Govern ing towards Sustainability
To
Lova & Sofie
Erik Hysing

Governing towards Sustainability
Environmental Governance and Policy Change in Swedish Forestry and Transport
**ABSTRACT**


Faced with environmental problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss, the dominant political response has been sustainable development, balancing environmental protection against economic prosperity and social justice. While political action is increasingly being called for, the role and capacity of the state is questioned – as captured neatly in the story from government to governance that implies a relocation of authority and power between policy levels and in public-private relations, as well as a radical restructuring within public administration. Taking its conceptual point of departure in theories of sustainable development, governance, and policy change, this thesis assesses, explains, and theorises about recent developments of environmental governing within Swedish forestry and transport, two areas with high environmental impact and that involve strong economic values and interests. The findings are presented in four articles that have all been published in leading academic journals. The thesis concludes that public policy has changed within both policy areas as environmental objectives and new modes of governing have been adopted – a development that can be characterised as governing towards sustainability. However, the storyline from government to governance is too simple to capture these changes. The state remains important in several ways (actor, arena, institutional structure, form of authority) and influences society through a variety of modes of governing. Thus, governance and government remain relevant. To explain policy change we need to recognise multiple barriers to and enablers of change as well as having a contextual understanding of the policy area in focus. The thesis concludes by arguing that sustainable development needs to be politicised in terms of visible political action and open political contestation between differing visions of a sustainable society.

**Keywords:** governance, government, modes of governing, public policy, policy change, sustainable development, environmental politics, Swedish forestry, forest policy, Swedish transport, transport policy, politicisation, governing towards sustainability
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Christmas 2009
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PART I
INTRODUCTION

Apocalyptic messages about the premature end of the world and the danger of environmental catastrophes in the near future have brought the problems of environmental degradation home with a vengeance. As the risk of an environmental Armageddon in the form of climate change, biodiversity loss, and ozone depletion has become more understood, reported, and accepted, political action is increasingly being called for (cf. Azar 2008; Swyngedouw 2007). The dominant political response has been sustainable development, balancing environmental protection against economic prosperity, and social justice to sustain all these values not only for this generation but for coming generations as well. In other words, environmental governing is reframed as governing towards sustainability. Sustainable development is a highly complex and diverse political challenge that requires paying attention to the uncertainty of policy options, and handling difficult value conflicts. To realise sustainability, changes in public policy and governing are needed. In these processes, deeply entrenched and powerful interests compete for influence within multiple decision-making forums on multiple levels, ranging from the global to the local.

While this massive challenge has come into focus, the very epicentre of political power in modern society – the state – has been questioned and challenged. It is argued by researchers and practitioners alike, that we are witnessing a change in the way society is governed, i.e., from government to governance (Article IV; cf. Sørensen 2006). Faced with such complex, diverse and dynamic policy challenges as environmental problems it is argued that the state is incapable of articulating and pursuing collective action and imposing its will on society (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003; Kooiman 1993). In addition, the legitimacy and integrity of the state have been questioned as perceptions of governing among citizens increasingly include new forms of self-regulation and participation (cf. Newman 2001; Swyngedouw 2007; Walters 2004). The state is described as being hollowed-out by the transfer of functions upwards to the European Union, downwards to local and regional governments, and outwards to private and voluntary actors (Rhodes 1997 and 2007). Following this line of reasoning, we are witnessing a transformation from hierarchical governing by nationally organised political institutions (i.e. government) to modes of governing in which a multitude of public and private actors from different policy levels govern society through networks and voluntary action (i.e. governance) (Sørensen 2006). While some researchers regard these changes as signs of the weakening of the state (Rhodes 1997), others argue that it is more appropriate to speak of a shifting than a shrinking role of the state;
i.e., the state is adapting to new circumstances by transforming its role from one based on constitutional powers towards one of being a facilitator and co-operative partner (Pierre & Peters 2000).

Governing towards sustainability, that is, purposeful action to change society (or facets of society) in a more sustainable direction (Kooiman 1993b; Voss et al. 2007), exposes all those difficulties of state governing identified in the governance literature, but it also highlights the continuing reliance among citizens on the state’s ability to handle key societal problems.

**Understanding Environmental Governing in Practice**

Environmental politics and policy are reframed as governing towards sustainability. However, “sustainable development is really only an idea; what matters is what people actually do with it” (Jordan 2008, p.25). The practices of governing towards sustainability are messy, varied, and contextual. They vary between countries as well as between individual policy areas. We need to conduct research on how sustainable development is put into practice in the form of policymaking and implementation (cf. Olsson 2009). In this thesis, the research interest is on environmental governing in Swedish forestry and transport (with an emphasis on the operations of roads and railways).

Sweden is often regarded a forerunner in environmental governing and in its ambitions to create a sustainable society (Lundqvist 2004), and for having a policy style of strong state governing that is different from the Anglo-Saxon contexts in which key ideas of *from government to governance* have evolved (e.g. Rhodes 1997; cf. Marinetto 2003; Rhodes 2000 and 2007). Forestry and transport have a large environmental impact; forestry is one of the main threats to forest biodiversity (Eckerberg 2000) and transport is responsible for a large and increasing part of the greenhouse-gas emissions responsible for climate change (Banister 2005; Swedish Energy Agency & Swedish Environmental Protection Agency [SEPA] 2007). Forestry and transport are also of great economic importance in Sweden (Statistics Sweden 2008). Thus, these areas involve important environmental and economic values and interests. Sustainable forestry and sustainable transport have been key strategies for handling environmental problems in public policy. This policymaking has been part of complex governing situations in which multiple levels and forums, and a diversity of actors, have been part of policy formulation and implementation. Thus, these areas are interesting cases for studies of governing towards sustainability.
Aim & Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to increase our understanding of how to govern society to make it develop in a more sustainable direction by assessing and explaining current practices of environmental governing, and by theorising on policy change and governance.

The empirical aim of the thesis is to describe and explain how environmental issues are governed in Swedish forestry and transport. This involves identifying important actors, policy processes and institutional structures. Based on the empirical cases, the thesis also aims to make a theoretical contribution by assessing and further developing theories of policy change and governance. More specifically, the thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- How has public policy changed in terms of policy objectives and modes of governing?
- What are the roles of the state? Are we experiencing a shift from government to governance?
- What are the barriers to and enablers of policy change?

Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of two main parts. The first introduces the research object, and elaborates and justifies the aim of the thesis – thereby placing the research in its proper context. This part also includes three chapters discussing and elaborating the key concepts of the thesis: sustainable development, policy change, and governance, and one chapter on methodological considerations, how the research was conducted. This part ends with a concluding chapter that brings the different themes and concepts together, answering the research questions and summarising and further developing the main arguments and findings in the articles. The thesis ends by reflecting on the need to politicise sustainable development in terms of visible political action and open political contestation.

The second part (Articles I–IV) consists of four peer-reviewed articles published in different academic journals. In these articles, the theoretical and empirical findings of the thesis are presented; describing and explaining environmental governing in Swedish forestry and transport. The article Contextualising the Advocacy Coalition Framework: Theorising Change in Swedish Forest Policy (Article I, co-authored with Jan Olsson and published in Environmental Politics) describes and explains changes in the Swedish forest policy. Ecological values and modes of governing have been introduced through an incremental, pragmatic learning
process. The advocacy coalition framework (ACF), one of the most prominent theoretical approaches used to understand policy change, is applied, assessed, and elaborated. The article concludes that although the ACF captures many important aspects of change it is unable to capture key mechanisms of change specific to Swedish forestry; ideas of ecological modernisation combined with economic interdependency were highly important in bringing about change, and the process was mediated by a partnership culture pre-established through the legacy of democratic corporatism. Thus, policy change needs to be contextualised.

