why we moved from sustainable consumption to sustainable lifestyles. When you look at the whole system – products, services, lifecycles, and the chain of providers – at the end, it is not only about how we consume. Sometimes we consume a product because there is no other way of getting the service that we want. Sometimes you want to do things, but you cannot do without the service. I'll give you an example: mobility. Maybe I don't need a car, but I need mobility to go from A to B. So a sustainable lifestyle would be that instead of saying 'oh, consume a good car, one that is more environmentally friendly', it would be 'ah, maybe let's invest in a sustainable infrastructure for public transport and then I will have mobility, but without car'. Let's work with some companies, for example, with kitchens. They realized that the consumers, on the third or fifth year, change their refrigerator, but not because it was old or not working, but because it was 'gelo' [white] and they want it red. Then they started to integrate their service and say, 'ok, do you want to change it? We will paint it, we will change the colour, but not change the whole thing.'

In this discursive system, consumption is also socially and technically constrained and constructed by devices which shape and change practices. The concept of lock-in, which describes how some technologies lock people into stable daily practices (Southerton et al 2004), and the concept of technological script (Akrich 1994:209; Wilhite 2006:250), where devices carry a script for practices that will direct future attitudes to certain directions, show how consumption is also configured by many aspects of production. Which goods and services are provisioned, how those goods and services shape the consumption of related products, and how devices are used, all affect the structuring relations between consumers and providers. Nevertheless, the central question is how the introduction of new devices affect or change practices. Lars

Mortensen explains how the newly created SCP programme at EEA has approached the concept of technological script:

‘Consumption changes when consumers consume differently for many reasons. It changes when the driving forces that affect our consumption change. So we are affected by economics means, technology, what kind of social issues, and what culture means. So for example, if we have more money, we consume differently, we consume more basically. If technology changes, if we have new technologies like Internet and mobile phone, it complete changes the way we consume. Internet, for example, enables us to buy things from all over the world.’ (Lars Mortensen, EEA)

Anthropologist Daniel Miller claims that the study of consumption should be ‘increasingly articulated with the study of the mechanisms by which goods are produced and distributed (1995:17). After all, the way consumers ‘choose’ is dependent on the choices that are available for them. Demand is the result of both consumption and the set of available choices, as Throne-Holst, from SIFO, explains:

‘You cannot choose what is not there; but you can have demand for something that it is not there. I would like organic tomatoes, but they don’t have them. How is my wish voiced? When I go shopping, I buy organic milk. With this choice, I would like to signalize to all producers that I want more organic products, not just organic milk. But do they understand that when I buy organic milk? When I make choices, some would say that they are just routine choices, but for me it can be a very active choice. I really would like to tell something when I choose this instead of that. That is political consumption. You have an idea and you would like to make an impact. That is a challenge.’

Sustainable consumption policies framed by this discursive system would need to be oriented to change both the way people choose and the choices they face; they would need to influence both consumers and what set of choices are available. Increased public investment in public transport, for instance, is seen as a manner to design policies that can affect consumption practices. Advertising the use of public transport as being sexy, fun, creative, relaxing, would be another manner to influence the imagination of social groups and channellize actions, since advertising and the media conveys messages on what is socially appropriate (Wilhite 2001). In other words, SCP policies should not only encourage voluntarism in people to go out and struggle to find alternatives. Policies should also create new alternatives and advertise those alternatives. Zacarias, from UNEP, and Throne-Holst, from SIFO, highlights the need of having innovative ways to create and promote alternatives that could have an impact on modifying consumption patterns:

‘We need to change the level of natural resources that we are consuming, the waste that we are generating, the use of natural resources, the use of energy, the use of water. Is it

eco-efficiency? Yes, but the problem is that the consumption levels are increasing so much that all the gains in eco-efficiency are being lost. So we really need to modify the consumption patterns. And that implies modifying the whole lifestyles. This implies to be more creative, innovative, create a different system of providing services and products. Because at the end of the day, it is not only about consuming less, but it is about consuming better, or making better choices. I would use different slogans like 'consume smartly, consume better'. We could make a campaign of how to make sustainable consumption sexy and cool. You have to 'picture' people that when they see an ad on sustainable consumption, they can say 'ah, it's like me!' It is not someone alternative, hippie, it is someone like me that is promoting another option of sustainable consumption patterns.' (Adriana Zacarias, UNEP)

'Historically I am afraid that the message of what being a sustainable consumer means has been understood as very radical, as a boring life: a sustainable life is a boring life; it is to say no, it is to reduce everything that is fun. It has a negative image, at least in a historical perspective. It seems like a hindrance for living out your dreams. It has some kind of negative tone to it; it means reduction and not much fun. But, in a sense, it is changing. There are good signs; something is happening. I think personally that the climate change, or some of the changes in the weather that we see, and many now connect with climate change, I think there is a big potential there to make people realize that we have to do something. I think human ingenuity finds way to be sustainable without being very boring. In fact, it could be quite fun. But it cannot top overnight. It should not necessary be radical steps, or huge steps. The picture that we have gone small steps on the wrong direction, and now we need to turn around and start to walk on the right direction, but not very radical steps, but small steps, it seems a positive message. It does not seem that hard; just change a bit, every year, a little bit better.' (Harald Throne-Holst, SIFO)

Within this system, the social practices that result from consumer, producer and intermediary actions should be at the core of analysis of sustainable consumption. For policy, the challenge would not be providing information strategies that would work as 'top down' persuasion, but of helping consumers to find ecologically rational ways of achieving the taken for granted goals of daily life. In this context, the key point is that consumers are involved in developing alternative (lower impacts) modes of provision and in reproducing new routines associated with them, explains Harald Throne-Holst, from SIFO.

'It has been a clear result of our research on the last ten years that you have to facilitate for the consumers. It should be easy to make a change. Also in a sense that you cannot take a bus that does not go. It has to be a bus there. We cannot just ask one to do something; they should all do something and see that 'it is not just I, but also the government trying to do something'. There is now a campaign in Oslo regarding litter, and I think it is completely wrong. 'You, pig', it says, 'we have put out a lot of garbage cans; just use them instead of littering'. I think they should say, 'Let's work together. We will put out even more garbage bins, and we will try to empty them oftener, but let's do it together. To achieve the goal we all need to work together'. I think this message would be much better instead of accusing the consumer, saying that the consumers don't do their bit. You should try to work together with all different roles, retailers, consumers, business, politicians, and producers. I think all of them need to see that

somebody else is doing something too. You cannot expect business to do all of it, all effort. You cannot expect either the consumers to do very much if they cannot see that other actors also are making an effort. All have to contribute.'

Summarising, in this section, I have identified five discursive systems on which SCP discourses are built. The first four systems can be grouped in one set of discursive material based on the principles of the rational choice model. The first system claims a view of consumption as a matter of personal choice exercised by autonomous consumers who make choices based on rational deliberations. The second discursive material argues for the need of changing values and ethical conversion as remedy to environmental problems. In the third system, national governments are responsible for establishing frameworks through legal instruments, prices, taxes, and information campaigns within which business community and consumers could operate sustainably. The fourth and last system of this set of discursive material based on the rational choice model approaches the responsibility of governments and business community for their own consumption patterns. Green public procurement is regarded therefore as the instrument to steer sustainable practices within the operations of these two actors. The fifth system presents an alternative discursive material on which SCP discourses are based. Within this system, consumption is approached through the social world in which consumer practices are embedded in a variety of ordinary, routine and habitualised behaviours. It considers how these social practices are influenced by social norms and constrained by institutional contexts which evoke lock-in situations, like infrastructure of public transport. This discursive material also addresses the concept of technological script, in which devices affects and change practices.

3.4 – Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified the discursive practices that have formed sustainable consumption and production as objects of which they speak. The fields in which SCP has emerged as discursive objects are heavily framed by sustainable development discourses. They relate to the needs of the present and future generations, the needs of the world's poor, environment capacity and eco-efficiency, and state that developed countries and business community have leading roles to play. Key authorities are limiting and defining SCP as objects of discourse in international arena. These limitations have resulted in a focus on 1) consumers as the unit of analysis, and 2)

national governments as responsible for providing the legal and fiscal frameworks within which business community and consumers can operate. The discursive practices of developed countries were approached through Norway. The Norwegian SCP framework is twofold. From the production side, the focus is especially on green public procurement. From the consumption aspect, SCP is approached through eco-labelling and the social aspects in a broader consumer culture perspective.

SCP discourses uttered by the key authorities referred above are built and structured within certain grids of specification, or discursive systems. I found five such systems which can be grouped in two sets. The first set is based on the principles of the rational choice model, characterised by individual consumers exercising rational choices; need of changing lifestyles and values; governments responsible to frame settings to business community and consumers through market instruments, law, taxes, information etc.; and green public procurement affecting governmental and industrial own operations. The second discursive set approaches consumption through the social world in which consumer practices are embedded in a variety of ordinary, routine and habitualised behaviours. It relates to social norms and institutional as consumption constrainers characterising lock-in situations. It also approaches SCP through the concept of technological script, in which devices affects and change practices.

It is the relations between the three different planes of emergence – surfaces of emergence, authorities of delimitation, and grids of specification – that give rise to SCP as discursive objects. There is not one privileged set of relations defining the SCP discourse, but rather a dispersion of many SCP discursive objects. It is the complex formation of this dispersed field of objects that characterises the SCP discourse.

Following the archaeological method of discourse analysis, the task in the next chapter is to identify the various positions the subject can occupy in relation to these discursive practises now identified as shaping sustainable consumption and production as objects of discourse.

4 – The Formation of Enunciative Modalities

Enunciative modalities are described on the basis of various positions a subject occupies in relation to the discursive relations practised in order to speak of the object sustainable consumption and production. Who practices those discourses, and from where are they uttered? The answer does not lie on looking for ‘a thinking, speaking subject’, but rather for ‘subject positions’ which individuals may occupy (Foucault 1972).

As we have seen in chapter 2, Foucault establishes three analytical steps in order to identify the enunciative modalities: 1) ask ‘who is speaking?’; 2) describe the institutional sites from which a given discourse derives its legitimacy and efficacy; and 3) identify the positions that are possible for the subject to occupy in relation to the object or domain of knowledge.

4.1 – Who speaks?

Which group of individuals have the right to speak, ability to understand, lawful and immediate access to the group of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, and practices? Within the archive sustainable consumption, those who have either ‘scientific’, political or market power are the ones who speak.

The first group is constituted by the academic community, those who produce knowledge and recommend political strategies. The second group by politicians, policy makers and journalists, those who put in practice political strategies, sometimes based on scientific knowledge, and those who promote or criticize them; and the third by executives, architects, designers, those who support and implement or boycott the strategies.

These groups, these subjects, are inscribed in institutional sites that ‘empower’ their discourses, without however, restricting them. On the contrary, depending on certain grids of positions, the subject can be the questioning subject, the listening subject and so on. Individuals belonging to one group may interchange positions in other groups without losing its own peculiarity; e.g. a social scientist may give consultancy to national governments.

In the categorization of who has voice in sustainable consumption discourses, it is important to stress here that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have contributed little to the sustainable consumption agenda at the international level. NGOs of international militancy like World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and Friends of Earth do not deal with sustainable consumption issues as such, but in indirect ways, such as promoting the market of certificate woods, for instance. An exception could be Consumers International (CI), which works specifically on consumer policies¹⁹. CI has SCP in their agenda, focusing on consumer rights. The UN Guidelines on Consumption Protection were expanded in 1999 with new directions on sustainable consumption partly due to CI's efforts, especially to assure consumers' right to have information regarding environment, infrastructure for recycling and green products. Nevertheless, consumer organisations, even though having the political right to occupy subject positions within the archive SCP, have not expressed 'consumers' voices' at the international discursive arena.

Summarising, SCP discourses have been voiced by those who have academic, political and market power. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and consumer organisations, even though having the right to utter SCP discourses, have not entered in the international SCP political arena.

4.2 – Institutional sites

In this section, I will describe the institutional sites from which SCP discourses derives its legitimacy and efficacy. At the international level, two institutions – EEA and UNEP – dominate the sustainable consumption discourse, especially related to producing knowledge and delivering information to the authorities responsible for elaborating political strategies and those capable of implementing them.

The European Environment Agency (EEA), although established by the EU in 1990, became operational in 1994:

'The EEA is the EU body dedicated to providing sound, independent information on the environment. We are a major information source for those involved in developing, adopting, implementing and evaluating environmental policy, and also the general

¹⁹ CI is a federation of consumer organisations dedicated to the protection and promotion of consumers' rights worldwide through empowering national consumer groups and campaigning at the international level. It currently represents over 230 organisations in 113 countries (www.consumersinternational.org).

public. Our aim is to help the EU and member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability' (EEA).

The information produced by the EEA is delivered to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and the EEA's member countries, which are the 25 EU Member States together with Bulgaria, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Romania and Turkey. In addition to this central group of European policy actors, the EEA also provides information to other EU institutions such as the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Investment Bank. Outside the EU framework, the business community, academia, non-governmental organisations and other parts of civil society are also important users of the EEA information.

The EEA's sustainable consumption and production group was recently established (February/2006) aiming to strategically support the political commitments that the EU has assumed in this specific political agenda in the last years. The 2003 European Council established that the EU should take the lead at both international and EU level in implementing the Marrakech 10-year framework of programmes for SCP. Moreover, as an outcome of the 2005 Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the European Commission committed itself to make an action plan on SCP to be delivered in 2006. Lars Mortensen, head of the SCP group of the EEA, describes the 'institutional site' from which EEA operates:

'EEA works in a different way from other organisations to some extent. We make analysis; we make assessments that policy makers can use. So we bring together knowledge from science, from statistical data, we write reports, develop indicators, make analysis, identify where the problems are, and identify options for policies, but we aren't policy makers.'

Another institutional site from where SCP discourses derive their legitimacy is the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which has played a strategic role in developing the debate on changing consumption and production patterns as a follow up of Chapter 4 of the Agenda 21. UNEP launched its Sustainable Consumption Programme in 1999. 'UNEP's relatively young SC Programme has quickly achieved the status of one of the leaders in setting the international agenda on sustainable consumption and in promoting its implementation' (UNEP 2004:10). It has been developed specially by the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), based in Paris. DTIE has several branches; one of them is the Production and

Consumption Branch (P&C), which has become the Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch (SCP) as from the first of August 2006 so ‘as to better reflect the evolution of the SCP agenda and to respond more adequately to its present, potential and emerging stakes and challenges’²⁰.

UNEP’s strategies and tools, such as cleaner production, environmental management tools, and waste management are elaborated to be applied on the following sectors: tourism, building and construction, retail, mining, agri-food, oil & gas, and industrial estates. The rationality behind the UNEP’s sustainable consumption programme is that:

‘The increasing awareness of sustainability among consumers worldwide can potentially create business opportunities in those countries, both in their domestic and their export markets, which will also strengthen their economic development. However, a lack of knowledge and skills sometimes leads to a hesitant or slow uptake of the required policies. This is why UNEP’s SC Programme includes an important ‘capacity-building’ component, focusing on Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe’ (UNEP 2004:10).

Within the Marrakech Process, the UNEP got the mandate to support the development of national and regional strategies on SCP. The recognition that SCP means different things for each region – Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America – led the UNEP to promote regional consultations to find out what the priorities are in each region, and which regional strategies should be developed. ‘In this process, we brought together the discourse of poverty reduction with sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption is not about reducing consumption, because sometimes it is necessary to increase it to meet the basic needs’, explains Adriana Zacarias, responsible for the Marrakech Process within UNEP. The Marrakech Process is now on its third phase, the implementation, as Zacarias explains²¹:

‘We want to start the implementation at local level with concrete projects. We want to do demonstration projects, and say ‘these are the added value of sustainable consumption and it is possible. And it is helping for economic growth, for poverty reduction, for better quality of life, for the environment, etc.’”