The second article Greening Transport – Explaining Urban Transport Policy Change (Article II, published in Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning) also aims at explaining policy change. In the city of Örebro, environmental objectives and policy measures were established in urban transport policy through the adoption of a Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP). Three interrelated mechanisms proved vital to understanding this greening: new policy ideas of sustainable transport, reorganisation of local administration, and pressure from green-policy entrepreneurs. Common to all three mechanisms of change was the politicisation of urban transport; that is, urban transport was framed as a political issue, and elected politicians played a key role in the policy process. These two articles describe and explain policy change within the two policy areas, identifying barriers to and enablers of change.

The third article Governing without Government? The Private Governance of Forest Certification in Sweden (Article III, published in Public Administration) uses the case of forest certification in Sweden to assess the theoretical idea of governing without government. Forest certification is a case of private governance in which governing capacity is based on voluntary self-regulation rather than government authority. The article shows that government nonetheless enabled and influenced the forest certification schemes through multiple governance-oriented modes of governing. Thus, forest certification can better be understood as governing with government.

The fourth article From Government to Governance? A Comparison of Environmental Governing in Swedish Forestry and Transport (Article IV, published in Governance) is a comparative analysis of the role of the state in environmental governing within the two policy areas. The comparison shows that environmental governing within both areas is characterised by both government and governance modes of governing. The storyline from government to governance is too simple to be suited for structuring empirical studies or framing political decisions. Taken together the third and fourth articles describe the multiple roles of the state, and scrutinise the storyline from government to governance.
Sustainable Development

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare
(Japanese saying)

Since the late 1980s the concept of sustainable development has been crucial for the way people talk and think about the environment, and it has been integrated into political rhetoric and policymaking all over the world. It has framed environmental governing as a matter of balancing environmental concerns against other core values rather than viewing environmental protection as a sole objective. In this chapter, the emergence of sustainable development as a top priority in policy is presented, and various views on its meaning and usefulness are discussed. The chapter ends by identifying key characteristics of sustainable development as an approach to environmental governing.

Sustainable Development — A Policy History

Sustainable development was introduced on the political agenda with the publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report Our Common Future in 1987 (the so-called Brundtland Report). The basic idea was that the previously competing objectives of economic growth and environmental protection needed to be handled together in policymaking and implementation (Dryzek 2005). A baseline definition of sustainable development was provided by the Commission;

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. [p. 54] ... In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development; and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (WCED 1987, p.57).

This proved to be a highly successful agenda-setting exercise but was not a new idea. As early as 1972 the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm highlighted the importance of linking economic development and environmental protection. In 1992, when world leaders met at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, it was hoped that sustainable development would induce worldwide political action. This
Earth Summit resulted in five major documents: the Rio declaration (a statement of principles on international action); the Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Convention of Biodiversity; the non-legally-binding Statement of Forest Principles; and Agenda 21, a non-binding action program for global cooperation on sustainable development (Lafferty & Meadowcroft 2000). This global political commitment to sustainable development was rearticulated ten years later at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, one of the largest gathering of politicians, lobbyists, journalists, researchers, public officials, and others the world had ever seen (Dryzek 2005). During the first decade of the new millennium, sustainable development has been intimately linked to or even overshadowed by the debate on climate change and global warming. Climate change parallels many of the challenges of sustainable development generally (Lidskog & Elander 2009) and has largely vitalised the political debate on sustainable development and heightened public awareness of environmental problems.

Although established on the political agendas through a series of international agreements and summits that make national governments responsible for implementation, sustainable development has extended far beyond the realm of government and into the world of international institutions (e.g. the World Bank and the World Trade Organization), business, and civil society (Carter 2007; Elander & Lidskog 2000; Dryzek 2005; Lafferty 2004). Erik Swyngedouw (2007) even argues that sustainable development is supported by all political actors, at least rhetorically. Thus, despite enduring criticism for limited implementation and lack of policy progress since Rio, sustainable development remains a key issue in political rhetoric and on policy agendas around the world.

To what extent and in what ways sustainable development has been handled varies between different countries. While some countries, like the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, have been actively pursuing policies of sustainable development, others have lagged behind (Lafferty & Meadowcroft 2000b). During the Bush administration, the US was particularly criticised for neglecting environmental governing on the national and global level. With the subsequent administration, however, new hope was born for a revised US foreign policy agenda – including a new stance on global environmental governing (Harris 2009).

Sweden is often regarded as among the forerunners in developing policies on sustainable development (cf. Lafferty & Meadowcroft 2000b; Lidskog & Elander 2000; Lundqvist 2001 and 2004). In March 1996, Prime Minister Göran Persson declared that Sweden was to set an example for the Western world by transforming itself into an Ecologically Sustainable Sweden with clear rhetorical
analogies to the building of the Swedish welfare state (Eckerberg 2000; Lundqvist 2001). This governmental commitment has since found its clearest expression in the National Environmental Quality Objectives, established in 1999 and further elaborated in 2001 and 2005 (Government Bill 1997/98:145; 2000/01:130; 2004/05:150). The overall aim was “to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved” (Government Bill 2000/01:130, p.1). This has been interpreted as meaning that key measures for achieving the objectives need to be implemented by the year 2020 (or 2050 for the objective on climate change). The overall responsibility for reaching these objectives was delegated to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), answering to the Ministry of Environment, and a new Environmental Code was enacted in 1998.

However, environmental governing was not treated as a discrete policy area (Lundqvist 2001). Environmental policy and implementation were to be integrated within various policy sectors and handled together with other objectives. Furthermore, the principle of sector responsibility stipulated that all actors within a policy area—government agencies, companies, non-governmental organisations etc.—were to take responsibility for the natural environment in their activities (Government Bill 2000/01:130; Lundqvist 2004b; Nilsson & Persson 2003; Sundström 2005). Thus, in forestry, biodiversity conservation was to be balanced against forestry production and social objectives (Government Bill 1992/93:226), and in transport, reduced carbon dioxide emissions were to be balanced against traffic safety, gender equality, accessibility, and other values/priorities (Government Bill 1997/98:56). Key environmental problems were to be handled using strategies of sustainable forestry (Government Bill 2000/01:130) and sustainable transport (Government Bill 1997/98:56).

As demonstrated in this section, Sweden offers the opportunity to study how one of the pioneer countries of sustainable development governs its environmental problems in two areas in which governing towards sustainability seems to be the approach.

**Conceptualising Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is an essentially contested concept (Baker & Eckerberg 2008; Jacobs 1999; Jagers 2002; Jordan 2008; Olsson 2005); that is, there is fundamental disagreement over its meaning and importance (cf. Gallie 1956). It has been argued that the concept is so fuzzy that anyone can endorse it without committing to anything – which is also argued to be the reason why the concept
has been so successful (Jordan 2008; Swyngedouw 2007). According to Michael Jacobs (1999, p.26):

*there is a battle for the “meaning” of sustainable development. But there is no point in trying to secure universal “agreement” on a unitary meaning for the term. This will never happen, for those who use it have different interests and political values.*

In fact, it is argued that the debate caused by sustainable development is its greatest achievement, and if it was ever defined precisely it would only cause conflict among those who today stand behind it (Hajer 1995; Jordan 2008).

Four key aspects can be identified as being central in the debate on sustainable development (cf. Jacobs 1999; Lidskog & Elander 2007; Low & Gleeson 1998; Olsson 2005; Pettersson 2005). The first has to do with the *ecological dimension* of sustainable development, namely that the world’s natural resources are limited and their protection and exploitation should be kept on a level that secures “ongoing satisfaction of essential human needs” (Lafferty 2004, p.14). This is an anthropocentric argument for environmental protection, holding that by destroying the environment we risk depleting key resources such as raw material for new medicines (Lee 2000). This motivates us to act with caution (i.e. the precautionary principle). In a stronger version, the ecological dimension is framed as *ecological justice*, which refers to the ethical position that all species, and/or entire ecosystems, have the right to a decent life, a right that humans do not have the moral authority to infringe upon (Low & Gleeson 1998). These different views on the ecological dimension reflect a key issue in sustainable development – what does environmental protection actually mean? Is it the preservation of nature per se or is it rather a particular social role of nature, that is, the role that is currently appreciated by (powerful) actors, that should be preserved (cf. Harvey 1996)?

A second aspect of sustainable development is the relationship between generations; that is, present action should not compromise the living conditions of future generations. This basic idea of sustainability (WCED 1987) has been debated both as an ethical dilemma, how to value the needs of today against the needs of the future, and as a practical problem, how can future generations make their voices heard in present policy processes (Eckersley 2004; Lidskog & Elander 2007).

The third aspect is related to the equitable distribution and utilisation of resources between different parts of the world (i.e. a *spatial dimension*) and the right to design sustainable development based on local conditions. There is a
A final aspect is related to participation and democracy. Sustainable development is a responsibility, as well as a right, of all. However, are these rights restricted to humans, and if not, how can we organise the political representation of other species and future generations? Should some actors (e.g. rich countries, experts, stakeholders) take more responsibility than others? While some argue that sustainable development requires an expert-guided, top-down process, others argue that the capitalist market will induce profit-seeking business to create a green society, while still others argue that broad participation and deliberation on sustainable development among all stakeholders is needed in order to achieve sustainability (Eckersley 2004; Dryzek 2005; cf. Hajer 1995; Jacobs 1999; Lidskog & Elander 2007).

**AN EASY FIX OR GREENWASH?**

In addition to major discussions on the meaning of sustainable development there is also a great deal of disagreement on the usefulness of sustainable development as a way to handle environmental problems. On the one hand there are those who argue that sustainable development is greenwash for business as usual and that a total transformation of society into an eco-centric political system is needed in order to handle environmental challenges (ecologism) (see Dobson 2007). On the other hand there are those who believe that sustainable development provides an easy fix to the existing economic system. Continual economic growth is seen as compatible with environmental protection through technical innovations, changed consumption patterns, and market-based policymaking (ecological modernisation) (see Milanez & Bührs 2007). These theoretical approaches are highly fragmented and diverse, but for the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to broadly outline the different positions, even though this will not do justice to the approaches (for further reading, see references).
Ecological modernisation is closely connected to sustainable development (Keil 2007; Olsson 2005), with some even seeing the two as synonymous (Hajer 1995). The basic idea of ecological modernisation is that there is a positive-sum relationship between economic growth and environmental protection. Environmental protection is seen as a source of growth rather than a burden on the economy (Weale 1992) – pollution prevention pays. Existing liberal-democratic institutions and the capitalist market are seen as capable of inducing a gradual shift towards sustainability that does not necessitate any significant changes in corporate, public, or political values (Christoff 1996). Change is not primarily administrated from hierarchically organised political institutions but rather through co-operative, market-based, and voluntary initiatives such as eco-labelling. In addition, the market forces are seen as pushing for change through technological innovation and green consumerism (Article I; Hajer 1995; Dryzek 2005; Olsson 2005; Toke 2001).

According to Bruno Milanez and Ton Bührs (2007), theories of ecological modernisation can be divided into four main schools of thought. The technological strand argues that technical innovations will solve the environmental problems by redesigning products and improving production processes. As a complement to hard technological solutions, softer measures such as organisational changes, environmental management systems, and certification will help industry to adapt to demands for environmental considerations. The social strand centres on consumer practices, i.e., public awareness leading to green consumerism. Changed consumer preferences bring about the production of more environmentally friendly products (Dryzek 2005). The economic strand focuses on decoupling economic growth from environmental impacts through technological innovation and/or a structural shift from resource-intensive to knowledge-intensive industries. Finally, the policy strand questions the ability of governments using traditional instruments of command-and-control to handle environmental problems. Regulatory instruments should be complemented by voluntary and market-based instruments to gain in flexibility and cost-effectiveness (cf. Jordan et al. 2005). Groups outside of government, Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs) as well as industry, have knowledge and qualifications essential for successful governing (Milanez & Bührs 2007).

Ecologism challenges the anthropocentrism of contemporary politics not only by arguing that insufficient care of the environment will have a devastating effect on society but also that ecosystems, and everything within them, have a value independent of human needs (Dobson 2007; Low & Gleeson 1998). As the world is made up of finite resources there are physical limits to growth; that is, we are in
a zero-sum game in which the carrying capacity of the globe sets absolute limits for the use of natural resources (Carter 2007; Dryzek 2005; Jacobs 1999). The ecological challenges need to be treated holistically and require fundamental changes in the prevailing economic, social, and political system, e.g. limits to growth and changed consumption patterns, rather than technological fixes and ecological modernisation, portrayed as greenwashing or a cover-up for business as usual (Carter 2007; Dobson 2007; Olsson 2005).

The capacity of current political institutions to handle the ecological crisis is generally questioned within green political theory (Eckersley 2004). The state is seen as crippled by a globalised economy that requires competitiveness; by citizens demanding ever increasing welfare; and a government organisation plagued by implementation deficits (Dryzek 2005; Lundqvist 2004b). Progress has been made, but environmental reforms remain superficial and cosmetic. It is argued that discursive constructions of sustainable development impede real change by co-opting the environmental movement and the environmentally awakened public. Instead, radical changes of political institutions are needed. Eco-authoritarianism argues that there is a need for strong central government dominated by an ecological elite acting in the public interest and unhindered by the short-termism of democratic elections. Thus, green values are more important than the processes of democracy (Carter 2007; Dobson 2007). Ecological democracy, on the other hand, argues that democratic states can be rethought and restructured into ecological stewards (Eckersley 2004). Finally, eco-anarchism argues for participatory democracy in decentralised communities without central state co-ordination (Carter 2007).

**Defining Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development means accepting that economic growth needs to be reconciled with environmental protection, that the constant growth of material well-being, in its current form, has damaging environmental implications that need to be addressed. In addition, sustainable development means accepting the need for social equity and human development, including continued economic growth to alleviate poverty (Banerjee 2003; Dryzek 2005). Following Lafferty and Meadowcroft (2000c, p.448), sustainable development thus indicates that “not all of the environment should be conserved, and that not all patterns of growth are desirable.” Sustainable development is about finding a balance between environmental protection, economic prosperity, and social justice so that these values can be sustained (at least in theory) indefinitely. What this balance actually looks like,
and what changes that are required, are largely time and place specific (Olsson 2009; Voss et al. 2007). In the contexts studied in this thesis, the rebalancing is largely about increasing the consideration of environmental values in policy-making and implementation, that is, a focus on *environmental/ecological sustainability*.