20 UNEP’s website: www.unep.fr/pc

21 The process of implementation has been done through the Marrakech Task Force (MTF). In June 2006, there were seven confirmed task forces on: sustainable lifestyles (Sweden), sustainable product policies (United Kingdom), co-operation with Africa (on leapfrogging to SCP) (Germany), sustainable procurement (Switzerland), sustainable tourism (France), sustainable building and construction (Finland) and education for sustainable consumption (Italy).

In the analysis on institutional site, I have identified that EEA and UNEP utter discourses at the international level. However, it is the national governments which, based on information and recommendations from EEA and UNEP, are responsible to put in practice strategies towards sustainable consumption. The Norwegian government specifically has participated actively in shaping the concept of sustainable consumption since the 1992 UNCED, as the adviser of the Ministry of the Environment, Paul Hofseth, describes:

‘Norway was quite active in pushing decisions on what became the Chapter 4 of the Agenda 21. We wrote part of that. But we took it up in Norwegian policy, or in international action, in 1994. We wanted to have the OECD countries in first, because the G-77 was not very enthusiastic²². We felt that we could give scientific credibility [to SCP] if we got the concepts right first. So we brought in UNEP and others and we gave US\$ 5 million to UNEP to have a project on this. We had several roundtables in Oslo, not in order to negotiate texts, but to get facts on the table and to get people exchanging opinions. And that is the way we worked for about three or four years.’

After the EU developed its own sustainable development strategy in 2000 as part of the Lisbon Strategy²³, in which the EU set out the aim of becoming the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, the Norwegian government in 2002 submitted an action plan for the implementation of its own sustainable development strategy in the form of a National Agenda 21 in connection with the 2004 national budget. While detailing the national strategy at practical levels, the government recognises its commitment to international policies:

‘The framework for national policy development is changing with political and economic globalisations, which are restricting the extent to which individual countries can develop independent environmental policies. WTO and EU/EEA (European Economic Area) rules lay down standards and a framework for action in environmental policy. Multilateral environmental agreements set out commitments for individual countries and form the basis for priorities and the application of policy instruments’ (Ministry of the Environment 2005:11).

22 The Group of 77 (G-77) was established on 15 June 1964 by 77 developing countries signatories of the ‘Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries’ issued at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva. As the largest Third World coalition in the United Nations, the G-77 provides the means for the developing world to articulate and promote its collective economic interests and enhance its joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues in the UN system.

23 The Lisbon Strategy is a ten-year programme accorded during the European Council meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, in March 2000. It aims at revitalising growth and sustainable development across the EU. Since then, the EU has formulated its policies in line with the Lisbon Strategy, which sets a framework for action until 2010, aiming specifically for economic as well as social and environmental renewal.

The Norwegian government also emphasises the importance of developing political strategies in cooperation with the EU: ‘The widening and deepening of cooperation within the EU mean that the Union is becoming an increasingly important player and standard-setter in Europe, for Norway as well. It will therefore be important to cooperate closely with the EU on sustainable development in the years ahead’ (Norwegian government 2002:12).

The EU’s Lisbon strategy is important for Norway’s sustainable development efforts because Norway forms part of the internal market as a signatory to the EEA Agreement, and much of the EU’s environmental legislation therefore applies in Norway as well. In addition, the EU is the most important export market to Norway, and Norwegian business and industry are therefore interested in working within the same framework conditions as EU businesses. This applies to environmental policy as well.

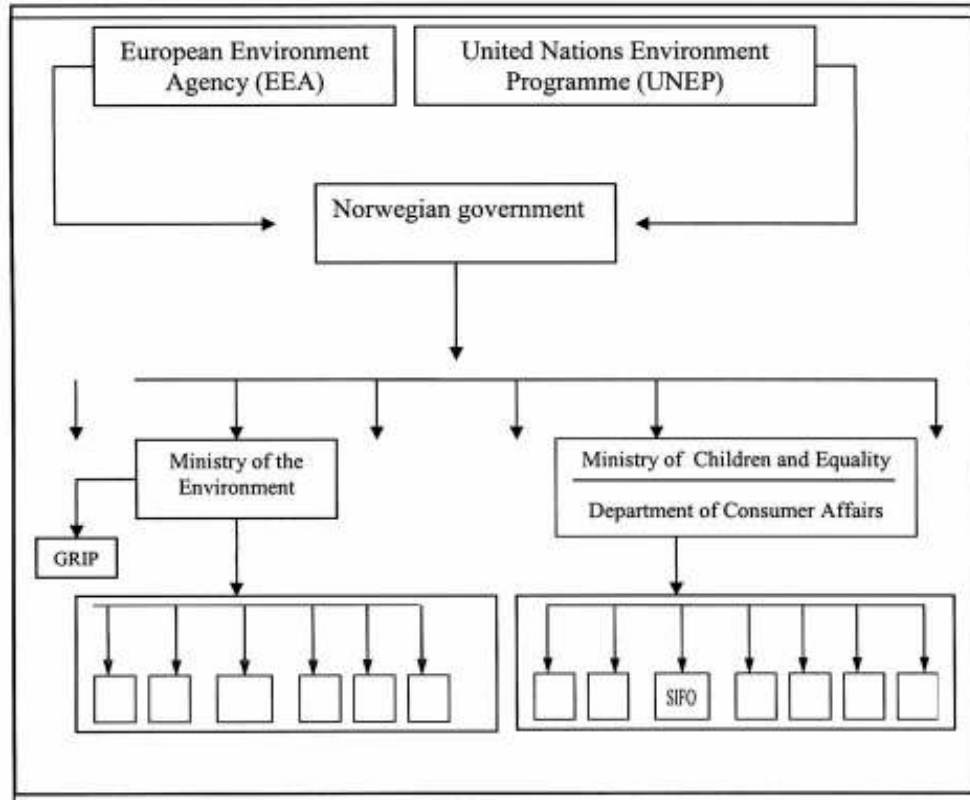
After have described the position which Norway occupies in an external network of social and institutional relations, I turn to indicate Norway’s internal structure. The Norwegian sustainable consumption and production policies are clearly divided in two. The first group of policies is developed by the Ministry of the Environment, which is responsible for issues related with the production side, approaching it through green procurement, waste management, and control of hazardous substances. Paul Hofseth describes the Ministry’s work:

‘The kind of work that the Ministry does is to make systems, rather than stand and talk about what people should do and so on. Our job is to create the policy so that the access to information is easy, so that the right information is provided at the point where you can make decisions. Our aim is to influence decisions. It is also to make sure that the goods are available, because it doesn’t help if you cannot buy them or if they are very expensive. This is also a role of public procurement. The Ministry wants to influence industry procurements so that we know that green products are there and that they are in great numbers, so that it doesn’t become so expensive.’

The second SCP group of policies is the responsibility of the Department of Consumer Affairs of the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality. It develops Norwegian consumer policy. As well as researching into consumer issues and providing information for consumers, the department deals with matters concerning domestic economy, sustainable consumption and food security. The senior adviser Jacob Bomann-Larsen explains the organisational system of the Ministry:

‘The Ministry of Children and Equality is split up in many departments. We are the Department of Consumer Affairs. In a way, we are a Ministry on its own inside of the Ministry of Children. And it has been some discussions if we should move to another

Ministry. Our department is working with consumer's issues, and it is in fact the Ministry of Consumer Affairs in a way. There is also a department working with gender equality. But we are in the consumer side, and sustainable consumption is one bit of what we are doing.'



The Ministry of Environment subordinate agencies are the Directorate for Nature Management, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the Norwegian Polar Institute, the Norwegian Mapping Authority, the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, and the Norwegian Product Register. The affiliated agencies which follow up the Ministry of Children and Equality policies are Consumer Council of Norway (responsible to information campaigns), Office of the Consumer Ombudsman (responsible for the marketing law and the ethical consumption debate), National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO), Norwegian Consumer Complaints Board, Norwegian Market Council, Norwegian Foundation for Environmental Labelling, and Norwegian Assay Office.

As a whole, the two branches of sustainable consumption policies produced by the two Ministries, are detailed in the *Norway National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, which is in fact a responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, because it is this Ministry that does the national budget. It was decided by the government in 2002 that *The National Strategy* would be implemented through the ordinary planning and budget processes. At odd intervals, the Ministry of Finance revises, renews and publishes *The National Strategy* together with the national budget. It means that Norwegian sustainable consumption national policies, at the end of the day, are implemented in accordance with what the Ministry of Finance prioritizes. Actually, a

possible divergence in which policies should be prioritized and the lack of coherence of strategies between the Ministries, are pointed out as a main obstacle to achieve sustainable consumption, as these interview extracts show:

‘You came to the wrong place. It is the Ministry of Children and Equality that is responsible for all consumer affairs’ (Paul Hofseth). ‘We have a Nordic Eco-label, The Swan, and it is not the Ministry of Environment that is responsible for that. It is the Ministry of Children. They give much more financial support to the label, because they are responsible for it, and also because consumer information in general, and environmental information are their responsibility’ (Grethe Torrissen). ‘That is our dilemma. We don’t have actual control of things of the environmental side of the sectors.’ (Ulla Hegg), (Ministry of Environment)

‘Ministries are used to have their own sector, ‘this is our sector, and this is the other Ministry’s sector’. But when it comes to the consumer policy, other Ministries have instruments to influence much of what the consumer policy needs. For example, public transport is responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. What could the Ministry of Children and Equality do more? Because you cannot really say to people use less car if there is no alternative. It must have alternatives. I think one of the lacking things in the policy, and it applies to all Ministries and all governments, is the lack of coherence.’ (Jacob Bomann-Larsen, Ministry of Children and Equality)

‘Sometimes governments start to do campaigns of awareness rising saying, ‘you should buy this, don’t do that’. But what happened? There is no alternative to do what they are approaching. To approach this problem, UNEP produced the guidelines ‘Communicating Sustainability’ (2005). The key message is ‘do not do an awareness campaign if there is not already a policy in place that support what you are telling or asking people to do’. So don’t say, ‘don’t use your car’, if there isn’t an efficient public transport system. Or ‘sort out your trash’ if there isn’t containers. The campaigns must be supported by already existing policies and infrastructures.’ (Adriana Zacarias, UNEP)

I will now summarise the institutional sites identified from which SCP discourses derive their legitimacy and efficacy. At the international level, EEA and UNEP are the institutional sites regarded as the producers of knowledge and substantial and consistent information on sustainable consumption and production. The political recommendations derived from both are applied by national governments. In the Norwegian institutional system, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Children and Equality are responsible to deliver SCP policies. The former approaches SCP through green procurement, waste management, and control of hazardous substances. The latter is responsible for the Norwegian consumer policy. However, at the end of the day, it is the Ministry of Finance that decides which policies should be prioritized and implemented.

4.3 – Positions of the subject

It is possible for a person or a group, a subject, to occupy different subject positions within a grid of positions in relation to the sustainable consumption and production objects. The subjects are especially those pertinent to one of the three categories of speakers that have used the right to utter SCP discourses: the academic community, the political community, and the business community.

At the international arena, the subjects of sustainable consumption discourse at UNEP and the EEA work directly with governments and business community in order to provide strategic advice. At the same time, they are also, for instance, investigating and promoting tools such as eco-design, dematerialization and the promotion of services and product service systems (PSS). This latter position is due to the institutional understanding that sustainable consumption and cleaner production are two sides of the same sustainability coin (UNEP 2004:10). Moreover, the subjects of sustainable consumption discourse at UNEP also occupy the position of researchers. In 2002, three years after the UN Guidelines were expanded to include new elements on Sustainable Consumption, the UNEP's DTIE and Consumers International (CI) conducted a global survey measuring progress of implementation of the sustainable consumption section of the UN Guidelines. Specifically, the research project was designed to discover whether governments were aware of the existence of the sustainable consumption section and to determine what governments had done to implement these elements in their national policy frameworks.

At the national level, policy makers define which SCP policies national government and local authorities should adopt. Sometimes, they can also take the position of listening subjects, for instance, when consulting international agencies and research centres in searching for political options. The public authorities in Norway, for example, are relying on research developed mainly by the Research Council 'to find out more about the relationship between opinion forming and action among consumers and households' (Norwegian government 2002:35). They want to know the potential for bringing about changes as regards food, the use of housing and transport.

'In many cases, we know a great deal about environmental problems and about which policy instruments are most effective for achieving more sustainable development. Nevertheless, we do not choose to apply these instruments often enough, and this must change. The Research Council of Norway has a comprehensive programme that will be examining the significance of framework conditions and the link between the

production and the application of knowledge. The results of this programme can in turn provide a basis for action' (Norwegian Government 2002:35).

The Norwegian Ministry of Environment states that environmental policy must be based on adequate knowledge of environmental developments which 'makes it possible to evaluate the impacts of our actions and to choose short- and long-term policy instruments that will put us in a better position to prevent or counteract environmental damage and injury to health. Knowledge about the environment and environmental problems must become a key element of decision-making processes in both the public and the private sector' (Ministry of the Environment 2005:19). At the Ministry, the directors of its external agencies, e.g. the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, are responsible to read and interpret scientific reports, and then give advice to the Ministry of the Environment, as Paul Hofseth explains:

'If we want answers to a very specific question, we sometimes set up a commission. Just now, we have the Low Emission Committee, which is looking at all the scientific evidences of how we can reduce emissions. We [bureaucrats] do not read all the papers. So we set down this group of eminent people to discuss the issue among them. Afterwards, they'll give us recommendations in a formal report, which can be the basis for proposals to the Parliament for money, and so on. This way of Norwegian government working has two functions. First, it aims to gather the scientific knowledge and give political advice. Secondly, it creates consensus, because decisions in Norway are very much a consensus affair. People don't just stand up and say, 'Oh, I have this great idea and we ought to do this'. But if a group sits, discusses and makes recommendations, it is much easier to get something done, and it provides great stability in decisions, making it very difficult to change the decisions'.

'And it gives legitimacy to the policy making', adds Ulla Hegg, senior adviser of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of the Environment.

Policy makers are also panellists and debaters in international seminars along with the academic and business communities in the process of building frameworks and establishing practical strategies. One example of this interchanging of positions is the '*Nordic Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production*' in Stockholm, Sweden, in March/2006, organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Policy-makers, scientists, executives, and representatives of development agencies worked on the question, 'What can be done to ensure that business relations and supply chain management promote sustainable consumption and production in a global context in collaboration with relevant actors?' It's summary and recommendations were presented at the UN CSD14/15, in May 2006.

The subjects of sustainable consumption discourse in research agencies can also occupy different positions. In addition to their role as producers of knowledge, researchers also work close to policy makers developing instruments to support national strategies. This is the case, for instance, of the Norwegian Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production²⁴ (GRIP). Its objective is to promote and support more sustainable patterns of consumption and production in Norwegian private and public organisations. Since Norway decided to take part in the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), the subjects of sustainable consumption discourse in GRIP have adopted this theme as their main focus area. GRIP's researchers are working with the business community and public bodies with the purpose of making them 'familiar with how environmental criteria can be used within the procurement law; making available environmental information and environmental product criteria; supplying procurement officers with the necessary tools and methods to undertake green purchasing; and stimulating suppliers to deliver the green goods and services that public bodies are demanding' (GRIP 2005:3).

'The focus is now very much on public procurement and using public procurement as a lever to make sure that businesses do implement environmental management, and make products environmentally more friendly, and getting therefore competitive advantage. I would say that now 75% of our resources are on influencing public procurement, developing criteria and methods, and helping concrete procurements. The other 25% are going on eco-tourism, and also we still have a lot of competence on environmental managements, and we are still selling that.' (Martin Standley, GRIP)

The National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO – *Statens institutt for forbruksforskning*) is another example of researchers working close with political institutions, e.g. the Ministry of Children and Equality and Nordic consumer authorities on issues concerning the consumer and consumer politics. The subjects of sustainable consumption discourse at SIFO are researchers as well as disseminators of information to various authorities, national agencies, consumer-oriented institutions, research and scientific institutions, and industrial organisations. One example of this combination of positions is the workshop '*Sustainable Consumption: The Contribution of Research*', hosted by SIFO and the Industrial Ecology Programme of the Norwegian University of

24 When GRIP was established effectively in 1994, it was part of a three-line approach by the government. GRIP should work towards business and organisations; Grønn Hverdag (www.gronnhverdag.no) should work towards consumers and households; and Ide Banken (www.idebanken.org) was mainly oriented towards municipalities and local authorities.