The process of (re)balancing, i.e., changing the priority given to different and often conflicting values, is inherently a political process. Sustainable development consists of a complex mix of empirical, normative, and theoretical ideas on how the world functions and what is needed to make it sustainable. It is important to recognise that sustainable development is given different meanings, largely due to different political values and interests (Jacobs 1999).

**Governing towards Sustainability – An Approach to Environmental Governing**

Sustainable development has become “the dominant global discourse of ecological concern” (Dryzek 2005, p.145); i.e., it is the primary way people talk and think about environmental issues (Hajer 1995). Governing towards sustainability (GtS), that is, purposeful action to change society (or facets of society) in a more sustainable direction, has been a key vehicle for introducing and/or strengthening green values in policy formulation and implementation.

GtS is an approach to environmental governing that differs from the environmental governing of the 1960–80s in primarily six respects (Table 1) (cf. Lundqvist 2004; Weale 1992). These characteristics, identified in previous research, affect the content of policy (objectives, logic of action, measures, and so on) as well as the structure of the policy process. However, the extent to which these characteristics apply varies between context and policy problems. It is also important to recognise that previous environmental policies and institutions, including implementation success and failures, form an important foundation for GtS. Thus, GtS complements rather than replaces traditional forms of environmental governing (cf. Chapter 4).

First, sustainable development is an ambitious and extremely ambivalent goal of societal change (Voss et al. 2007). While environmental protection/conservation was the key objective of traditional environmental policy, the objective of GtS is to balance environmental values against multiple, often conflicting, values and goals. Sustainable development is arguably not always a positive-sum game; hence, GtS means making trade-offs between societal interests and values (Baker & Eckerberg 2008; Carter 2007). Furthermore, sustainable devel-
development is an essentially contested concept that only gives vague guidance on how to actually handle conflicting and contradictory values, or what values that should be given priority under certain conditions. Rudimentary guidance for policymakers is provided by *meta-policies*, i.e., policies designed to guide the development of more specific policies, such as Sweden’s national strategy for sustainable development (Baker & Eckerberg 2008; Montin & Hedlund 2009; O’Toole 2004; Written Communication from the Government 2001/02:172).

Second, sustainable development is extremely complex, combining ecological, economic, and social considerations on a global scale and over a long period of time. Knowledge of problems and solutions is often limited and regularly contested. One reason for this is that GtS is supposed to handle policy problems in the intersection of society, technology, and nature, a combination that disciplinary science is ill-equipped to handle (Voss *et al.* 2007). Scientific knowledge is a necessary, but not sufficient, ingredient in designing policy options for sustainable development (Lundqvist 2004). Acknowledging uncertainty (or a lack of full scientific certainty) regarding policy options has resulted in *better-safe-than-sorry* principles for policymaking (i.e. the precautionary principle). Furthermore, the faith in rational/scientific planning (social engineering) based on technical expertise and solutions as able to handle environmental problems is dwindling (Dryzek 2005; Montin & Hedlund 2009; Olsson 2005). It is argued that sustainable development is too complex, and has too far-reaching consequences for the life and welfare of people, to be planned using an instrumental rationality. Instead, *the demos* need to have their say – a communicative rationality (Lidskog 2008; Low & Gleeson 1998; Lundqvist 2004; Olsson 2005; Toke 2001).

Third, recognising the cross-sectoral character of many environmental problems, a cornerstone in GtS is Environmental Policy Integration (EPI); i.e., environmental issues and objectives are to be integrated into non-environmental policy sectors (Nilsson and Persson 2003) rather than treated as a distinct *environmental policy sector* (Carter 2007; Lundqvist 2001; Weale 1992). Previous public policies and practices are to be reappraised or at least reformulated in terms of sustainable development (Baker & Eckerberg 2008). Taking it a step further, sustainability is to be integrated into the logic of everyday activities of corporations, organisations, and ordinary citizens (Dobson 2003; Keil 2007). EPI has been advocated from the normative standpoint that all sectors in society have a responsibility to do their part to protect the environment, but also from a perspective of increasing the rationality and effectiveness of policymaking (e.g. avoiding policy contradictions, increasing the pool of knowledge, identifying win-win situations) (Lundqvist 2004; Nilsson & Persson 2003). On the other hand,
one could argue that EPI risks fragmenting environmental governing, thus reducing the capacity for central co-ordination as responsibility and resources are distributed across sectors.

Fourth, environmental policy was institutionalised in new, nationally organised government agencies (i.e. environmental protection agencies) and legislation (Weale 1992). Sustainable development, on the other hand, is not to be implemented through new organisations/agencies or major new public investments. Instead, existing government agencies are to promote sustainable development using existing public resources (Montin & Hedlund 2009). In addition GtS is not restricted to public actors but involves multiple heterogeneous actors with different interests and resources. Governing capacity is distributed horizontally among policy sectors and among public, private, and voluntary actors, and vertically between different policy levels (from global to local and vice versa) (Dryzek 2005; Newig et al. 2007; Voss et al. 2007). Although the nation states may be recognised as ongoingly important (Dryzek 2005; Jordan 2008), national government is de-emphasised in favour of public and private actors from multiple levels, such as intergovernmental organisations, the business community, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and local stakeholders and citizens (Baker & Eckerberg 2008; Dryzek 1997; Lafferty 2004). Sustainable development has been described as a discourse of and for global civil society, i.e. “political action and interaction not encompassed by the state” (Dryzek 1997, p.131; cf. Dryzek 2005).

Fifth, a new toolbox for environmental governing is evolving. Although, environmental regulations continue to be widely used, they have been complemented by New Environmental Policy Instruments (NEPI), such as tradable permits, eco-labels, environmental management systems, and voluntary agreements (Article III; Jordan et al. 2005; Lidskog & Elander 2000). The promotion of instruments with less direct state intervention largely follows the logic of ecological modernisation, regarding the market as capable of providing sufficient environmental protection.

Finally, environmental governing of the 1960–80s was situated in a context in which environmental issues were the subject of visible, political conflict between diverging societal interests. Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs) and Green political parties were established as political advocates for a green political ideology (Lidskog & Elander 2000). Sustainable development differs in this regard as it provides an umbrella for political actors with highly diverging interests and values (Swyngedouw 2007). GtS favours consensus-seeking, deliberation, and problem-solving over open political contestation between different views/opinions. It is argued that if fundamental conflicts are excluded in favour of consensus, sustainable development risks being limited to “politics as the art of the
possible”, that is, promoting policies that work within existing institutional frameworks (i.e. market capitalism and liberal-democracy) rather than a radical challenge to this framework (changing the parameters of what is considered possible) (Swyngedouw 2007; Žižek 1999).

**TABLE 1: Approaches to Environmental Governing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Environmental Governing</th>
<th>Governing towards Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental protection is the key objective</td>
<td>Environmental protection is to be balanced against economic growth and social justice (Goal ambiguity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental protection can be rationally planned using technical solutions and expertise</td>
<td>Uncertainty about policy options and contestation of scientific knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental policy is a distinct policy area</td>
<td>Environmental Policy Integration (EPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationally organised governmental institutions</td>
<td>Multi-level and multi-actor governing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental regulations</td>
<td>New Environmental Policy Instruments (NEPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>(Rhetorical) Consensus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GtS takes place in very different contexts, thus resulting in different practical solutions (Voss et al. 2007). Consequently, research needs to focus on how sustainable development is realised (interpreted and applied) in actual processes of policymaking and implementation. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to public policy change.
POLICY CHANGE

Governing towards sustainability is about changing society (or facets of society) in a more sustainable direction. A key ingredient of such transformation is public policy change, understood as change in the course of action adopted and/or pursued by government actors (Hill 1997). How can we understand public policy change, and what different mechanisms of change are there?