Science and Technology, in Oslo, Norway, in February/2005. At that meeting, 50 researchers from around the world signed a declaration stating that it is imperative to expand international research efforts to investigate processes of sustainable consumption, a strategy consistent with official statements during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. This argument is stated on the *Oslo Declaration on Sustainable Consumption*²⁵.

Within its five research categories, SIFO's projects on consumption and economy, especially in the field of household economy, have focused on the consumer resource dispositions in a household perspective. 'Through this work, SIFO has distinguished itself as a central supplier of conditions for participants working on consumer economic issues within politics, administrations, private sector and the media'²⁶.

Researchers and academics have been also called to teaching sustainable consumption and environment to high school teachers. This project was developed as part of the Norwegian strategy to change consumer behaviour through information. The background is that the Norwegian government reckons that 'the interests of the environment and consumer interests do not always coincide' (Norwegian Government 2002:37).

'Until now, Norwegian consumers have only allowed environmental considerations to influence their behaviour to a limited degree. We will therefore encourage more environmentally conscious consumer behaviour. The government is focusing on information as an important means of changing consumption patterns' (ibid).

The Norwegian government is aware, however, that making consumers more informed and concerned about the consequences of their behaviour is a long-term process. To foster this awareness from an early age, a school project on consumer behaviour has been initiated in Norway. Teaching on sustainable consumption and the environment has been incorporated into teacher training courses²⁷ (Norwegian government 2002:37).

25 www.oslodeclaration.org

26 www.sifo.no

27 Another issue to be approached in these training courses is ethical consumption: 'The development and effects of marketing and advertising, and the commercialization of a growing number of life spheres are fundamental features of the consumer society. To enable children and young people to resist advertising and the pressure to buy, consumer topics, including consumption and the environment, must be an integral part of teaching at all levels of schooling, including teacher training' (Norwegian government 2002:45).

‘The environment interest in Norway is not particularly high. The government wants to raise the interest in environment among the general public to create a basis for, maybe, adopting more strict policies on environment in a sort of second phase. And it is very difficult because you have information but you don’t know if you can actually change the way people consume just by information. You can know about a problem but it doesn’t make you change your habits, unless there is a direct link there. But still I think it is an ambition that they really want people to think more and talk more about environment.’ (Ulla Hegg, Ministry of Environment)

Summarising, the subject positions within the grid of positions in relation to the sustainable consumption and production objects are occupied by those subjects that have used the right to utter SCP discourse: the academic community, the political community, and the business community. At the international arena, the subjects of sustainable consumption discourse at UNEP and the EEA research and develop political tools, but they also work with governments and business community. At the national level, policy makers define policies; but they are also panellists in seminars and listening subjects while working with researchers. The researchers themselves, in addition to their scientific projects, work close to the policy makers, and in Norway, they have also been occupying the position of promoters of SCP to high schools teachers.

4.4 – Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to identify where sustainable consumption and production statements come from. SCP discourses have been voiced by those who have ‘scientific’, political and market power. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and consumer organisations have kept themselves absent from the international SCP political arena.

The institutional sites which SCP discourses derive legitimacy and efficacy are, at the international level, EEA and UNEP. National governments follow the political recommendations produced by both, while having their own institutional positions in external networks of social and institutional relations. In the Norwegian institutional system, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Children and Equality are responsible to deliver SCP policies. The former approaches SCP through green procurement, waste management, and control of hazardous substances. The latter is responsible for the Norwegian consumer policy. However, it is the Ministry of Finances that decides which policies should be prioritized and implemented, since this institution

is responsible to revise, renew and publish the *Norway National Strategy for Sustainable Development* together with the national budget.

The subject positions are exchanged between the groups who have used the right to practice SCP discourses. At the international arena, UNEP and EEA research and develop political tools, at the same time that they work with governments and business community. At national level, policy makers define policies, and occupy also the subject positions of panellists in seminars and listening subjects while working with researchers. The scientific community on SCP works closely with policy makers and business community. In Norway, academics have also been occupying the position of promoting SCP to high schools teachers.

The set of SCP enunciative modalities identified in this chapter does not unit in a single rational SCP project and it does not struggle towards a single goal. Neither does it imply a single position from which subjects of the SCP discourses speak. Instead, the various enunciative modalities manifest the subject dispersion. Nevertheless, it is the organisation of the enunciative modalities of SCP – who practices SCP discourses, the institutional sites from which SCP discourses derive their legitimacy and efficacy, and the grid of subject positions – which proportionate the appearance and circulation of concepts. In the next chapter, I will describe the emergence of sets of SCP concepts.

5 – The Formation of Concepts

Concepts – in the Foucaultian sense of the word – are formed on the basis of forms of coexistence between enunciative modalities. As described on the previous chapter, specific groups of subjects (policy makers, scientists, and business community) have the status to utter sustainable consumption and production discourses. These groups also reserve for themselves a mobility within a grid of subject positions (e.g., scientists giving consultancy to national governments). Institutional sites, like EEA, UNEP, national governments, and research institutions, give legitimacy and efficacy to the discourses. It is in this field of enunciative modalities that concepts appear and circulate. This chapter will scrutinize the schemata by which concepts are organized within the SCP discourses.

Again, Foucault establishes three steps in order to unveil this schema. The first implies describing the forms of succession, i.e. the rhetoric used, how descriptions, deductions and definitions – whose succession characterizes the architecture of a text – are linked together. SCP is not simply an invention of concepts like ‘eco-efficiency’, but rather ‘a set of rules for arranging statements in series, an obligatory set of schemata in which the recurrent elements that may have value as concepts were distributed’ (Foucault 1972:57). Identifying the forms of coexistence which mark out the set of SCP concepts is the second analytical step, in which the aim is to define the modes of relation between different discourses. In other words, it is necessary to identify 1) statements that were formulated elsewhere and taken up in SCP discourse, acknowledged to be truthful; and 2) statements that belong to quite different types of discourses, but which are active among the SCP discourses, either because they serve as analogical confirmation, or because they serve as a general principle and as premises accepted by a reasoning. Lastly, the third analytical step aims at discovering the procedures of intervention, which determine the ways in which SCP statements could be systematized, redefined, rewritten, and so on.

5.1 – Forms of succession

In this section, I will identify types of dependence of SCP statements and various rhetorical schemata according to which groups of SCP statements are combined. I will also look for the ways in which deductions and definitions are linked together. Once more, I will study quotations from the documents that bear the concepts of sustainable consumption and changes adopted by the EEA, the UNEP and the Norwegian government to illustrate the relations between the SCP statements; and review fragments of the interviews that give access to the discourses.

The first common conceptual framework that the EEA, the UNEP, and the Norwegian government agree upon and operate within is that each actor – national governments, business community and consumers – has specific roles in order to steer sustainable consumption and production.

'Governments, in partnership with business and relevant organisations of civil society, should develop and implement strategies that promote sustainable consumption through a mix of policies that could include regulations; economic and social instruments' (UNEP 2004:64).

'Sustainable consumption and production implies a clear and straightforward group of relations between business, consumers and government. They are the actors that can make the whole life cycle more sustainable. Business when designing, producing and marketing products. Consumers when choosing, buying, using and disposing products. Government when defining the framework conditions for business and consumer decisions. SCP's potential lies in realising synergies between these actors. But this is also SCP's main challenge. It requires coordinated action in order to succeed.' (GRIP 2004:3).

Within this set of concepts, public authorities at international, European Union, national, regional and local levels are responsible to provide the legal framework within which business and consumers can operate. The concepts present the tools available to governments in order to set this frame: legal and regulatory instruments (such as directives, laws and regulations), market-based instruments (such as taxes and charges, market-based emissions trading systems, removal of subsidies that are environmentally harmful), enabling technological improvements, information, green public procurement, ecolabelling and other instruments (EEA 2005:55; Norwegian government 2002:37,38).

'Legal instruments and supporting technology are necessary, but not necessarily sufficient actions, basically because consumption growth can outweigh the efficiency gains from improved technology and because new technologies sometimes stimulate consumption. However, they can be combined with adequate market-based measures, information and other tools. In practice the challenge is to implement the right

combination of policy instruments that take different groups of consumers into account, in order to achieve the most sustainable results' (EEA 2005:55).

'Technological advances are helping us to move in the right direction, but policy instruments and framework conditions must also be designed to stimulate environmentally sounder, more sustainable investment and behaviour' (Norwegian government 2002:36).

This set of statements also establishes that the business community, 'operating within the framework provided by public authorities and meeting the demands of consumers', has the challenge 'to produce goods and services which are profitable, and are sustainable, both in their production and when consumed' (EEA 2005:55), i.e., goods and services that are sustainable in their entire life-cycle. These statements relates to concepts of improving efficiency, particularly of energy and water use and material consumption, generate less waste, and require less transportation. EEA and the Norwegian government points to companies developing and implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies, regarding both ethics and social issues and environmental criteria, due to a reckoning that they can make use of this as a competitive advantage.

It is important to emphasise here that, within this conceptual framework, it is the public authorities' responsibility to 'encourage the design, development and use of products and services that are safe and energy and resource efficient, considering their full life cycle impacts' (UNEP 2004:62).

'The authorities must give clear, long-term signals about their commitment to framework conditions, both national and international, that favour enterprises that comply with such procedures' (Norwegian government 2002:43).

In our search for forms of succession between the statements, it is also possible to identify the conceptual schema in which the EEA, the UNEP, and the Norwegian government regard consumers as having an essential role to play 'since they are the ones who decide which goods and services, and resources to consume and in what amounts' (EEA 2005:11).

'Informed consumers have an essential role in promoting consumption that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, including through the effects of their choices on producers' (UNEP 2004:64).

From all the statements above, we see that the conceptual relations are that consumers need information, products, services, price incentives, legal frameworks and infrastructure in order to be inspired to change their consumption choices.

'Provided that information on the environmental effects of the goods and services is available within the framework set by public authorities, and that prices are affordable, consumers can choose to buy goods and services that are sustainable throughout their life-cycle from production to consumption' (EEA 2005:11).

Governments and businesses need, therefore, to create the right conditions for consumers to consume more efficiently, i.e. using fewer natural resources and causing less pollution and negative social consequences (UNEP 2004:10). Nevertheless, as a boomerang effect, 'as consumers, we all play a part in influencing the priorities set by business and industry, and the quality of the goods and services offered' (Norwegian government 2002:43).

Finally, consumer and environmental organisations have responsibility for promoting public participation and debate on sustainable consumption, for informing, motivating, and mobilizing consumers, and for working with government and business towards sustainable consumption (UNEP 2004:64, Norwegian government 2002:43).

Summarising, I have identified that the forms of succession of statements in SCP discourses, in which specific roles to governments, business, and consumers are established as a means of steering sustainable consumption and production, are based on discursive systems related to the rational choice model, i.e. the set of discursive systems identified on the grids of specification (chapter 3), which SCP discourses are built on. This set of discursive systems is characterised by individual consumers exercising rational choices; need of changing lifestyles and values; governments responsible to frame settings to business community and consumers through market instruments, law, taxes, information etc.; and green public procurement affecting governmental and industrial own operations.

5.2 – Forms of coexistence

In this section, I will determine how each actor – EEA, UNEP and Norwegian government – relate to concepts that concern and belong to quite different domains of objects (e.g. international institutional sites, national departments, researchers centres), and to quite different discourses (e.g. economic models applied in sustainable development discourses; sociological models used in environmental sociology discourses), but that are active among the SCP discourses. They may be applied in SCP discourses either to serve as general principle and as premises accepted by a reasoning,

or because they serve as models that can be transferred to other contents. This is our task in this section: looking for these forms of coexistence within the SCP discourses concerning public authorities, business community and consumers.

5.2.1 – Public authorities

The Norwegian government's conceptual framework towards sustainable consumption and production is an example of how governments conceive and develop their political options by bringing in statements that belong to conceptual frameworks shaped in the international SCP arena. Just as a means of reminding: the discursive relations established in order to access SCP as discursive objects are heavily influenced by sustainable development discourses. They relate to needs of the present and future generations, quality of life, needs of the world's poor, environment capacity and eco-efficiency. Growth in consumption especially in industrialised countries, and inefficient productive processes are presented as the major cause of the deterioration of the global environment.

Having these discursive relations in mind, let's have a look at the Norwegian SCP discourses. The Norwegian government's concept of far-reaching changes in production and consumption patterns is 'to ensure that everyone can enjoy a satisfactory quality of life and living conditions without destroying the natural resource base or exceeding the carrying capacity of the environment' (Ministry of the Environment 2005:16).

'... given current patterns of production and consumption, the affluence of the industrialised world is just as great a threat to the environment and natural resources as poverty in developing countries' (Norwegian government 2002:8).

Reaching this target will require a 'dual responsibility' from the Norwegian government, both to reduce the environmental pressure caused by the country's own consumption and to help to prevent economic growth and development in poor countries from imposing excessive costs on the environment and resource base:

'To achieve global results, action is required in both developing and industrialised countries,... and will require changes in behaviour by all actors, including the business sector, NGOs, international organisations, the public sector, consumers and the general public' (ibid:16).

Outlining the Norwegian government SCP conceptual framework suggests a confluence of international discourses and the national strategy for sustainable

development, especially regarding the set of discursive systems based on the rational choice model:

'The national authorities will have to take account of sustainability considerations in all sectors that they administer directly, and set framework conditions that will motivate others to take account of the same factors, for instance in the form of economic instruments (taxes, market-based emissions trading systems, removal of subsidies that are environmentally harmful, incentives for technological innovation) and administrative instruments ('green public administration', strategic environmental impact assessment, eco-labelling, conditions for and agreements with the industrial sector, legislation, information and research). The national authorities have overall responsibility for ensuring that the general public receives information that enables people to make the right decisions in matters relating to the environment' (ibid:43).

However, focusing my analysis in pointing out forms of coexistence between statements from different discourses and domains, I identify that the Norwegian government SCP conceptual framework also contains a distinct approach revolving around the principles of the social practices discursive system identified on the grids of specification (chapter 3). This approach has been framed by the Ministry of Children and Equality and its research agency SIFO, the National Institute for Consumer Research.

The Ministry of Children and Equality underlines the power of advertisers, the advertising business and the media in shaping young people's identity with regard to their relation to body, looks, sexuality, drugs and violence. 'Beauty, confidence, companionship and happiness are sold in the form of clothes, shoes, beauty care products, and other items'²⁸. The Ministry also considers how the advertising industry and the media are affecting the young's consumption, in such manner that 'consumption is on its way to becoming a major element in the life of children and youngsters'. Against this background, the Ministry of Children and Equality has developed a strategy consisting in, first, establishing a constructive dialogue with advertisers, the advertising business, the media and relevant organisations – aiming to initiate a debate, and promote ethical guidelines for influencing children and the young, especially focusing on the body, body fixation and body ideals. Secondly, it is working on developing educational material and promoting information and education aimed at children and youngsters

28 The Norwegian action plan to reduce commercial pressure on children and the young people, <http://www.dep.no/bld/english/doc/handbooks/004061-990036/dok-bn.html>

about consumption, about the ideals inherent in advertising, and about the intended and actual effects of advertising.

5.2.2 – Business community

Operating within the framework provided by public authorities and meeting the demands of consumers, the business community has an instrumental role in enabling and implementing SCP. The SCP discourses describing the business community role are characterized by the coexistence of statements which belong to quite different discourses. These discourses are also heavily based on the principles of the discursive system of rational choice model. Within the conceptual framework set by international SCP discourses, the challenges for the business community reside in their own production process, aiming on reducing ‘environmental load’. Industries are encouraged to establish ‘eco-efficiency’ criteria for their production processes and supply chains, i.e. ‘improving efficiency’, particularly of energy and water use and material consumption. In other words, the discourse based on the rational choice model focuses especially on the production phase of goods.

The environmental load of a product, however, is not just limited to production. Here I identify the coexistence of concepts belonging to different discursive domains and discourses. GRIP has signalized that, for many products, the greatest environmental load is caused during their use (e.g. buildings, cars, household appliances). Nevertheless, the producer is not usually responsible for the whole life cycle, so this phase has received little focus. Increasing awareness is now resulting in eco-design and Life Cycle Approaches being applied to design eco-efficient products. UNEP is also directing attention to eco-design, as explains Bas de Leeuw and Adriana Zacarias:

‘In spite of the work that is aimed at governments and particular business, we say, ‘if you develop new technology and new products taking a lot of things into account, take also into account environmental aspects – what materials you are using, what you are doing with the product as soon as it is used – and make it in such way that after being used, the product can be recycled and reused.’ So there are projects on eco-design, design for environment, design for sustainability, also working in a pro-activity way, very early in the process, with design institutes. Helping students, young designers in many networks to take the environment and sustainable consumption into account when they are designing their new products, especially new services systems, that can be only good.’ (Bas de Leeuw, UNEP)

‘UNEP is also promoting eco-design and eco-products. Companies, in the beginning, said, ‘we are producers, we make products. Why do we have to care about the impacts

during the consumption phase?’ Take for example cars and wash machines. They have had loads of improvements on the production side; industries have adopted clean technology, reduced emissions, they are more efficient, using less resources, etc. But the biggest environmental impact for a car or wash machine is during the use phase. So we say to the producer ‘you have a great power to influence the impact during the consumption phase if you change your design. You will also get a better reputation and make more profits’. So when they do it, for instance, when they work with more energy or water efficiency for wash machine, or work with eco-labelling, and they are being recognized as a better company which cares about environment, etc., they think it is good for them. They can have also an increase of the price sometimes.’ (Adriana Zacarias, UNEP)

Actually, some SCP actors are actively applying statements relating to the ‘use phase’. This concept belongs to other discourses than the rational choice model that has prevailed in framing the business community role towards SCP. By applying actively the concept of ‘use phase’, SCP actors are developing a conceptual framework that address both the demand and the supply side, and that offers instruments to shape more sustainable social practices.

This trend can be observed, for instance, in how international air companies, from the supply side, can influence consumer transport behaviour. The EEA identified that with the gradual development of the trans-European high-speed rail network, high-speed trains are gaining market share in some countries. ‘Fast trains are becoming a viable alternative to the car and aviation for intercity traffic. Many of Europe’s larger airports also see high-speed rail as an opportunity to shift their (often less profitable) short-distance flights to rail’ (EEA 2005:39). As a result, for example, the EEA quotes the company Air France, which has ended its flights between Paris and Brussels, and is cooperating with the high-speed train service from Brussels to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport.

‘The greatest improvements can occur when business develops new products that allow consumers to satisfy their needs in new ways – like using videoconferencing instead of travelling to meetings, or participating in a car sharing collective instead of buying a new car’ (GRIP).

5.2.3 – Consumers

So far, I have identified forms of coexistence of concepts belonging to different domains or discourses related to the public authorities and business community roles in steering SCP. Now I turn to the discourses which approach consumers, aiming also to identify forms of coexistence of concepts.

The EEA states that the effects of the consumer's consumption can be measured through the negative environmental effects that it promotes, mainly 'as a result of resource extraction, production, processing and transportation' (EEA 2005:5). In relation to European consumption, those environmental impacts occur especially in other regions of the world: 'Resource extraction in Europe has decreased, while imports of resources, especially fossil fuels and metals, have increased. In fact, the environmental pressures from resource extraction in other regions of the world are increasing due to European consumption' (ibid).

Considering that '[I]n spite of the renewed policy-focus on SCP, growth in European household consumption is still a major cause for the increase of many environmental pressures' (ibid:13), household consumption becomes therefore an important part of the production-consumption chain 'as it is consumers who make the final choice of which goods and services to consume' (ibid). Individual consumer is therefore the imperative unit of analysis to the EEA, and understanding consumption behaviour is an utmost need in order to deliver political options towards sustainable consumption and production.

'European households affect the environment through their day-to-day choices of which goods and services to buy and how to use them. However, we also affect the environment through our choices of where to live, where to work, how to use leisure time and how to travel' (ibid).

'Understanding changes in consumption patterns is about understanding human behaviour – why people consume, what drives us to behave the way we do and buy specific products and services' (EEA 2005:19).

The EEA discourse is built on the discursive material which relates to the rational choice model. However, concepts belonging to the social practices discursive system coexist side by side. For instance, the EEA states that consumption patterns, at individual level, are shaped by needs, abilities and opportunities. 'But they are also shaped by the desire to identify with groups of consumers that define themselves in a variety of different ways, for example with role models. The supply of goods and services and how they are advertised and marketed also have a major influence' (ibid:53).

Cultural and sociological changes have also been acknowledged by the EEA to contribute to our changing patterns of consumption. 'Consumers are often locked into particular consumption patterns due to a complex mixture of institutional, social and

psychological factors' (Jackson, 2005, quoted by EEA 2005:21). The EEA asserts that these cultural and social changes have had a great impact on the way we consume:

'By consuming we can express ourselves through the goods and services that we choose and we can enjoy the feeling of personal freedom (travel, having a car, etc.). Schor (1998) finds that consumption is driven as much by the desire to belong to a group as by the desire for status. Thus, a large car enables parents to participate in a group of people who drive each other's children to school. Participation in such social groups may require particular standards of dress, and reciprocity such as inviting others to restaurant meals' (ibid).

The EEA also points out that advertising and marketing directly affect our knowledge and perception of the wide range of available products and services.

'For example, Dickinson (1998) finds that dialogues within households about the choice of food draw extensively on arguments and narratives from the media. This also often contributes to changing consumer behaviour by creating a sense that buying a certain product or service will make us happier, improve our status in society, the way we look, or enable us to avoid risks we had not previously imagined. The role of advertising and marketing has increased tremendously in recent decades through various lines of communication including the internet, commercial breaks in television programmes and, most recently, product placement in films' (ibid).

A summary of this section shows that statements belonging to different discourses and domains have coexisted side by side within SCP discourses. It seems that concepts belonging to the set of rational choice model discursive systems have guided much of the modern policy approaches towards SCP in international arena and Norwegian context. However, it is possible to identify statements belonging to the set of social practices discursive systems being applied by SCP discourses at all levels. These two set of discursive systems were identified in the grids of specification in chapter 3. They are the discursive material on which discourses about SCP are built.

5.3 – Procedures of intervention

The third and last analytical step in order to identify the schemata by which concepts are organised within the SCP discourses implies determining the ways in which statements can be translated, systematised, redefined, rewritten, and so on. In other words, it aims to identify which other conceptual framework could have been framed as discourses uttered by SCP subjects.

The EEA 'recognises' that sustainable consumption requires economic, social, and environmental sustainability. However, it decides to delimit its focus to analysing

the environmental effects of household consumption. The agency chooses not to analyse the economic and social effects of consumption in Europe. Therefore, it does not analyse issues such as the financing of household consumption, distribution, family structures, employment or health effects related to household consumption. ‘We do, however, analyse the economic and social forces driving household consumption’ (EEA 2005:13).

The economic factors identified by the EEA are, firstly economic growth: ‘as we become wealthier we also in most cases consume more. The projected economic growth of 2.4% per year in the EU-25 between 2000 and 2030 would be accompanied by similar growth in consumption’ (ibid:19). Secondly, globalisation: ‘The removal of trade barriers across the world and the process of globalisation and liberalisation of markets have given European consumers access to many products from all over the world at all times’ (ibid). Finally, the EEA analysis discloses that technological improvements and breakthroughs have resulted in improved efficiency in production and consumption, in terms of the use of resources such as energy and water, waste generation and reduced pollution’ (ibid:10).

‘But while efficiency is improving, growth in the total levels of consumption of goods and services have been so high that in many cases it has outweighed these technological improvements. While the energy efficiency of heating systems and electronic appliances has improved considerably, we live in larger homes, and buy and use an increasing number of electronic appliances. As a result, CO₂ emissions from households have remained stable. Also despite increased resource efficiency, the amounts of waste generated from households continue to increase. Finally, in spite of improvements in energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions from personal travel by road and air, including for tourism, continue to increase’ (ibid:10).

The message is clear: many environmental pressures are increasing because new technologies sometimes stimulate consumption and also because consumption growth outweighs technological gains; i.e. the rebound effect²⁹. This statement, acknowledged to be truthful, has been formulated by different institutions and authors: ‘Analysis by the EEA, the OECD and others shows that in industrialised countries the general trend is an increase in environmental pressures because consumption growth is outweighing the gains made through improvements in technology’ (EEA 2003, 2004; OECD 2001, 2002; Michaelis and Lorek 2004)’ (ibid:14).

²⁹ The rebound effect refers to the situation where the volume of consumption outweighs any gains made through the improved efficiency of the products (Defra 2003; Odyssee 2002; quoted on EEA 2005:31).

However, '[new technologies] can be combined with adequate market-based measures, information and other tools. In practice, the challenge is to implement the right combination of policy instruments that take different groups of consumers into account, in order to achieve the most sustainable results' (ibid).

The social factors driving household consumption identified by EEA are the trends towards smaller households, which generally use more space, contribute to higher consumption of energy and water, and more generation of waste per person: 'An increase in the number of single person households and single parent households partially explain this change. Another social driving factor is the European ageing population, which also has significant implications for consumption patterns, 'which may lead to large expenditures on health and personal travel, and more second homes' (ibid:53), especially at mountain or coastal areas, which are particularly vulnerable in terms of environmental pressures. Lars Mortensen, from EEA, explains in which ways the SCP statements can be also approached:

'We've just started focus particularly on the ageing aspects. We are analysing how the ageing affects our consumption, because we consume differently as we age. In terms of gender, how consumption is different between women and men, how consumption is different between different social economic groups are things that we are planning to look at. To make sustainable consumption policies is necessary to understand consumption; and to understand consumption is necessary to understand how different people consume, i.e. understanding why and how women and men consume differently.'

The complexity of the main factors that shape consumption patterns and the economic and social changes that has occurred in just the past decade may explain in part the difficulty to influence consumption behaviour effectively. 'Many of these factors are social and cultural in nature which makes it difficult to agree on how to influence consumption behaviour effectively, given the different types of consumer behaviour and influencing factors across Europe, and hence the challenges of designing and implementing suitable measures' (EEA 2005:54). Despite agreement on the need for sustainable consumption and production policies, the EEA states that a possible reason for the lack of progress 'is that the debate on the basic principles of sustainable consumption from which a framework for actions could be derived remains unresolved' (ibid).

UNEP has also the same argument, but regards lack of knowledge as one of the main reasons for not having a more effective political framework. 'Consuming efficiently – using fewer resources and causing less pollution – to achieve a better

quality of life for all should be a non-controversial issue. However, insufficient knowledge sometimes leads to a hesitant or slow uptake of the required policies' (2004:3).

Summarising, SCP discourses could also be approached through the economic and social effects of consumption, but this set of concepts has not been prioritised by SCP actors. On the other hand, discourses focusing heavily in technological improvements as a means to improve the efficiency in production and consumption of natural resources are being reviewed, regarding the rebound effect and because new technologies sometimes stimulate consumption. The complexity of the economic and social factors which have shape consumption patterns, translated by some SCP actors as 'insufficient knowledge', have been considered as an explanation for not having a more effective political framework on SCP and for the lacking of political progress in achieve SCP.

5.4 – Conclusion

I have identified that most of the forms of succession of statements in SCP discourses – in which the specific roles of governments, business, and consumers are established as a means of steering sustainable consumption and production – are based on discursive systems related to the rational choice model. However, I have also determined that statements belonging to different discourses and domains coexist side by side within SCP discourses. Even though concepts belonging to the set of rational choice model discursive systems have prevailed on the modern policy approaches towards SCP, it is possible to identify statements belonging to the set of social practices discursive systems being applied by SCP discourses at all levels.

The relations between these elements of succession, coexistence, and intervention define a 'system of conceptual formation'. However, the analysis of these elements undertaken here does not provide a theory about the system or progression of the SCP concepts themselves, but rather their 'anonymous dispersion' at a field in which concepts can coexist.

In chapter 3, I identified the discursive relations which form SCP as discursive objects, and the discursive systems in which SCP discourses are built on. In chapter 4, I determined the various SCP subjects – those who have right to voice SCP discourses –

and their grid of positions. In this chapter, I have analysed the SCP system of conceptual formation, showing the relations established between SCP statements. The next archaeological step will be to determine, depending on the degree of coherence between the dispersions of these three elements – object, enunciation and concepts – the SCP strategies. If I am able to determine that the different SCP strategies are derived from the same set of relations, i.e. a system of formation of strategies, then it will be possible to argue for the existence of a sustainable consumption and production discursive formation.

6 – The Formation of Strategies

A strategy is formed according to a degree of coherence between a certain regrouping of objects, certain types of enunciation and a certain organisation of concepts. This chapter will determine if it is possible to define a system of formation of the different SCP strategies, ‘in other words, if one can show how they all derive from the same set of relations’ (Foucault 1972:68). At this point, it is imperative to rescue and revisit some theoretical material described at Chapter 2, because this final archaeological step, beyond being ‘the most difficult point of the analysis, and the one that demand greatest attention’, as Foucault himself reckons, is also the one that will allow us to unearth a possible sustainable consumption discursive formation.

The system of formation of strategies is defined, first of all, by a description of points of diffraction. These points are characterized, in the first instance, as points of incompatibility, i.e. where two objects or two types of enunciation, or two concepts may appear, in the same discursive formation, without being able to enter the same series of statements (ibid:65). They are then characterized as points of equivalence, i.e. these two incompatible elements are formed in the same way and on the basis of the same rules; the conditions of their appearance are identical. However, instead of constituting a mere defect of coherence, they form an alternative: even if they have not received the same political attention, for instance, they appear in the form of ‘either...or’. Lastly, they are characterized as linked points of systematization: ‘on the basis of each of these equivalent, yet incompatible elements, a coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts has been derived (ibid:66). In other words, the dispersions determined in previous chapters to form discursive sub-groups.

The second analytical step in order to identify a system of formation of strategies is, ‘in order to account for the choices that were made out of all those that could have been made, one must describe the specific authorities that guided one’s choice’ (ibid). Actually, a discursive formation does not ‘occupy’ all the possible volume that is offered to it by the systems of formation of its objects, its enunciations, and its concepts. A discursive formation is essentially incomplete, ‘owing to the system of formation of its strategic choices’. However, based on, for instance, a political will to reconsider other strategic choices that have been excluded, disregarded or not translated in practical

programmes, a given discursive formation may reveal new possibilities. ‘What we are dealing with is a modification in the principle of exclusion and the principle of possibility of choices; a modification that is due to an insertion in a new discursive constellation’ (ibid:67). All these options are, in fact, regulated ways (and describable as such) of practicing the possibilities of discourse.

6.1 – Points of diffraction

In this section, I aim to determine the ‘points of diffraction’ of a discourse, the first analytical step in order to define the system of formation of strategies. These points are characterized by the existence of two incompatible objects, concepts, or types of enunciation. These incompatible points are, however, formed on the same conditions of emergence, therefore, they are characterized as points of equivalence. By trying to occupy the same discursive space, at the end, they form an alternative, an ‘either/or’ situation. Based on the archaeological analysis of the SCP discourses undertaken until here, the points of diffraction are characterized by the incompatibility of two SCP discursive objects built on different sets of discursive systems, which were identified in the grids of specification, chapter 3.

6.1.1 – Points of incompatibility

The first SCP discursive object is built on the set of discursive systems which has the rational choice model as its base. In these systems, the individual is the unit of analysis, following the economic rationality of consumers as autonomous individuals making free choices through rational deliberations. In this set of discursive systems, national governments, as a means of influencing consumption patterns, are responsible to provide a political framework to business community and consumers through market instruments, law, taxes, information etc. Industries should, beyond promoting eco-efficiency of its own production process, supply the market with eco-friendly products. Both national governments and business sector should be responsible for its own consumer patterns, and promote changes through green public procurement. In this set of discursive systems, consumption is therefore the end point of the economic cycle, and a matter of personal choice exercised by autonomous consumers making relatively unconstrained lifestyle choices.