POLICY RESEARCH

Trying to understand and influence the actions and decisions of government has always been a key issue within social science. As states took on new roles of welfare-service delivery (education, pensions, health, and so on) following World War II, studies of public policy became established as an academic research field (Kjær 2004; Mayntz 2003).

Policy research of the 1950s and 1960s had a largely prescriptive aim, influenced by ideas that societal development could be purposefully guided with the right political instruments. By using new methodologies and technology, policy analysis was expected to increase the capacity of the state to politically plan and steer society (Kenis & Schneider 1991; Mayntz 2003). The policy process was conceptualised as having discrete stages: agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation, evaluation, and others. Each stage had its own character, including actors, conflicts, and rationales, while earlier stages influenced the activities of later stages (i.e. a policy cycle). The debate on this stages approach has framed policy research. The critics denied that the policy process was a logical sequence of stages from policy initiation to policy termination. Instead, it was argued to be a far more dynamic and interactive process, in which actors and institutions involved at different stages constantly affected the process at other stages – precluding a sequential understanding of policymaking (cf. deLeon 1999; John 2003; Sabatier 2007a). It was shown, for example, that street-level bureaucrats at the implementation stage (Lipsky 1980) such as police officers, teachers, and social workers were re-shaping policy as they tried to implement often vague policy objectives under budget constraints.

A second important debate concerned the dominant top-down perspective of policy research, which focused on the subject of policymaking, i.e., the central government. Widespread governing failure turned attention towards the object of governing. Research showed that target groups of public policy were capable of resisting policy implementation, thus hampering the success of government pro-
grammes. In addition, it was recognised that governability differed between contexts and policy sectors. Policies directed at households required different approaches than policies directed at big business (Mayntz 2003). In the 1970s, pioneering research by Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1984, first published in 1973) made implementation the focus of policy research. This research was described as the missing link in explaining why policies did not achieve the intended results. The top-down perspective of earlier research was criticised for taking the hierarchical structure of government for granted and thus being more capable of evaluating specific decisions than explaining how governing actually took place. As an alternative (or complement), bottom-up research focused on the operational level of particular policy issues or problems. This approach argued that implementation was a complex issue in which relevant actors needed to be mapped empirically, not taken for granted a priori. Actual implementation structures could, thus, include horizontal as well as vertical co-ordination between different actors (Hjern & Porter 1981; Sabatier 1986; Winter 2007).

Since the 1990s, governance has been at the centre of policy research debate. It is still an open question, and, there are differing opinions as to whether or not governance is merely a change in semantics or if it also reflects actual changes (Mayntz 2003). Governance has widened the research agenda by critically assessing the role and capacity of the state, the involvement of non-governmental actors in public policy processes, and the societal conditions for public policy (Chapter 4). The governance perspective drew lessons from the revived interest in institutional arrangements that developed in the 1970s and 1980s. Theorisation on policy communities, iron triangles, and issue networks questioned and elaborated on the pluralist notion of state-society relations, i.e. a relatively autonomous state and competing interests (cf. Marsh 1998). In the “bring the state back in” debate (Skocpol 1985), it was argued that the role and capacity of the state needed to be at the centre of research attention. States were described as complex and multifaceted organisations whose autonomy, governing capacity, and structure varied between policy areas and could not be taken as fixed in advance (Rothstein 1996). Finally, the conditions for public policy were argued to have become radically different. The fiscal crisis of many states in the 1980s and 1990s, increasing public expenditures and decreasing tax revenues, the ideological shift from politics to the market as the preferred solution to societal problems (i.e. a more individualistic political culture), economic and political globalisation, and more complex and difficult problems for public policies to handle are examples of some of these changes (Pierre & Peters 2000).
As demonstrated in this section, policy research has evolved through a number of debates reflecting a combination of real-world changes identified through empirical research and theoretical and methodological shifts in social science. These debates form an important background for theorising on policy change.

Theorising Policy Change

Public policy invariably changes over time. Policy processes are dynamic rather than static. However, policy change does not necessarily mean a single major re-orientation of basic values or allocation of resources, but can take place incrementally through multiple minor adjustments of instruments and organisation over time. Peter Hall (1993) identifies three orders of policy change: (i) changes in policy instruments (e.g. the levels of taxes and grants), (ii) changes in modes of governing (e.g. the introduction of new instruments or techniques, or the re-organisation of governing structures, such as public agencies or networks), and (iii) changes in the hierarchy of policy goals (introducing new objectives or reprioritising existing objectives) (Hall 1993). Following Robyn Eckersley (2004), we can also envision a fourth order of policy change (iv) fundamentally restructuring and rethinking the broader discursive/institutional context in which policies are made and implemented (e.g. the role and rationale of the state). Public policy change is of key importance for who gets what, where, when, how, and from whom in society (Howlett et al. 2009; cf. Lasswell 1950). Policy can be reformed in terms of new or re-prioritised policy objectives (“what”), new governing techniques (“how”), rearrangement of the relationship between different actors (“whom”) and so on. In any given situation, policy change can include one or all of these orders, ranging from annually reoccurring policy decisions affecting the taxation levels to constitutional changes like making Sweden part of the EU.

Policy change does not necessarily result in intended outcomes, nor are stated aims always intended. Unintended consequences and governing failures have been a key concern in policy studies (Goetz 2008; Mayntz 1993). Policy change may be a symbolic political gesture, never intended to achieve actual change (i.e. to change target group behaviour). Appearing to take action on a policy problem is politically appealing regardless of whether a new policy is well suited to accomplish actual change or not. Citizens want to be convinced that their leaders are on top of policy problems. The primary motive for policy change can be visibility rather than actual results, policy change being used to divert attention from pressing policy problems and/or to avoid criticism for passivity and negligence. In
short, policy change can be used as *window dressing* (cf. Edelman 1964; Hysing & Olsson 2005; Vedung & van der Doelen 1998).

**WHY DOES POLICY NOT CHANGE?**

In most policy areas, most of the time, policy processes remain relatively stable and policies change incrementally. However, this incrementalism is now and then punctuated by major policy change (True *et al.* 2007). Most theories of policy change focus on these rare occasions of major policy change (Schlager 2007). Why are these changes so rare? What are the barriers to major policy change?

There is a whole family of institutional approaches to policy research that help explain the lack of policy change, i.e., policy stability and continuity (John 2003; Rothstein 1996b; Schlager 2007). These approaches explain policymaking by arguing that formal and informal institutions provide *rules of the game* that shape the behaviour and interaction of individuals (Rothstein 1996b). More specifically, institutions have been understood as a collection of interrelated values, rules, and routines that define appropriate behaviour for individuals (March and Olsen 1989), as collections of nested rules confronting more or less rational actors in determining the costs and benefits of different options (Ostrom 1990 and 2007), and as a path of policy and institutional choices made in an earlier era that provide channels that shape the policy process, i.e., path dependency (Heclo 1974; Peters 1999). When faced with a problem, actors generally search for policy options within the framework of the institution, that is, options that are deemed appropriate, that are beneficial, and/or that follow in the footsteps of previous policies. The choice of policy response is largely a matter of routine; that is, the search is limited to a range of pre-established policy options (cf. Kingdon 1995; March & Olsen 1989). Policy change, then, is largely incremental; that is, policies adapt within the institutional framework. Major policy change requires institutional change (Rothstein 1996b).

A related explanation of policy continuation and incremental policy adjustments is the existence of powerful and entrenched *policy networks* (policy communities or coalitions) that benefit from the status quo. The metaphor of networks was introduced in the 1970s in theorisation on sub-governments, policy communities, and issue networks (for the history of networks, see Börzel 1998; Kenis & Schneider 1991; Marsh 1998). The basis for policy networks is the recognition of a diffusion of power among a diversity of actors. Networks can be based on mutual resource interdependency, i.e. public actors needing resources from actors outside their hierarchic control to gain governing capabilities and,
thus, being forced to co-operate with these actors (Kenis & Schneider 1991). These networks can be very inclusive and loosely coupled (issue networks) as well as exclusive and highly structured (policy communities) (Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Marsh 1998).

Another type of network is identified in the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993; Sabatier & Weible 2007). In this approach, a coalition of actors coordinate their activities in the policy process over time on the basis of common policy core beliefs that represent basic normative and empirical commitments, including value priorities, perceptions of causal mechanisms, and basic policy preferences (Sabatier & Weible 2007). A third type of network mobilises actors with widely different interests and commitments (scientists, politicians, activists, celebrities, journalists, and others) around particular ways of talking and thinking about a policy issue (i.e. discourse). At the centre of these networks are storylines which “give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena” (Hajer 1995, p.56) by reducing complexity, providing a framework for knowledge, and establishing common symbols, metaphors, and figures of speech (Hajer 1995).

Policy networks can be seen as an intermediate factor in understanding policy change, filtering external input into the policy process (Richardson 2000). Following the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, policy networks may even gain a policy monopoly by framing an issue or problem in a certain way with a mixture of empirical information and emotive appeals (so-called policy images). This understanding is institutionalised in the organisational arrangements and practices within the policy area. This subsystem politics supports incremental policy adjustments as a result of bargaining within the network, or in order to accommodate changed circumstances (Baumgartner & Jones 1993; True et al. 2007). To understand policy change, the structure of the network and the power relations between actors within the network need to be considered as do the presence of alternative policy networks (further discussed in the next section).

As already implied, policy stability and continuity are supported by certain policy ideas (images or storylines) about how the world faced by policymakers operates, that is, what the problem is, what policy solutions are appropriate, what actors are relevant, and so on. These ideas help in interpreting information, constructing meaning, and defining common sense (Dryzek 2005). Policy ideas legitimise certain practices, beliefs, knowledge, and actors while discrediting others, which makes the policy process a struggle for discursive hegemony in which actors try to secure support for their policy ideas (Hajer 1995). Dominant ideas tend to be relatively stable. Peter Hall (1993) draws a parallel to the scientific
paradigms identified by Thomas Kuhn (1970) to describe this character of policy ideas. One reason for this is that policy ideas are mutually supported by established institutions and networks (Baumgartner & Jones 1993; John 2003) as well as enclosed within more general discourses, such as sustainable development or liberal-democracy (Hajer 1995).

A final explanation of policy stability is a lack of capacity for action within the state. Government actors may be powerful agents of change, but their autonomy (i.e. independence from actors and interests in society) and capabilities (such as fiscal strength or administrative capacity) vary across policy areas (cf. Rothstein 1996; Skocpol 1985). In many areas, policy change requires extensive financial, administrative, and political resources which pose a very practical hindrance to replacing established policies and institutions. A lack of capacity for action may also be due to administrative fragmentation, i.e., responsibility, resources, and key actors being divided across several policy areas and institutional settings. In such circumstances, there is a risk that government authorities will promote the interests within their specific policy sector rather than focus on handling the policy problem (often discussed in terms of departmental silos or drainpipes) (Carter 2007). Incompatible objectives, various institutionalised practices and norms, as well as power plays within public administration may reduce capacity for action and, thus, pose difficult barriers to change.

**WHY DOES POLICY CHANGE?**

Even if stability is the usual state of policy, major change does occur. In the following section, some mechanisms that enable policy change are identified.

One oft-mentioned reason for policy change is the occurrence of contextual changes that *shock* both the institutional arrangements and the networks that benefit from them (Richardson 2000). The Advocacy Coalition Framework argues that *external* shocks, such as changes in socio-economic conditions, regime changes, or natural disasters, or *internal* shocks (e.g. a nuclear accident that induces world-wide changes in security policies for nuclear power plants) are necessary but insufficient causes of major policy change. The shocks may redistribute resources, giving proponents of change the political muscle to replace dominant coalitions. The shocks may also raise doubts about the empirical or normative content of the beliefs of dominant networks while strengthening the position of alternative ideas and networks. Finally, shocks may pull competing networks within a policy area together. Faced with a *common enemy*, different networks may be prepared to set aside their differences and negotiate a policy compromise
Shocks can also result in increased visibility of a policy issue among media and the general public. Once in the public eye, issues can spill over onto the agenda of high-level politics in which networks and institutions that dominate individual policy areas are less powerful. The opening of new venues for policymaking in this way may enable policy change (Baumgartner & Jones 1993).

A second oft-reported explanation of policy change is a shift in dominant policy ideas. New ideas can be accommodated, mutated, and adapted to fit with the policy frame or image of dominant networks and institutions, thus resulting in incremental change. However, new ideas can also result in major policy change, spreading across policy areas like a virus, disrupting existing networks, institutions, and policies (Richardson 2000). According to Maarten Hajer (1995), policy processes can be envisioned as argumentative struggles between different ideas, interpretations, and storylines about what constitutes a policy problem. Once an issue is framed as a policy problem, policymakers need to find socially and politically acceptable solutions that can remedy the problem. When a policy idea is established in policy it can be locked in through institutional reforms (cf. True et al. 2007). The key to successful policy change is to secure credibility, feasibility, trust, and acceptance for the policy idea, as well as for the institutional arrangements under which implementation is carried out. Ideas are, however, never separate from actors. New ideas need their advocates who introduce, guide, frame, choose the time for, and adapt the policy ideas to suit a specific context. These advocates can be coalitions and networks or policy entrepreneurs.

Although revolutionary policy ideas may inflame a policy area and bring about rapid policy change, new ideas and knowledge often require a period of learning before they take hold and become accepted. The learning approach to policy change was introduced as a complement to the view that policy change is largely driven by societal conflicts and pressure. Hugh Heclo (1974) argued that policy makers could learn from experience and apply these lessons in the policy process. Peter Hall (1993) defines policy learning as a deliberate attempt to change or adjust policy in response to past experience and/or new information. However, policy learning is a highly political process in which competing interests and stakeholders claim to represent the truth (Richardson 2000). Actors tend to filter out information that challenges their core values and beliefs, especially if the information comes from competing policy actors (often seen as less trustworthy and more powerful than they actually are) (Sabatier & Weible 2007). This has made Paul Sabatier and Christopher Weible (2007) conclude that policy learning primarily concerns the instruments and strategies of governing, while basic values, policy
preferences, and the relationship to other actors are more resistant to change. This can be described as single-loop learning, i.e., learning within the dominant institutional framework, as contrary to double-loop learning, in which the framework itself is revised in the light of new knowledge (Stagl 2007). Institutional change is envisioned through the process of organisational learning caused by major discrepancies between values and objectives of an institution and its actual organisational practice, or discrepancies between its values and those of surrounding society (Peters 1999). In such situations, new institutional structures and policies may be established to remedy these bad practices.