'Household consumption forms an important part of the production-consumption chain as it is the consumer who makes the final choice about which goods and services s/he consumes. Although the environmental impact of each household is relatively small compared with that of production activities, millions of households in Europe are major contributors to environmental problems such as climate change, air pollution, water pollution, land use and waste' (EEA 2005:5).

The second SCP discursive object is built on the set of discursive systems which, instead of looking at the environmental impacts of each household and provide political options to steer changes in consumer behaviour at the individual level, regards consumption as framed by specific cultural and social contexts within and outside of the household. The rationality is that norms, habit and routines are decisive factors explaining consumption practices. This set of discursive systems also refers to 'the house itself as social material artefact, and how [household electrical appliances] are implicated in changing ideas about convenience, cleanliness and comfort' (Wilhite 2006:6).

'The ways people regard cleanliness, comfort and mobility, and the role of consumption in achieving these services involves an interplay of technologies, discourses and the social re-construction of meaning' (ibid:171).

This set of discursive systems also analyses 'the ways that consumption and commodities are nested in practices, ... how practices, products and new discourses contribute to change; ... the ways that social relations, especially gender and family relations, affect and are affected by consumption' (ibid:6,7). Considering the social-context of dynamics of consumption, consumption involves the 'selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair, and disposal of any product or service' (Campbell 1995:102). By emphasising the use phase, this perspective opens up opportunities to include the social context of both 'supply' and 'demand' into the political options of strategies.

6.1.2 – Points of equivalence

The analysis of these two SCP discursive objects characterises them as points of incompatibility. These incompatible SCP discursive objects, however, are formed on the basis of the same discursive relations practiced at surfaces of emergence: framed by sustainable development discourses, and related to Agenda 21, industrialised countries taking the lead, poverty reduction, etc. These two SCP objects are also formed having the same subjects uttering SCP discourses, and following the same grids of subject positions interchanged between policy makers, scientists, and international agencies.

Finally, these two SCP objects acknowledge, to some extent, a common conceptual framework, in which all actors have its share of responsibility. These dispersions were described on the previous three chapters concerned with the formation of objects, statements and concepts. Therefore, I can argue that these two incompatible SCP discursive objects are, in fact, equivalents, constituting an alternative to SCP political options.

6.1.3 – Alternative points

The two SCP discursive objects characterised as points of incompatibility are in fact, based on the same rules of formation, constituting therefore, points of equivalence. I will turn now to examine if these two SCP discursive objects, built on different sets of discursive systems, have been applied as an alternative to political options on SCP. Quotations of the documents that bear the concept of sustainable consumption and changes adopted by the EEA, the UNEP and the Norwegian government will illustrate the SCP discursive objects that each actor is adopting as political options. Fragments of the interviews will give voice to the SCP discourses on which the political options are based on.

The aim is to identify if SCP discursive objects, build on different sets of discursive systems – rational choice model and social practices –, characterise an alternative to the political options of each actor.

The EEA

The EEA, the UNEP, and the Norwegian government identify food, transport, and homes as the major consumption categories that form part of the total individual consumption expenditure and for which the environmental effects are either great or increasing rapidly (EEA 2005:5). The Norwegian government states, for instance, that ‘steps to reduce the ecological footprints of Norwegians will be most effective if they target food, car use and air transport, and homes. If such measures are to work, the authorities and private households must cooperate’ (2002:44).

‘Individual consumers, organisations and groups of households can all help to drive a changeover to a more sustainable lifestyle, particularly as regards food consumption, the use of transport and homes, and they can make demands on both business and industry and the public authorities’ (Norwegian government 2002:43).

The political options indicated by the EEA to bend the trend of the environmental burden of household activities, food and transport habits and to change consumer behaviour are heavily based on the set of rational choice model discursive system. It considers a mix of legal, market-based, and information tools, and the promotion of more efficient and environment-friendly technologies.

'Household water consumption has shown positive trends, mainly as a result of water pricing and the use of metering in many European countries' (ibid:29).

'Labelling of environment-friendly food products, such as organic food, is an effective example of a policy measure that helps consumers to take informed decisions about what to buy – and thereby should enable more sustainable food consumption' (ibid:7, 27).

'Road pricing, traffic-calming schemes, better provision for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport investment, telecommunications, car sharing, etc. have all been put in place in various part of Europe. It is a challenge to implement a mix of action across Europe including in particular legal and regulatory tools, information and other instruments, spatial and urban planning, and public transport' (ibid:9).

'[t]o 'get the prices right' for various goods consumed by households can also be considered. These include taxes and levies on goods with significant environmental impacts, for example on plastic bags or wastewater, and on resources that are scarce in certain parts of Europe, for example freshwater' (ibid:35).

The EEA, however, draws a few tentative attempts to also include in its analysis social forces driving household consumption. These attempts eventually lead to some political options pertinent to the system that revolves around the social-context of dynamics of consumption. In other words, beyond the political options based on the set of the rational choice model discursive systems, the EEA presents alternative political options based on the set of social practices discursive systems.

Relating to food, for instance, the EEA identifies a marked change in the Europeans' diet from the last three decades and relates it to the supply of 'fresh food all year round from all over the world' (ibid:23). The agency also points out that 'with adults often working outside the home, receiving higher incomes and having less free time, convenience has become a major factor in determining food choice' (ibid:25). This social practice leads to the need of having some household appliances, like freezer, refrigerator and in many cases the microwave, 'allowing people to rely on pre-prepared foods that require minimum planning and preparation time in the home' (ibid:23,25). Notwithstanding the identification of social practices trends, the EEA does not develop

political options beyond the traditional economics, like labelling food, removing environmentally harmful subsidies and so on.

In relation to housing, however, political options based on the social practices discursive systems complement those based on the rational choice model discursive systems. Our dependence on electronic appliances is regarded to have increased in recent decades, especially related to communication devices, electronics, lighting and kitchen appliances, confirming the trend of Europeans' consumers being 'even more dependent on electronic appliances in the future' (ibid:30). This trend has created additional pressures on the environment in terms of energy and water use and waste generation. 'Examples include washing machines, dishwashers, microwaves, refrigerators and freezers, and audio-visual appliances such as televisions, DVD players, mobile phones and personal computers. Despite their improved efficiency, growth in the number of appliances is still expected to outweigh any efficiency gains' (ibid). In addition to the economic political options – technology improvements, price, information, etc. –, the agency suggests that 'community-based initiatives (eco-communities, car sharing, etc.) can also be important actions to limit environmental pressures from housing' (ibid:36).

The EEA also derives alternative political options from the set of social practices discursive systems in relation to transport. Better spatial planning and investments in public transport are some of the political options suggested to steer mobility behaviour in a more sustainable direction, since 'EU citizens are generally very car-dependant and the personal travel and action radius is at its highest' (ibid:37). The EEA relates the modes and extent of consumers' travel to be dependent on how individuals organise their lives, 'how functions are spatially planned, in what way information technology affects this organisation, the quality of the supply of different modes of transport' (ibid:42), and on whether individuals become globally or more locally orientated. Moreover, the EEA highlights the social practice of attaching values to commodities, as status, for instance: '[t]he purchasing of transport is not a rational process. This is especially true for personal vehicles, where decisions are guided by many aspects, including status' (ibid:44).

In many European cities, parents are making more and more use of the car to transport their children to school, creating a key urban traffic problem, with congestion around schools. This behaviour, in the longer term, 'risks developing an even more car-

dependent generation; children who are not encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport will later in life be much less inclined to chose alternatives to car transport' (ibid:43).

Approaching the discursive material of 'technological script' from the set of social practices discursive systems, in each devices have embedded potentials for changing practice (Akrich 1994; Wilhite 2006), the EEA also analyses the influence that the e-society, i.e. the information society, has on the creation of new ways of working, education, shopping and contacting people. The e-society 'may replace or remove some mobility needs, but at the same time create new ones, due to expansion of personal and professional networks, and access to services and goods' (EEA 2005:43). However, the agency asserts that it is not possible yet to document any reductions in demand for transport resulting from home offices, etc. 'Indeed demand may actually increase as people become less dependent on travelling during rush hours, and therefore take trips that would earlier have been avoided because of congestion' (ibid).

The EEA suggests many political options to influence transport behaviour in order to manage the growth in car and air transport. 'One is a change from the mainly supply-orientated actions of recent decades (focusing particularly on road transport infrastructure and car supply) towards more integrated demand-side policies designed to improve accessibility, with restrictions on the growth of motorised traffic. The challenge for policy makers lies in reconciling such policies with the public perception of mobility as an expression of personal freedom' (ibid:44).

'Improving the attractiveness of environment-friendly non-motorised vehicles such as bicycles has had some success, but again has not managed to bend the trend. People often take their car to go to work and then continue on to a sports centre rather than using a bicycle to go to work and get exercise from that activity' (ibid). An observation, the EEA does not refer to the obsession of the modern industrial societies in 'scheduling' the time, i.e. the process of ordering and managing activities so as to be able to cram ever more events into a given day or week. 'This aspect of convenience has implications for energy use, leading to more activities, more devices to manage the pressures of time, more travelling and greater demand for faster means of getting from one place to another' (Wilhite et al. 2000:116)

Summarising, the analysis of the SCP discourses uttered by the EEA identifies that the two SCP discursive objects, built on different sets of discursive systems – the

rational choice model and the social practices – are considered alternatives to approach and deliver political options regarding the consumption categories of transport, food and homes.

The UNEP

In our analysis of SCP discourses, examining whether different SCP objects constitute alternative political options, I will turn now to investigate the second actor, the UNEP.

Within the common conceptual framework adopted by SCP subjects and described in the previous chapters, public authorities are responsible to provide a framework in which business and consumers can perform their own share of obligations. Nevertheless, governments themselves must act within a conceptual framework shaped by SCP international discourses uttered mainly by the UNEP and the EEA. The broader framework was drawn on the 1992 UNCED and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, but the detailed set of policies focusing mainly on public authorities is directed by the extended version of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection (1999), Section G ‘Promotion of Sustainable Consumption’. This document is regarded as bearing the official concept of sustainable consumption and changes applied by UNEP.

UNEP’s political options instruct national governments to pay special attention on the following policy areas: publicly-available information on measuring progress; research on consumer behaviour; environmental product testing; regulatory mechanisms, including economic instruments; sustainable government practices, including sustainable procurement; life cycle design of products and services; and recycling programmes (UNEP 2004:7). The rationality behind this set of policies is that ‘consumers need information, products, services, price incentives, legal frameworks and infrastructure in order to be inspired to change their consumption choices’ (ibid:10).

UNEP understands that through this mix of policies, which are based straightforwardly on the set of rational choice model discursive systems, governments can create the conditions for consumers to consume more efficiently, i.e. using fewer natural resources and causing less pollution and negative social consequences.

The first global governmental study of the status of implementation of the sustainable consumption section of the UN Guidelines, conducted by the UNEP and Consumers International (CI), shows that eight in ten governments have promoted

practices to raise consumer awareness about sustainable consumption issues. ‘The most common activities revolve around disseminating information about saving energy and water resources, or about protecting the environment by recycling or buying recycled products. Awareness and information campaigns have been carried out in the full range of media, including TV, magazines, newspapers and the Internet’ (ibid:60). All this effort is based on the concept that it is crucial to focus on the direct consumer role in bringing about sustainable consumption: ‘Informed consumers have an essential role in promoting consumption that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, including through the effects of their choices and producers’ (ibid:64).

‘Consumers must be aware in order to make valid and informed choices, and this remains a critical policy area for governments. Governments, in conjunction with civil society and, in particular, with consumer organisations, should advance activities, providing consumers with the right tools to take action’ (ibid:61).

UNEP recommends applying a mix of policies that could include ‘regulations, economic and social instruments; information programmes; removal of subsidies that promote unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; promotion of sector-specific environmental-management best practices; encouraging the design, development and use of products and services that are safe and energy and resource efficient, considering their full life cycle impacts’ (UN Guidelines 2003:§44, §45). Through such policies, the governments may also create the right frame for businesses and industry to promote sustainable consumption through the design, production and distribution of goods and services.

This mix of policies, which are build on the set of rational choice model discursive systems, is believed to impact also the governments own operations, like waste collection and recycling systems, energy- and water-saving schemes, implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and audit schemes, and ISO 14001 accreditation, all practices ‘extremely encouraging’. Moreover, given that government purchasing can sometimes exceed 15% of national purchasing’ (UNEP 2004:29), governments are strongly encouraged to promote sustainable or green government procurement: ‘Government procurement, as appropriate, should encourage development and use of environmentally sound products and services (UN Guidelines 2003:§54).

'Governments should lead by example and effectuate the enormous potential to directly motivate change (for example, sustainable/green procurement)' (UNEP 2004:29).

Summarising, the SCP political options forwarded by UNEP to national governments and business community are straightforwardly built on the set of rational choice model discursive systems. UNEP has not considered the SCP discursive object based on the set of social practices discursive systems as an alternative to their political options.

The Norwegian government

I will turn now to the SCP discourses uttered by the third actor. Our aim is to identify whether the SCP discursive objects – one based on the set of rational choice discursive systems, and other on the set of social practices discursive systems – constitutes an alternative political options to the Norwegian government.

Following the international SCP framework regarding the role of public authorities, Norway is applying new knowledge, eco-efficiency, information, market-based instruments, indicators, international cooperation, and others as policy instruments. Related to new knowledge, Nordic countries have the ambition of playing a leading role in research and development of resource efficient products and services. Norway, by its turn, is investing in development of environmentally friendly technology through research that can also be applied to the production of goods and to the improvement of provision of services (Norwegian government 2002:35).

Eco-efficiency, information, and market-based instruments are the political options enclosed within the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, under the policy instrument entitled 'increasing value creation without reducing the long-term production capacity and value of the natural environment' (ibid:36). First of all, it presupposes inciting the business community to produce more from less, 'so that the natural resource base is used to create more value in relation to the amount of pollution generated and the consumption of raw materials and energy' (ibid). It regards technological advances as helping the country to move in the right direction:

'The Government intends to promote the development and use of environmental technologies and to make them a key element of efforts to deal with important environmental challenges. Reducing energy and resource use often reduce costs as well, thus improving the competitive position of the technology in question. Thus, environmental technologies can contribute to industrial development and higher

employment in addition to environmental improvements' (Ministry of the Environment 2005:17).

Secondly, it also presupposes relying on information as an instrument to change consumer behaviour. The political options developed by the Ministry of Children and Equality, for instance, aim to 1) standardize and simplify information on the environmental and ethical aspects of consumption, and make sure that it is available to consumers, and 2) help individual consumers to learn more about and become more aware of the environmental impacts of their consumption through eco-labelling.

Finally, it also means applying economic instruments, like environmental taxes, to 'ensure appropriate pricing of the costs of environmentally harmful activities to society as a whole' (Norwegian government 2002:36). Prices are also being used in cases where environmental problems are caused by emissions from many small sources.

The political instruments so far examined are based on the set of rational choice model discursive systems. However, while examining the Norwegian Green Public Procurement (GPP) program aiming to impact the government own consumption patterns, it is interesting to note that, even though GPP belongs to the set of rational choice model discursive systems, it has been applied considering some discursive material from the set of the social practices discursive systems. The GPP has been developed and carried out by the Ministry of the Environment, especially through the Norwegian foundation GRIP. GRIP's adviser, Martin Standley, states that working on the sector of public procurement means to deal with a market in which the demand is very much politically defined. However, some questions may go beyond the reach of what a green public procurement can influence directly and by itself. Standley points out, for instance, the business plane travel:

'You can ask, 'what is the demand for plane travel? Where has it been formed?' In fact, 50% of all domestic air travels in Norway are business travels. It is a big part of the market. The question is, who is deciding whether to take the plane or not?' It is an incredible complicated question'.