An important aspect of policy change according to several theories is the ability to combine a compelling policy problem, a viable policy solution, and a political venue open to change (Hajer 1995; Baumgartner & Jones 1993; Kingdon 1995). The Multiple-Streams Approach discusses this in terms of policy windows, short-lived windows of beneficial political opportunities (e.g. supportive public opinion or a change of government) during which a compelling problem can be coupled with an acceptable and feasible policy solution. If problems, solutions, and political opportunities are joined together in one single package, the chances of policy change increase dramatically. This is, however, not an autonomous process, but requires skilful political manipulation by policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 1995; Zahariadis 2007).

Policy entrepreneurs are actors strategically placed in the policy process, who use a diversity of strategies and skills to bring about change; i.e., they act as catalysts of policy change (Article II). The importance of these actors is noticed in several theoretical approaches (Kingdon 1995; Baumgartner & Jones 1993; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993). They frame policy problems and solutions to attract political attention, mobilising previously uninvolved political actors in order to push issues onto the political agenda of other policy venues or levels. This requires skill, timing, resources, and access to key policymakers, but also the ability to dissolve institutional resistance and dominant networks (Mackenzie 2004; True et al. 2007; Zahariadis 2007). They mediate between conflicting networks and support policy learning (Sabatier 1998) as well as networking (i.e., using a wide spectrum of professional contacts and personal networks to find support for policy change) (Mackenzie 2004; Olsson 2009b). These actors are generally described as individuals (politicians, lobbyists, high-ranking public officials), but can also be conceived as corporate actors (networks, public agencies, political parties).

Policy change is a political process in which different interests and actors are involved in struggles for power and influence. This power struggle can take the
form of *competing networks* (or advocacy coalitions) that adopt various strategies to influence the behaviour of governmental authorities in an effort to realise their policy objectives. This is done within a multitude of venues using different types of resources and instruments, such as recruiting members/supporters within public agencies, influencing public opinion, performing fund-raising, conducting research, designing attractive policy images, and employing skilful policy entrepreneurs (Sabatier & Weible 2007). It is argued that major policy change requires network change. Thus, policy change can take place when one dominant network is replaced by another, but also through negotiations and learning between competing networks (Sabatier & Weible 2007). After a brief period of policy punctuation, the policy area settles at a new equilibrium, mirroring the ideas of the new power constellation (True *et al.* 2007).

**TABLE 2: Barriers to and Enablers of Policy Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional resistance</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of capacity</td>
<td>Policy entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigms</td>
<td>New policy ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrenched networks</td>
<td>Competing networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Window of opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in this chapter, policy change is a highly complex process and there are multiple theoretical approaches claiming to say important things about policy change (John 2003; Sabatier 2007a). Instead of treating different theoretical frameworks as alternative or even competing explanations of change, the key explanatory mechanisms of these frameworks are conceptualised as barriers to and enablers of change that are all potentially vital to understanding policy change in a particular context (Table 2). As such, they constitute an inclusive theoretical framework that directs “the attention of the analysts to critical features of the social and physical landscape” (Schlager 2007, p.293) and enable researchers to be “knowledgeable about multiple theories and, when possible, applying several theories in empirical research” (Sabatier 2007b, p.330). Based on this inclusive, or even eclectic, theorisation of policy change, assessments and further theoretical elaboration of the relationship between explanatory mechanisms as well as their relative power of explanation can be conducted for particular contexts (cf. Article II).
GOVERNING, GOVERNANCE & GOVERNMENT

They [governance theorists] accord the postwar state an aura of political autonomy and de facto power, which, perhaps, it never possessed. This is just one reason why narratives of declining state power and sovereignty should be treated with some caution. (Walters 2004, p.39)

An often told story in policy and implementation research and practice is that the way society is governed has changed from government to governance. According to this story, the state is incapable of articulating and pursuing collective action and imposing its will on society – the challenges of governing are too complex, diverse, and dynamic (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003; Kooiman 1993). This story does not only structure academic debate, it also influences current political beliefs and practices:

The language of “governance” seems to help practitioners and theorists alike to unlearn embedded intellectual reflexes and break out of tacit patterns of thinking. This stimulates them to rethink governing, politics and administration. (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003, p.2)

From government to governance is a rhetorical device – a story that includes a set of assumptions about what governing is and how it should be conducted, i.e., what modes of governing that are considered legitimate and effective (Article IV; Hajer 1995; Rhodes 2007; Sørensen & Torfing 2007).

Arguably, governing towards sustainability is a key case for this story as it includes all the complicating elements that the story argues challenge the role of the state (Chapter 2). In the following, the governance literature will be reviewed to identify and describe different dimensions of the story. This will form the basis of an elaboration of governance and government, using modes of governing as building blocks. The purpose is to make a theoretical contribution by cleaning up the semantic swamp built into much of the governance research and to develop a framework that sets the stage for empirical assessments of governance ideas and theories.

FROM GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE

The baseline from which the story from government to governance takes its departure is a model of state governing (government). This traditional way of gov-
erning has allegedly been replaced by governance. According to R.A.W. Rhodes (1996, pp.652–3);

*governance signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed.*

Governance provides a “language for redescribing the world and challenges the dominant narrative of the 1980s” (Rhodes 2000, p.67). At least three dimensions of the story from government to governance can be identified in the literature: (i) change in the locus of authority, (ii) changes in actor constellations and power relations, and, (iii) change in the workings of public administrations. However, before taking a closer look at these dimensions, the state governing model will be outlined.

**GOVERNMENT – A MODEL OF STATE GOVERNING**

The governing of Western liberal democracies is perceived (ideally) as based on the will of the people. All political authority comes from the sovereign people who elect representatives to exercise power. These representatives form a legislative assembly that defines common interests. The executive power is the highest administrative authority, responsible for making policies. These policies, as well as the laws enacted by parliament, are implemented by a public administration organised according to the bureaucratic ideals of Max Weber; e.g., they have clearly defined jurisdictional boundaries and a clearly established set of rules, and appoint public officials based on expertise. Furthermore, the relationships within the administration as well as between public officials and politicians are characterised by a clearly identifiable top-down system of hierarchical rule (Kjær 2004; Olsen 1978; Pierre & Peters 2000; Richards & Smith 2002; Sørensen 2006; Weber 1946).

**FIGURE 1: A Model of State Governing**

![Diagram of Government Model](image-url)

From Kjær (2004, p.21)
The state governing model should not be regarded as a description of governing in real life, but is rather an analytical point of departure when discussing and theorising about governing (Kjær 2004). In reality, all political systems have their own particular policy style that deviates from this ideal type in some ways (Howlett 1991).

The Swedish state governing model has at least four features that differentiate Sweden from the Anglo-Saxon contexts in which the ideas of from government to governance have evolved (e.g. Rhodes 1997; cf. Marinetto 2003; Rhodes 2000 and 2007). First, Sweden has a tradition of strong state governing; that is, the state is expected to take the lead in transforming society through hierarchically organised political and administrative processes. National politicians decide the overall policy aim, while government commissions of inquiry compile knowledge and present politically, technically, and administratively feasible proposals that are turned into law by parliament and implemented by expert agencies and local governments that are constitutionally independent from central government ministries (Lindvall & Rothstein 2006; Lundqvist 2001).

Second, these processes have historically been situated in a democratic corporatist system (Hermansson et al. 1999; Katzenstein 1985; Schmitter 1974) with highly institutionalised interaction between state actors and major interest organisations. To gain wide political support (within and outside of parliament) was thought to be of great value, hence compromises and consensus-seeking have become a key characteristic of the political culture (Lindvall & Rothstein 2006).