However, it is also a situation where green public procurement, associated with the right technology, can influence consumption patterns and social practices. Standley exemplifies the case with a group of people working in a project team in Norway:

'How often should they meet? Usually, they meet once a month, but maybe they could meet once every three months and instead have video conferences the other two months. But when they do meet, they could spend two days together, so they get to know each

other, instead of having quick daily meetings. We need social practices and technology to match, satisfying the needs for communication in a more user friendly way.'

This is the type of change in consumption patterns that GRIP is trying to look at from the point of view of public procurement: in order to achieve this, it is necessary to buy IT equipments, new programs, and collaborative systems. 'But then you buy fewer tickets, but more hotels probably, because you will spend a night there. All this change is a quite complex pattern', argues Standley.

Summarising, the SCP political options adopted by the Norwegian government have considered almost exclusively the principles established on the set of rational choice model discursive systems. The SCP object built on the set of social practices discursive systems has not been officially part of the Norwegian SCP political options. However, some subjects, such as GRIP, also responsible to frame Norwegian approach towards SCP, have been regarded the principles of the SCP social practice discursive object on their discursive practices.

So far, I can argue that the two SCP discursive objects constitute alternative points, i.e. alternative SCP political options, available to SCP subjects. Why one has prevailed over another in authorities' political choices is out of the analytical scope of Archaeology, but it will be discussed through a genealogical analysis, in the next chapter.

6.1.4 – Points of systematization

I will turn now to the last analytical step in describing points of diffraction, which are one of the two steps in defining the system of formation of strategies. I will try to determine points of systematization. These points are established if one can show that on the basis of each of these equivalent, yet incompatible elements, a coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts has been derived. In other words, the dispersions studied at previous levels come to form discursive sub-groups.

The analysis of the main political options recommended and applied at international and national levels, confirms the existence of two SCP discursive objects that are incompatible regarding their analytical approach towards sustainable consumption and production.

At the same time, the analysis also shows that they are equivalent points, since they are formed on the basis of the same rules of formation. Both SCP objects derive

from the same discursive relations, such as sustainable development discourses, Agenda 21, industrialised countries taking the lead, poverty reduction, etc. These two SCP objects are also formed on the basis of the same enunciative modalities: the same subjects utter SCP discourses, following the same grids of subjective positions. Finally, these two SCP objects regard a common conceptual framework, in which all actors have its share of responsibility. Together, these two SCP discursive objects form alternative points, i.e. alternative political options, focusing either on the SCP object based on the rational consumer discursive systems or on the SCP object based on the social practices discursive systems.

Lastly, these two alternative political options can be characterized as linked points of systematization since they are both based, firstly, on the SCP conceptual dispersions (enunciated in chapter 5). One group of political options regards government and business responsible to build the frame in which consumers can make rational and sustainable choices. Another group of political options considers social and cultural context as essential in shaping consumers pathways. Secondly, these groups of political options, characterised by different conceptual arrangements, are – in their turn – products of dispersions of enunciative modalities (studied in chapter 4). On one hand, international agencies and national governments set SCP policies, on the other hand, researchers and consumers organisations frame the field of knowledge. Thirdly, these enunciative modalities are formed in relation to the different domains of objects formulated by the arrangement of the discursive relations (studied in chapter 3). It is this dispersion of elements – objects, statements, concepts and strategies – influencing, determining and authorizing the possibility of other elements in consecutive levels, which characterizes a unity of a discursive formation.

I have shown that on the basis of the two alternative SCP political options – one built on the set of rational choice model discursive systems and another built on the set of social practices discursive systems – is possible to derive a coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts. Therefore, it is possible to assert that each coherent combination of dispersions identified in each level comes to form two sustainable consumption and production discursive sub-groups: one based on the rational choice model and another on social practices.

6.2 – Authorities' choices

I will turn now to the second and last analytical step in order to identify the system of formation of strategies. I will describe how political choices have been made by specific authorities out of all those that could have been made.

Which discursive sub-group – one based on the rational choice model and another on social practices – will prevail as the 'official' SCP discourse depends on the choices made by the authorities that are using the right of voice within the archive sustainable consumption. Considering that today, public authorities and the international agencies UNEP and EEA are the authorities able to exercise the power of choice regarding which combination of dispersions should be the basis for political strategies, the chosen group of dispersions has been the one that deals with individual consumers, regulatory framework, market and technology. As states Gronow & Warde (2001), the emphasis has been in individual choice rather than contextual and collective constraint; conscious, rational decision-making rather than routine, conventional and repetitive conduct; decisions to purchase rather than practical contexts of appropriation and use; considerations of personal identity rather than collective identification. The analysis in previous chapters confirms this view. Therefore, I conclude that international governmental organisations (IGOs) and governments are relying on the rational choice model discursive sub-group to establish sets of policies towards sustainable consumption and production.

6.3 – Conclusion

The rational choice model discourses and the social practices discourses are identified as SCP discursive sub-groups, implying that a coherent series of objects, forms of statements and concepts can be derived from them. Which political alternative receives focus depends exclusively on the choices of authorities that formulate policy.

6.4 – Archaeological conclusion

The identification of the system of formation of SCP strategies concludes the archaeological analysis that I have undertaken so far. The discourse analysis based on

the archaeological method developed by Michel Foucault started in chapter 3 with the identification of the rules of formation of SCP as discursive objects, outlining the discursive relations and the grids of material discursive on each SCP discourses are built. In chapter 4, I identified the rules of formation of enunciative modalities, determining where SCP statements come from and the subjects who are voicing them. The schemata by which concepts are organized within the SCP discourses were examined in chapter 5. Based on coherent combinations of dispersions identified in each chapter, it is derived the formation of the SCP strategies. Since all dispersions of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts and strategic options follow the rules that characterise the system of dispersion, I can now conclude that the two sub-groups of discourses identified here form a sustainable consumption and production discursive formation.

The rational choice model and the social practices discursive sub-groups do not compose two discursive formations, what would mean refer to opposite discursive relations or belonging to two complete different worlds, like one belonging to the Darwinism evolution of species discursive formation and another to the Biblical Story of the Creation discursive formation.

Both the rational choice model discursive sub-group and the social practice discursive sub-group belong to the sustainable consumption and production discursive formation. This acknowledgement has deep political impact, since it makes possible to argue for a conjunction of the two discursive sub-groups in a common set of SCP political strategies. The availability of this political alternative depends on changes in relation to the balance of power between these two discursive sub-groups. These changes can be only promoted by the discursive power struggles that are being undertaken within the archive SCP.

7 – Genealogy

Archaeology was the analytical method applied on the previous four chapters aiming to identify the discourses that international governmental organisations (IGO) and national governments are relying on while establishing sets of policies towards sustainable consumption and production. In that analytical method, discourse was understood as objects governed by a system of rules, i.e. the system of dispersion. Therefore, as an archaeologist, I described in theoretical terms the rules governing the SCP discursive practices.

I will turn now to Genealogy, the second analytical method to be applied in this thesis, aiming to examine the power struggles exerted by the SCP discourses that I have identified in the archaeological analysis. In a genealogical analysis, discourses are the objects of political struggle, since discourses produce power. It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together (Foucault 1976:100). However, Foucault warns that ‘we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies’ (ibid). In this context, strategy designates the means employed to attain SCP; it is a question of rational functioning to arrive at an objective (Foucault 1982:224).

7.1 – Genealogical Analysis

A genealogical analysis presupposes, first of all, the identification of the two forms of subjugated knowledge: 1) historical contents which have been consigned to obscurity and 2) sets of knowledge which have been discredited as incapable to their task or labelled as simple and shallow. The two forms of subjugated knowledge are concerned with a historical knowledge of struggles. What a genealogical analysis performs is a careful rediscovery of these struggles, attempting to emancipate historical knowledge from subjection, what Foucault characterizes as ‘the insurrection of subjugated knowledge’ (Foucault 1980:81). As a result of this first analytical step, it will be possible to locate points of discontinuity within the SCP archive, and to identify the effects of power produced by the dominance of a discursive group. Foucault

conceptualises discontinuity as a whole new ‘régime’ in discourses and forms of knowledge. It does not mean a change of content, nor a change of theoretical form. In the SCP archive, it means a break with the ‘true’ propositions which had until now been possible to formulate and also, more profoundly, with the ways of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as support for SCP discourses. Discontinuity is a change of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a change in their internal ‘régime’ of power (Foucault 1980:112).

Secondly, a genealogical analysis aims at the union of these two subjugated knowledge in order to unveil the historical knowledge of struggles. The next step will therefore be to apply this knowledge tactically, pointing towards a more robust sustainable consumption and production political strategy.

7.2 – Power Struggles of Knowledge

In this section, I will undertake the first genealogical step, which means identifying the two forms of subjugated knowledge which are concerned with a historical knowledge of struggles. The outcome of this analysis will be the location of the points of discontinuity within the SCP archive, and identification of the effects of power produced by the dominance of a discursive sub-group.

The archaeological analysis performed in the previous four chapters identified two discursive sub-groups within the sustainable consumption and production discursive formation. One discursive sub-group is based on the rational choice model and another on social practices. The former may be regarded as the ‘official’ SCP discourse since the majority of the international and national policies on SCP have been based on strategies that deal with individual consumers, information campaigns, regulatory framework, market and technology. These political options were first outlined as a set of strategic tools on the Brundtland Report, in 1987, when the concept of sustainable development entered into the political arena. However, considering that it is in discourse that power and knowledge are brought together, the rational choice model discursive sub-group really became an instrument of power on SCP when discursive practices were built on its premises in order to talk about the object sustainable consumption and production.

Since the official launch of SCP on the international arena in 1992, the rational choice model discursive sub-group has taken the form of a scientific discourse, especially by the institutions which produce it, like UNEP and EEA. It has also been subject to constant economic and political enforcement, as governments and business community have adopted this discursive sub-group as the framework within which business should operate, and policies be formulated. Moreover, this discursive sub-group has also been diffused and consumed in seminars, reports, political roundtables, universities, newspapers, advertising campaigns, and so on. All these procedures characterise the rational choice model discursive sub-group as imposing a political economy of truth which produces, regulates, distributes, and circulates a specific group of statements regarding SCP. However, truth ‘is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power’ (Foucault 1980:131), since truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain truth, and to effects of power which truth induces and which extend it. Foucault calls this relation a ‘régime’ of truth. (ibid:133).

‘There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth’ (ibid:92,93).

Opposition and criticism by the social practices discursive sub-group upon the political economy of truth enforced by the rational choice model discursive sub-group can be identified since the ministerial roundtable in Oslo in 1995³⁰. Since that time, this second SCP discursive sub-group has presented an alternative discourse to the prevalence of the rational choice model framework. In the 1995 Oslo Ministerial Roundtable discourses pointed out that physical infrastructure, for example, in housing, energy, transportation and waste management, can lock societies into unsustainable patterns of consumption over which individual consumers have little influence. They stated that many unsustainable patterns of consumption are deeply rooted in cultural habits. The social practices discursive sub-group also presented political strategies to steer SCP, like developing infrastructures and cultural norms that enable rather than constrain sustainable consumption choices. However, this set of knowledge has been disqualified as insufficiently elaborated and inadequate to its task. In fact, the social

30 The 1995 Oslo Ministerial Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption. See footnote 4.

practices discursive sub-group ‘owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it’ (ibid:82). The statement of a professional designer, invited to lecture in the session ‘Sustainable Design’ of the SCORE!³¹ workshop, illustrates well this power struggle:

‘I am fed up with this social practices knowledge. How can I apply the knowledge of how food consumption is used as a principle of identification, for instance, on designing a new product? How can the knowledge of how people develop routines through the consumption of technologies be translated into a concrete product service solution? How can policy makers translate the social practices knowledge into practical political strategies, for instance?’

So far, I have identified the historical knowledge of struggles of the two forms of subjugated knowledge. First, I described how the rational model choice discursive sub-group became the ‘official’ SCP discourse, especially after having its premises used as a base to discursive practices in order to elevate SCP as a category of discursive object. I also related how this discursive sub-group has imposed a political economy of truth within the archive SCP. The social practices discursive sub-group has presented opposition to the prevalence of one discursive group driving the SCP political strategies. It has pointed out other paths in order to steer SCP since its official launch in the international arena. However, its discursive scope has been discredited as incapable to their task, with its premises being misunderstood, as shows the statement of the designer above. The point is not to build a technological product based on social practices knowledge, what would consequently require the voluntary adoption by a rational consumer. The social practices discursive sub-group propose a holistic, long term political approach, in which social practices could be reshaped in a more sustainable way.

However, the relation of forces between the two discursive sub-groups described above has gone through transformations. These changes have neither followed a continuous and smooth schema of development nor a progressive process of political maturation. On the contrary, these breaks, i.e. these discontinuities, points towards a new ‘régime’ of truth within the archive sustainable consumption. They do not mean a change of content, or a change of theoretical form. They concern the effects of power

31 The first SCORE! Sustainable Consumption Research Exchange workshop – ‘Perspectives on Radical Change to SCP – was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, April 2006.

induced by having the rational choice model discursive group as the ‘official’ SCP discourse.

It is to the analytical task of identifying points of discontinuity that I will turn now, aiming to detect changes in relation to the balance of power between the two SCP discursive sub-groups. However, before I undertake this analytical step, it is important to emphasise the role of a genealogist, which seeks out discontinuities where others found continuous development. A genealogist avoids the search for depth, since a genealogical interpretation is like an overview. The interpreter as genealogist sees things from afar. This certainly does not mean that the questions interpreted are either trivial or lacking in importance, only that their meaning is to be discovered in surface practices, not in mysterious depths. The methodological point is that, ‘when viewed from the right distance and with the right vision, there is a profound visibility to everything’ (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982:107).

7.3 – Points of discontinuity

The first manifestations of discontinuity within the archive SCP started to be felt in 2005. At that time, the international arena was yet under pressure to put the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation towards ‘*Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production*’³² in action. The political strategies foreseen in this document, launched at the last UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, in 2002, reflect straightforwardly the rational choice model discursive sub-group framework. As a means of illustrating this relation, here are some political recommendations:

‘15d) Develop awareness-raising programmes on the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns... 15f) Increase eco-efficiency... 16) Increase investment in cleaner production and eco-efficiency in all countries through, inter alia, incentives and support schemes and policies directed at establishing appropriate regulatory, financial and legal frameworks... 18) Enhance corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability... 20e) Diversify energy supply by developing advanced, cleaner, more efficient, affordable and cost-effective energy technologies... 20m) Promote education to provide information for both men and women about available energy sources and technologies... 20p) Policies to reduce market distortions would promote energy systems compatible with sustainable development through the use of improved market signals and by removing market

32 Title of the III Chapter of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIChapter3.htm

distortions, including restructuring taxation and phasing out harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts... 22) Prevent and minimize waste and maximize reuse, recycling and use of environmentally friendly alternative materials...'

A concrete answer to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation has been the development of a 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. Known as the Marrakech process, this set of activities is composed by Task Forces³³ that have been created to support the implementation of specific themes, which reflect, in their turn, some of the principles of the rational choice model discursive subgroup. The Marrakech Task Forces are: 1) education for sustainable consumption, 2) sustainable building and construction, 3) sustainable lifestyles, 4) sustainable products policies, 5) sustainable procurement, and 6) sustainable tourism.

It was within this context, when the entire international and national apparatus³⁴ was focused in pursuing conceptual frameworks and practical projects to implement the Marrakech Process, dominated by the rational choice model discursive group, that the international seminar '*Sustainable Consumption: The Contribution of Research*', was held in Oslo in February 2005. Scientists from different backgrounds from Europe, East Europe, Asia and United States presented their work that, surprisingly enough, considering the international frame of mind of politicians and business community at that moment, brought to the attention many themes regarding social practices discourses. Papers like '*A comparative case study on the car-free settlement in Vienna, Austria*'; '*Dimensions in consumers' visions of future sustainable societies*'; '*Development of quantitative evaluation method for social acceptance of products and services*'; '*Forms and social meanings among French organic food consumer*'; '*Who calls the tune in shaping demand for food in the UK?*', and so on, were presented side by side of papers conveying statements of the rational choice model discursive subgroup, like '*Analysis of environmental impact of consumption in Finland*'; '*Pollution embodied in Norwegian consumption*'; '*Lifestyle changes and residential solid waste management planning in Beijing*'; '*Education for sustainable consumption*';

33 Refer to the footnotes 16 and 17, chapter 3, section 3.2.

34 Foucault (1980:194,196) defines apparatus as the system of relations that can be established between regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions etc. It is also a sort of formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need. Thus, apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge.

'Development of benchmarking for the environmental impacts of different products, services, and consumption patterns', and so on.

Even though papers from different discursive sub-groups were presented within the same sessions, it was clear that those proponents of the rational choice model discursive sub-group outnumbered the presentations forwarded by the social practices discursive sub-group. However, the social practices group did not let themselves feel intimidated. On the contrary, having so many researchers focusing on the social practices discursive sub-group, this group, at the moment of the discussions on the elaboration of the *'Oslo Declaration on Sustainable Consumption'*, even suggested that the part 'production' should be dropped from the document. The suggestion was a reaction against the power effects produced by the rational choice model discursive sub-group, and it was accepted. The *Oslo Declaration* states: 'Environmental policy making in the world's high consumption countries continues to rely on remedial regulatory frameworks, cleaner production technologies, and (in some regions) product-oriented policies'. Despite this political focus, the *Oslo Declaration* affirms: 'actual initiatives to cultivate more sustainable modes of consumption have not materialized and there are indications that an implementation gap is becoming manifest'.

7.3.1 – Power effects

The power effects of the rational choice model discursive sub-group emphasising the role of the individual consumers has twofold consequences. First of all, the responsibility for achieving sustainable consumption is taken away from politics and placed on the individual consumer. Even though sustainable consumption is approached as a question of macro-economic efficiency, with governments and business community having its share of the responsibility, when the strategic policies are designed, sustainable consumption becomes a question of individual rational decision. Secondly, it reassures the system in which consumption is regarded as an important part of the economic development, both in the public and private sector. The idea is that people have to consume, but now sustainably, in order to make the economy work properly, generating growth and development.

The strategy supported by the rational choice model discursive sub-group is economically advantageous and politically useful, i.e. undoubtedly contributing to the general functioning of the wheels of power. Economically speaking, supporting

sustainable consumers' demands requests the development of new technologies, new products, new infrastructures, challenges the industries to achieve better efficiency, what implies the purchase of new equipments, the contracting of specialized professionals, and so on. At the end of the day, SCP paradoxically becomes the promoter of economic activity which implies, for instance, the consumption of even more natural resources. In the political arena, policy makers are requested to frame the market, to enforce regulations and to steer consumers in the right direction through information campaigns, what keeps the power concentrated in the governmental apparatus while bringing welfare to the state.

The mechanisms to support all these strategies – the apparatus of ethical conversion, of developing new technology and products, of investing in eco-design, in establishing a legal framework to regulate the market, and so on – and to achieve SCP, are pursued and maintained by global mechanisms and the entire State system. To put this differently: the governments and business community have never had any problem with the unsustainable behaviour of consumers until the discourse sustainable development started to dominate and frame the international order in all sectors – economic, social and environmental. Since then, the procedures they have employed to achieve sustainable consumption have revealed and realised – from the 1992 onwards – a political advantage and an economic utility, which have consolidated the system and contributed to its overall functioning. The government is interested in power and welfare; the business in market, economic advantages and profit; none are interested in sustainable consumers as a phenomenon in itself, but they are concerned about the complex of mechanisms with which consumption is controlled, pursued, etc.

This explains in part the political resistance in adopting discursive practices that might not stimulate economic activity and growth. What guarantee could governments and business community have that strategies focusing on changing habits and routines, approaching concepts of lock-in, and infrastructures constrains, would promote the same political and economical effects? In other words, which economic advantages and political utility could be derived from the mechanisms of power targeting cultural and social contexts of dynamics of consumption?

An answer to these questions may be to not focus on just one set of knowledge and disregard the other, but to consider both SCP discursive sub-groups and its mechanisms of power in just one system of strategies. This proposal was presented at

the Oslo international seminar through the launching of the idea of the SCORE! project (2005). At that time, pending negotiations, it was announced that the EU was likely to fund a research network supporting the Marrakech process. The network would ensure that experts that understand business development, sustainable solution design, consumer behaviour, and system innovation policy work together in shaping SCP structures. Furthermore, this knowledge would be brought together and be linked practically in experiences of actors (e.g. industry, consumer groups, eco-labelling organisations) in real-life consumption areas. SCORE! would then be a co-ordination point in the field of SCP, emphasizing on ‘user awareness’ for sustainable consumption, involving key expertise covering all relevant steps of the value chain in the priority consumption domains elected as mobility, agro-food, and energy/electronics.

The launch of the SCORE! project at that international seminar may be considered a landmark in the SCP archive since its conceptual framework, more than surpassing the power struggles of the two discursive sub-groups, actually embraces both sets knowledge and offers broader political strategies. Therefore, it may also be considered a point of discontinuity, by introducing a change of what governs SCP statements, and presenting a new system which could promote changes in the ‘régime’ of power within the SCP archive.

7.3.2 – A systemic approach

The SCORE! philosophy is based on three ‘lessons learned’. The first one states that in order to understand sustainable consumption behaviour it is necessary a systemic perspective. A system is the combination of production structure (business developers), interaction between demand and supply, and consumption structure (consumer scientists). In this system, consumers’ needs – such as housing, food, mobility, and leisure – are either covered via business to consumer interactions, or co-delivered via governmental services, like offer of public services and creation of infrastructure. A key point is, indeed, that consumption does not independently restrain or direct the market, the production system and the government strategies. In other words, it is not only through rational consumers making sustainable choices at the supermarket, for instance, that the business community will produce different goods, the market will change its supply system or the government will rethink which political strategies should be prioritized, a rationality defended by the rational choice model discursive sub-group. In

the SCORE! understanding, the production side of the economy in its turn shapes the context in which consumption takes place – and hence becomes a driver in itself, a rationality suggested by the social practices discursive sub-group.

The SCORE! systemic approach is built on a second lesson learned in which consumption is not only a function of individually controllable elements. It means that a change in awareness is not necessarily sufficient to make a consumer willing to change his consumption behaviour. SCORE! states that sustainable consumption behaviour is in fact a function of need, opportunity (availability of means) and ability (access to means). For instance, if buying a car is a mobility need, the consumer should be aware of car energy label and this could be achieved through awareness raising, as the rational choice model discursive sub-group arguments. However, buying a car can cease being a mobility need if there are other sustainable alternatives, for instance, a good public transport system that is accessible to the consumers, as the social practices discursive sub-group states. The SCORE! framework points out that personal attitude, behavioural control and societal pressure are also determinants for willingness to change.

Finally, the third lesson learned and adopted in the SCORE! framework is that different levels of change in production-consumption systems need to be discerned. SCORE! identifies therefore three different systems, each one presupposing specific changes. The first system is named system of optimization. It does not imply a change in the structure of the production-consumption system. Incentives for change are rather ‘soft’, such as introducing an energy label that supports enhancing the fuel-efficiency of a car followed by an awareness raising campaign trying to influence the attitude of the user and, indirectly, the producer.

The second system, identified as system re-design, requires structural changes of the production-consumption interactions, such as an integrated mobility system where people use public transport where feasible and car sharing systems as a back-up. Awareness raising is therefore complemented by the availability of an inherent sustainable solution for the mobility problem, although still shaped in an existing context and within market framework, which characterises a combination of arguments from both SCP discursive groups. In this system, not only the attitude, but also the behavioural control of the consumer is addressed.

The level of changes in the production-consumption system proposed by the third system, the system innovation, is broader than the simple union of the two political

strategies proposed by the SCP rational choice model and social practices discursive sub-groups. It emphasizes the need for simultaneous innovations in technology, infrastructure and wider institutions. It presupposes an understanding of 1) the systematic change process, 2) the direction of changes, and 3) the general conditions for changes. It aims to answer what type of change is required at the institutional level beyond the company level. In fact, the system innovation concept is a planning/policy concept. Thus, in seeking sustainable solutions for mobility, for instance, beyond awareness raising campaigns about a car energy label combined with the offer of efficient public transport, this system would presuppose urban planning strategies aiming to reduce the transport-need.

The system innovation goes beyond the union of the two SCP discursive sub-groups, and foresees a tactical application of these two sets of knowledge in order to point towards a more robust sustainable consumption and production political strategy. Therefore, it also can be said that the system innovation characterises the second genealogical analytical step.

Unfortunately, the conceptualization of systems innovation has been restricted to the academia universe still. It has neither reached the political scene nor the business community. This gap could be felt during the second Nordic SCP Roundtable ‘*North/South business relations and SCP: A driving force for sustainable development*’³⁵, a gathering of policy makers and business community. In reality, these actors are still discussing what sustainable consumption and production is and why we need it.

*‘For business, SCP is mainly a question of thinking in long term perspectives and including social and environmental factors in cost/benefit and risk analysis. For many, the term SCP at the level of society maps easily into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the corporate level – a concept that is now well accepted by much of the business community. Roundtable participants indicated a strong need for better information material of SCP, with concrete examples demonstrating the business analysis of the case including economic, ecological, and social aspects.’*³⁶

The Roundtable participants agreed that the main SCP challenges are first, political support since implementation of SCP measures often requires coordination

35 The Roundtable took place in Stockholm, Sweden from 9-10 March 2006.

36 Summary of recommendation based on the second Nordic SCP Roundtable ‘North/South business relations and SCP: A driving force for sustainable development’, which was presented during the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) in May 2006 by the Nordic Ad Hoc Group on SCP.

across sectors and ministries. Political support, in turn, requires strong public support. This support could only be achieved, in their view, through ‘public awareness of the challenges and a feeling that SCP measures will be positive to the individual and his/her environment’. Other challenges discussed were labelling and global trade, marketing and distribution, prices – subsidies, taxes, etc., and so on. In other words, the discussions happened within the boundaries of the rational choice model discursive sub-group. Moreover, the level of the discussions was a clear signal of the lack of dialogue between researchers’ community on one side, and policy makers and business community on the other side.

At this point, it is possible to identify another point of discontinuity within the archive SCP, i.e. another change in the relation of forces between the rational choice model and social practices discursive sub-groups. Each discontinuity produces impacts on the effects of power induced by having the rational choice model discursive sub-group as the ‘official’ SCP discourse.

The EEA report *Household Consumption and the Environment*, launched on November 2005, ten months after the Oslo international seminar, breaks the hegemony of the rational choice model discursive sub-group within the set of political recommendations directed to EU countries. As shown in chapter 6, the report considers strategic instruments pertinent to the rational choice model discursive sub-group, but introduces social practices strategies on SCP as well. Following the principles of the system re-design, which requires structural changes of the production-consumption interactions, this avant-garde document within the political scenario is a mix of arguments from both SCP discursive sub-groups. It is also a result of dialogues between individuals inserted within the political apparatuses and researchers’ community, since the document was written by the EEA in cooperation with the International Centre for Integrative Studies (ICIS)/Pantopicon, and the Danish National Environmental Research.

Achieving the next level, which would require obligatorily the involvement of policy makers and business community together with scientists, has already started to be pursued, and points out to one more discontinuity within the archive SCP. Three months after the launch of the EEA’s report, the EEA hosted in its quarters, in Copenhagen, Denmark, the first SCORE! workshop. The audience included the consumer scientists presented at the Oslo international seminar, plus the policy makers which participated of

the Stockholm Nordic Roundtable, sitting side by side with representatives of the productive sector – e.g. designers, professional of business schools and executives – and experts in system innovation and governance for transitions. The EEA and the UNEP, responsible to shape SCP discourses in the international arena, were both present.

The purpose of the workshop was to shape a conceptual framework about how to realise radical changes to achieve SCP. Presenters and discussants belonging to different scientific fields had the opportunity to confront their different perspectives, challenges and experiences, not just in the sessions, but also in the discussions in the plenary. The discussions undertaken in the plenary were characterized by an equal prevalence of the two SCP discursive sub-groups. Both discourses had their core principles being questioned and challenged.

7.4 – Genealogical conclusion

The genealogical analysis undertaken in this chapter has identified the points of discontinuity that could mean the start of a new ‘régime’ of truth within the SCP archive. The Oslo international seminar (January/2005), the EEA’s report on household consumption (January/2006), and the SCORE! workshop (April/2006) represent three different levels of transformation of the political economy of truth within the archive sustainable consumption.

The Oslo seminar was the official, through *The Oslo Declaration on Sustainable Consumption*, expression of dissatisfaction with, and the rebellion against the power effects resulting from the prevalence of the rational choice model discursive sub-group in the SCP archive. The EEA’s report performed, for the first time, the union of the two SCP discursive sub-groups in a document delivering political options to all the EEA members: the 25 EU Member States together with Bulgaria, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Romania and Turkey. It also represented the union of two elements of power apparatus: scientific knowledge and political propositions.

The third point of discontinuity, the practice performed in the SCORE! workshop, went beyond the union of the two SCP discursive sub-groups. It was a combination of sets of knowledge aiming to build a more holistic group of discursive relations, which could support a structural place to the SCP archive on the international policy agenda. Here remains the question:

Will these points of discontinuity be deep enough in order to produce new effects of power and establish a new 'régime' of truth within the archive SCP?

8 – Conclusion

The conclusion draws attention to this thesis's insights into discourses and power relations in sustainable consumption and production debates, and how these insights can be used in the formation of future strategies towards SCP. The two analytical methods applied – Archaeology and Genealogy – have allowed a thorough scrutiny of the SCP discourses within both international and national scenarios. The analysis began with the foundation of the discourses on SCP and ended with an analysis of power effects of political struggles of knowledge within the archive SCP.

The archaeological analysis has shown that the discursive relations forming SCP discursive objects are heavily influenced by sustainable development discourses, emphasising needs, lifestyles, quality of life, and especially the economic aspects of production like eco-efficiency, technology innovation, economic competitiveness and nature's limits. These relations canalise the ways in which authorities approach SCP in international and national levels focus on household consumption, consumer behaviour and the environment impacts of consumption on the one side; and on national governments responsible for providing the legal framework within which business community and consumers can operate on the other side. This discourse analysis has shown that these approaches are built on two discursive systems. The first system has the rational choice model at its core. Consumption is viewed as a matter of personal choice exercised by autonomous consumers making relatively unconstrained lifestyle choices based on rational deliberations. The second discursive system, in its turn, approaches consumption through the social world in which consumer practices are embedded in a variety of social practices, which are in their turn, influenced by social norms and constrained by institutional contexts which evoke lock-in situations, such as the infrastructure of public transport. SCP discursive objects are formed by the relations between all these discursive practices, but it is not possible to say that there is one set of relations that defines SCP discourses. Rather, there is a dispersion of many SCP discursive objects.

In relation to the broad scope of SCP discourses, I have identified grids of subject positions interchanged between academics, policy makers and business community. At the international arena, subjects of SCP discourse at UNEP and the EEA

research and develop political tools, but they also work with governments and business community. At the national level, policy makers define policies; but they are also panellists in seminars and listening subjects while working with researchers. The researchers themselves, in addition to their scientific projects, work close to the policy makers. Nevertheless, these SCP subjects neither strive towards one single rational SCP project and nor towards a single goal. They do not compose a single position from which SCP discourses are uttered. Instead, they manifest the dispersion of positions of agency in relation to particular SCP discursive objects.

The analysis of the conceptual organisation within SCP discourses – in which the specific roles of governments, business, and consumers are established as a means of steering sustainable consumption and production – shows a prevalence of the discursive systems related to the rational choice model in the modern policy approaches towards SCP. Nevertheless, it was also possible to identify statements belonging to the social practices discursive systems being applied by all SCP subjects, characterising a coexistence of dispersed and heterogeneous groups of concepts within the archive SCP.

At this point, the reader might have wondered where the identification of these elements and their systems of dispersion would lead. SCP strategies are only formed if there is a sufficient degree of coherence between the dispersions of the three elements approached above – SCP discursive objects, grid of subject positions, and SCP concepts. In this study, I have found two SCP strategies – one built on the set of rational choice model discursive systems and another built on the set of social practices discursive systems. Further, I have shown that these two strategies are derived from the same set of relations of objects, grids of subject positions, and concepts. Therefore, it is possible to assert that they form two discursive sub-groups.

Since all four SCP elements – objects, enunciative modalities, concepts and strategies – follow the same rules of formation, I claim the existence of a sustainable consumption and production discursive formation.

The identification of a SCP discursive formation has deep political impact. None of the two discursive sub-groups can claim the object SCP as their own. Rather, both discursive sub-groups form the SCP discursive formation. The rational choice model and social practices discursive sub-groups constitute alternative political options within a common framework. They do not form opposing knowledge systems as the proponents of each sub-group want us to believe. One does not exclude the other.

Therefore, it is legitimate, and a sound tactical move, to work towards a conjunction of the two discursive sub-groups in a common set of SCP political strategies, thus shaping a more robust approach towards SCP.

The possible emergence of a more robust political SCP strategy depends on changes in the balance of power between the two discursive sub-groups. The archaeological analysis shows that the rational choice model discursive sub-group has dominated the formation of SCP politics. So far, national public authorities and the international agencies UNEP and EEA are focusing on individual consumers, regulatory framework, market and technology. This is because this discursive sub-group has produced strategies that are viewed as politically useful and economically advantageous, i.e. undoubtedly contributing to the general functioning of the wheels of power. Economically speaking, supporting sustainable consumers' demands requests the development of new technologies, new products, new infrastructures, challenges the industries to achieve better efficiency, what implies the purchase of new equipments, and so on. At the end of the day, SCP paradoxically becomes the promoter of economic activity which implies, for instance, the consumption of even more natural resources. In the political arena, policy makers are requested to frame the market through legal and regulatory instruments (such as directives, laws and regulations), market-based instruments (such as taxes and charges, market-based emissions trading systems, removal of subsidies that are environmentally harmful), enabling technological improvements, information, green public procurement, ecolabelling and other instruments. By promoting SCP strategies forwarded by the rational choice model discursive sub-group, the national governments reinforce their system of political interests, keeping the power concentrated in the governmental apparatus.

The genealogical analysis has shown that the rational choice discursive sub-group is imposing a political economy of truth, i.e. to produce, regulate, distribute and circulates its principles within the archive SCP. This political economy of truth induces regular effects of power, which in its turn, reinforce the political economy of truth in a circular system, defined by Foucault as 'régime' of truth (Foucault 1980). Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true (Hall 1992). As it is today, the rational choice model discursive sub-group is sustaining a 'régime' of truth within the archive SCP. The social practices discursive sub-group, in its turn, has been deemed as inadequate to its task, since there are no

guarantees of economic advantages and political utility being derived from the adoption of cultural and social contexts of dynamics of consumption as SCP political strategies.

On the other hand, the genealogical analysis has also shown that the political struggle of knowledge between the rational choice model and social practices discursive sub-groups is starting to promote discursive changes in relation to the balance of power between them, perhaps even shaping a new 'régime' of truth. In order to track these changes, I identified points of discontinuity within the SCP archive, locating breaks with the 'true' propositions which had until now dominated the whole ensemble of discursive practices supporting SCP discourses. These points of discontinuity are the Oslo international seminar (January/2005), the EEA's report on household consumption (November/2005), and the SCORE! workshop (April/2006). They represent three different levels of transformation of the political economy of truth within the archive sustainable consumption. The Oslo seminar voiced formally, through the *Oslo Declaration on Sustainable Consumption*, dissatisfaction with the power effects of the prevalence of the rational choice model discursive sub-group within the SCP archive, and emphasised its inadequacy in delivering more sustainable modes of consumption. The EEA's report *Household consumption and the Environment* brought together, for the first time, the two SCP discursive sub-groups in a document delivering political options to all the EEA members: the 25 EU Member States together with Bulgaria, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Romania and Turkey. The third point of discontinuity identified was the discursive practices performed in the SCORE! workshop, characterising a union of sets of knowledge aiming to build a more holistic SCP approach.

These points of discontinuity have not yet brought themselves to bear, neither through political results, nor by producing new sets of SCP strategies. However, these changes refer to an already scientific acknowledgement that a systemic approach is needed, since the rational choice model discursive sub-group has not been as effective in stimulating changes in consumption patterns as expected. As research on 're-bounce' effect (UNEP 2001) has documented, even though SCP requires an increase in the efficiency of consumption, achievements based on economic and technological factors alone are recurrently outweighed by a growth in consumption volumes (EEA 2005).

Of the systemic approaches discussed in the international SCP forums so far, the one that seems most promising deals with the concept of planning/policy, i.e. system

innovation (Andersen 2006; Spaargaren et al 2000). It presupposes an understanding of 1) the systematic change process, 2) the direction of changes, and 3) the general conditions for changes. It aims to answer what type of change is required at the institutional level beyond the company level. Thus, in seeking sustainable solutions for mobility, for instance, beyond awareness raising campaigns about a car energy label combined with the offer of efficient public transport, this system would presuppose urban planning strategies aiming to reduce the transport-need.

A systemic approach towards SCP demands the involvement of all actors, from the institutional level, political arena, production structure (business developers), interacting with demand and supply sectors, and the consumption structure (consumer scientists, consumer organisations). The argument that a discursive change is already in motion within the SCP archive is sustained as all actors – policy makers, business community, consumer scientists, eco-designers, etc. – instead of planning SCP policies in separate forums, are confronting their different perspectives, challenges, and experiences in common meetings, where the two SCP discursive sub-groups have their core principles questioned and challenged. By bringing the proponents of the two different sub-groups together, they are promoting an interdisciplinary discussion in order to be able to forward a better and broader SCP political strategy. Whether they will be able to surpass their own frameworks, power interests, and to foresee different gains from a new ‘régime’ of truth, is too early to say.

This thesis’ contribution to the SCP debates is to show that the rational choice model and social practices discursive sub-groups are components of the same SCP discursive formation. That means that the challenging project of bringing both discursive sub-groups into a common political framework is achievable.

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Appendix 1: Interview questionnaire

1) CONCEPT

A) What kind of change does sustainable consumption imply?

B) What messages have been conveyed to the public about what being a sustainable consumer means?

C) What does XXXX³⁷ mean by ‘having a more sustainable lifestyle and sustainable consumption patterns’? What do sustainable consumption patterns mean?

2) CHANGES

A) How does consumption change?

B) What kind of changes does XXXX want to promote in order to achieve sustainable consumption?

C) At which level must these changes in consumption patterns happen: at consumers level, business level, retailers level, government level?

3) INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

A) The use of media is often absent in government approaches. Can public policy capitalize on the use of media? How?

B) What role do information strategies play?

4) SOCIAL ASPECTS

A) Do XXXX policies (reports, researches³⁸) take in account gender, for instance, how different technologies are incorporate into particular gender, or how gender affects the consumption? How policies target generations and classes?

B) Does XXXX work with individual preferences, routines and habits when it is trying to change consumption patterns?

5) TECHNOLOGY

A) How do XXXX policies (reports, researches) approach new technology? Do they imply that new technologies will shape new consumption patterns or promote behavioural changes?

³⁷At each interview, XXXX was replaced by the name of the institution: UNEP, EEA, the Norwegian government, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Children and Equality, SIFO, and GRIP.

³⁸ Some actors make policies, others produce reports, and others make researches. The question was formulated dependent on which actor was being interviewed.

6) MARKET

- A) What concept of choice does XXXX work with?
- B) What concept of demand does XXXX work with?
- C) Does XXXX articulate these two concepts – choice and demand – with the mechanisms by which goods are produced and distributed? If yes, in which way?
- D) Until which extent do the XXXX policies (reports, researches) consider that institutions of trade and government are also responsible for their consumption patterns?

7) GENERAL

- A) What are nowadays XXXX main strategies towards sustainable consumption?
- B) Do you think the message in XXXX discourse is consistent or are there differing approaches in the various public forums?
- C) What are the main obstacles to achieve sustainable consumption? How does XXXX deal with them?

List of interviews

Adriana Zacarias (UNEP) – 10th March 2006.

Paul Hofseth, Ulla Hegg, and Grethe Torrissen (Ministry of the Environment) – 20th March 2006.

Martin Standley (GRIP) – 10th April 2006.

Bas de Leeuw (UNEP) – 20th April 2006.

Lars Mortensen (EEA) – 24 April 2006.

Jacob Bomann-Larsen (Ministry of Children and Equality) – 23rd May 2006.

Harald Throne-Holst (SIFO) – 9th June 2006.

Glossary of Foucault's concepts

Archaeology	A Foucaultian method, which seeks to describe discourses in the conditions of their emergence and transformation, rather than in their deeper, hidden meaning. It suggests an interpretative strategy, a description of what has already been said at the level of its existence. The archaeological analysis studies discourse only at its level of existence, and it never takes discourse to be a trace or record of something outside of itself.
Archive	The total set of discursive relations, power relations and institutions that determine what can and cannot be spoken in a given historical era. For Foucault, the archive is not a set of things or even a set of statements, but rather a set of relations. It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements.
Authorities of delimitation	Those that limit, designate, name, and establish an object of discourse.
Concepts (Formation of)	The schemata in which statements may be linked to one another in a type of discourse; how recurrent elements of statements can reappear, dissociate, and then be taken up into new logical structures, acquiring new semantic contents, and constituting partial organizations among themselves.
Discontinuity	Within the space of a few years, a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way. These changes are, Foucault explains, the sign of a modification in the rules of formation of statements of what is accepted as scientifically true. It does not mean that it is a change of content, nor a change of theoretical form. It is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a change in their internal 'régime' of power.
Discourse	A group of statements which provide a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Foucault is interested in discourse as the societal process of understanding and self-definition. His research concentrates on the way discourses are organised and, more specifically, on who gets to participate and contribute, and who is excluded. Thus, the focus is on the productive function of discourses.
Discursive formation	A coherent group of discourses unified by a regularity of discursive practices that is, in its turn, determined by a set of rules. Foucault's method describes 'systems of dispersions' between statements, and seeks regularities only there. Wherever such regularities of dispersion can be found there is a discursive formation. 'Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion; whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity... we are dealing with a discursive formation' (Foucault 1972:38).
Discursive relations	The group of relations that discourses must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc. Discursive relations are the place in which 'a tangled plurality... of objects is formed and deformed, appears and disappears' (Foucault 1972:48). Discursive relations are at the core of discourse analysis since they characterize discourses as practices. These

practices systematically form the objects of which they speak.

Enunciative modalities (Formation of)	It is the field of regularity for various subject positions. In order to establish them, it is necessary to 1) identify who is speaking; 2) describe the institutional sites from which discourse derives its legitimate source and points of application; and 3) the positions of the subject that is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or group of objects (see 'Grids of subject positions'). The dispersion of enunciative modalities is manifested through the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions that a subject can occupy or be given when making a discourse.
Forms of coexistence	In defining the formation of concepts, it determines the modes of relation between different discourses. It is necessary to identify 1) statements that were formulated elsewhere and taken up in different discourse, acknowledged to be truthful; and 2) statements that belong to quite different types of discourses, but which are active among others discourses, either because they serve as analogical confirmation, or because they serve as a general principle and as premises accepted by a reasoning.
Forms of succession	In defining the formation of concepts, it identifies the rhetoric used, how descriptions, deductions and definitions – whose succession characterizes the architecture of a text – are linked together.
Genealogy	The genealogy of knowledge consists of two separate bodies of knowledge: First, the dissenting opinions and theories that did not become the established and widely recognized. Second, the local beliefs and understandings. The genealogy is concerned with bringing these two knowledge, and their struggles to pass themselves on to others, into play. This research activity entertains the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledge against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects.
Grids of specification	In the process of forming objects, they are the discursive material on which discourses are built, divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, and derived from. Based on different discursive material, it is possible to establish different systems. These systems may be compared and contrasted or related to each other; they may be derived from each other, or even contradict each other. In fact, these systems are the foundation of the delimitations of the discursive object established by the discursive practices of the authorities of delimitation.
Grids of subject positions	In the process of forming enunciative modalities, they are the positions that are possible for a subject to occupy in relation to the various domains or group of objects: according to a certain grid of explicit or implicit interrogations, he is the questioning subject and, according to a certain programme of information, he is the listening subject.
Institutional sites	In the process of forming enunciative modalities, institutional sites are from which discourse derives its legitimate source and points of application (its specific objects and instruments of verification).
Objects (Formation of)	Formed by a group of discursive relations between the surfaces on which the object appears, on which it can be delimited, on which it can be analysed

and specified. When one describes the formation of the objects of a discourse, one tries to locate the relations that characterise a discursive practice, i.e. a place in which a tangled plurality of objects is formed and deformed, appears and disappears.

Points of diffraction	The first methodological step in identifying strategies. These points are characterized by points of incompatibility, equivalence, alternative and systematization. A discursive formation will be individualized if one can define the system of formation of the different strategies that are deployed in it. And one will have defined this system if one can describe how the points of diffraction of one discourse derive from one another, regulate one another, and are involved with one another.
Points of equivalence	The two incompatible elements identified in the first methodological step of determining points of diffraction, are formed in the same way and on the basis of the same rules; the conditions of their appearance are identical. They characterise then points of equivalence.
Points of incompatibility	First methodological step of determining points of diffraction. Two objects, or two types of enunciation, or two concepts may appear, in the same discursive formation, without being able to enter – under pain of manifest contradiction or inconsequence – the same series of statements. They are then characterized as points of incompatibility.
Points of systematization	Last methodological step of determining points of diffraction. On the basis of each of equivalent points, yet incompatible elements, a coherent series of objects, forms of statement, and concepts can be derived. They characterise then points of systematization.
Political economy of truth	Characterised by five traits. ‘Truth’ is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power); it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (‘ideological’ struggles).
Power	A web of force relations made up of local centres of power around which specific discourses, strategies of power and techniques for the appropriation of knowledge cluster. In Foucault’s point of view, power relations are present in all form of social interaction: ‘Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere’ (Foucault 1976:93). Power is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society. Its effect is then not primarily the maintenance and reproduction of the system of relations, but it is above all a relation of force.
Procedures of intervention	In order to identify the schemata by which concepts are organised, it implies determining the ways in which statements can be translated, systematised, redefined, rewritten, and so on.

'Régime' of truth	A circular relation in which truth is linked with systems of power, which in their turn, produce and sustain truth, and the effects of power which truth induces and which extend truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. A discursive formation sustains a regime of truth.
Statements	Basic unit of discourse and therefore the basic unit analyzed in the archaeological method. It provides a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is defined by Foucault as an ensemble of statements whereby the term statement is not limited to speech acts but is meant to include texts, tables and arrangements of things, such as architecture. Depending on the conditions in which it emerges and exists within a field of discourse, and depending on scope of the 'field of use' in which it is to be analyzed, anything from a scientific chart to a sentence to a novel can be a statement.
Strategies (Formation of)	Formed when there is a sufficient degree of coherence between a certain regrouping of objects, certain types of enunciation and a certain organisation of concepts. This whole group of relations forms a principle of determination that permits or excludes, within a given discourse, a certain number of statements.
Subject positions	Specific positions of agency and identity in relation to particular forms of knowledge and practice. Discourses themselves are the bearers of various subject-positions.
Surfaces of emergence	The fields in which discursive objects first arise. It also relates to new fields of emergence in which new discursive relations are practiced. These fields allow discourses to define what they are talking about, thereby creating apparently definite objects of discourse.
System of dispersion	Transformations and incompatibilities of objects, the simultaneous or successive emergence of concepts, and the variable differences that separate statements. 'A dispersion itself... can be described in its uniqueness if one is able to determine the specific rules in accordance with which its objects, statements, concepts, and theoretical options have been formed' (Foucault 1972:72). Refer to 'System of dispersion'. Refer to 'Dispersion'.