Third, Sweden, like other Scandinavian countries, stands out as a welfare state in which welfare provision is characterised by universal, re-distributive, non-market-based welfare services (Cox 2004). This has increased the financial as well as the administrative capacity of local and national governments.

Fourth, Sweden is characterised by extensive local self-government constitutionally legitimised by the state. The Swedish municipalities have the right to collect taxes within their territory – giving them a significant financial foundation – and a high degree of responsibility for welfare functions and service provision. Although local self-governing has been argued to be crippled by state demands without additional financial resources, local governments still have great freedom to govern, including the right to add functions without state approval (Elander & Montin 1990; Granberg 2008, Granberg & Elander 2007; Montin 2007; Lundqvist 2001).
**Locus of Authority**

The model of state governing (i.e. government) largely perceives the national level of sovereign states as the central locus of authority. Even though other policy levels are recognised as important venues, the ability of central governments to retain their sovereignty is not in question. However, processes such as European integration and globalisation have made researchers question this autonomy and governing capacity of individual states. Instead, they argue that the authority is more dispersed, both horizontally (among different actors) and vertically (between territorial levels) (Bache & Flinders 2004; Treib *et al.* 2007).

The establishment of the European Community and the ongoing European integration have been described as a *state project* in which national governments have determined the pace and extent of integration. This view, however, has been challenged by the notion that the EU is a political project in which policymaking authority, resources, and power are shared across multiple levels – supranational, national, and subnational (Bache & Flinders 2004; Hooghe & Marks 2001; Marks 1992). These levels are not seen as hierarchically organised but as part of a complex and overlapping system of jurisdictions and interdependencies. State authority has been dispersed upwards to autonomously acting supranational institutions (e.g. the Commission of the European Communities, CEC) and downwards to local and regional governments, leaving the state unable to control the collective decision-making of the EU or the interface between domestic and international arenas (Hooghe & Marks 2001). Local and regional actors are seen to bypass the central government as they turn to EU institutions for financing, policy guidance, and (through that) governing guidance (e.g. CEC 2001). In addition, the formal power of member states to veto EU decisions has, in practice, been eroded. Even on policy issues with unanimous decision-making, it is decreasingly regarded as legitimate to use the veto to protect national interests and, thus, such action has political consequences (Hooghe & Marks 2001).

The European integration spurred studies of the EU as a political community and arena for policymaking in its own right, the so-called European governance approach (e.g. Jachtenfuchs 2001). In this approach, member states are treated as one type of actor among many trying to find venues to promote their policies (venue shopping). EU institutions are also seen as being integrated into the logic of domestic politics and policy processes (i.e. Europeanisation).

However, it is not only the EU that challenges the nation state; global economic and political institutions are also seen as relocating authority and infringing on the capacity of state actors. Following international relations research, states co-operate in international regimes to tackle problems on a global scale,
such as environmental problems (Hasenclever et al. 1997; Krasner 1983). It has, however, been noticed that this state-centric system of international relations has been challenged and complemented by a multi-centric system of global governance consisting of a diverse set of private and public actors and arrangements that transgress national boundaries and derive authority through market power, epistemic communities, civil society involvement etc. – establishing global governance beyond the state (Elander & Lidskog 2000; Jagers & Stripple 2003; Kjær 2004; Rosenau 2004).

While studies on European integration and globalisation argue that the authority and autonomy of the state have been challenged, there are others who argue that national governments can effectively resist being bypassed or marginalised in multi-level policy processes and are capable of defending their policy preferences (i.e. to act as gatekeepers). Even if states are forced to compromise on national policy preferences in international or EU negotiations, they may be able to resist such decisions at the implementation stage (Bache 1998 and 1999). In addition, national governments provide vital ground rules for governing on other levels, as well as largely continuing to control the dispersion of power to these levels. According to Mark Pollack (1995, p.385),

*they [supranational and sub-national actors] are actors in a play written essentially by the member states, and their ability to influence policy outcomes has been circumscribed by the institutional structures established, and periodically revised in light of past experience, by the member states.*

It is, however, important not to take the gatekeeping ability of states for granted. The gatekeeping capacity varies between policy areas as well as between national contexts (Bache & Flinders 2004; Pollack 1995).

**Actors Constellations and Power Relations in Policymaking**

The state governing model depicts a relatively open political system in which citizens makes their voices heard through popular elections and by organising themselves politically through interest aggregation and competition between a plurality of interests for the attention of policymakers (e.g. Dahl 1961). Governments are seen as relatively autonomous in relation to specific societal interests, more or less capable of choosing whether or not to let organised interests impact on policy (Pierre & Peters 2000; Rhodes 1997). However, these ideas have continuously been questioned as critics have argued that state-society interaction is far more structured and closed. Elite theorists have argued that government strategies are
formed through interaction within a small and exclusive set of actors (iron triangles) (Kenis & Schneider 1991). Likewise, Marxists have stressed the privileged position of business in gaining access to and influencing government politics (Judge et al. 1995). Neo-corporatism perceived a close connection between state and society with institutional arrangements linking powerful organisations (workers unions and employers organisations) to the state apparatus, granting them a monopoly of representing certain interests and direct access to public administration in exchange for controlling the demands placed on the state by their members (Katzenstein 1985; Kjær 2004; Schmitter 1974). This is far from the open competition between interests perceived by pluralism or the orderly/idealised relationship between the government and the people perceived in the state governing model.

This criticism has been taken a step further within the network literature – arguing that the boundaries between public and private have become blurred as previous patterns and boundaries are being tested and challenged. Private actors are more deeply integrated in the policy process than traditional theories such as pluralism acknowledge and are far more diverse than envisioned in corporatism (Rhodes 1997; Stoker 1998). Instead of highly institutionalised and hierarchical interaction between public and private actors, co-operation, deliberation, and co-governing are taking place in policy networks. In light of this diffusion of power between public and private, governments are perceived as unable to mobilise necessary resources (knowledge, finances, legitimacy, and so on) on their own and are therefore forced to rely on the co-operation and resources of actors outside their hierarchic control (Kenis & Schneider 1991; Voss et al. 2007).

These modes of governing brought about the characterisation of society as changing from being state-centric to centreless or polycentric (Kenis & Schneider 1991), including a loss of steering capacity for the state. The role of the state within networks has evolved into a central discussion within the governance literature. R.A.W. Rhodes (1997, p.15) defines governance as “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” that are autonomous and self-governing as well as capable of resisting government interference. The capacity for self-governing has been shown in the governing of local commons (Ostrom 1990) as well as in local and sectoral governing arrangements more generally (Héritier & Lehmkuhl 2008; Mayntz 2003). Further examples are the establishment of private authority in many areas of the world economy (Cutler et al. 1999) as well as in climate governance (Jagers & Stripple 2003). However, it has also been shown that although self-regulation is taking place, the state can influence networks through other means than top-down hierarchic control (Article III; Sørensen 2006). First, self-
governing arrangements are situated within institutional frameworks established and maintained by the state; i.e., they dwell in the shadow of hierarchy (Scharpf 1997). Hence, the state can structure the conditions/ground-rules for self-regulation and co-ordinate different governing structures in use (i.e. hierarchies, markets, and networks). Thus, if self-regulation by networks fails, the state is capable of taking on regulatory functions (Héritier 2002; Jessop 2004; Rhodes 2000; Scharpf 1997; Sørensen 2006). Second, state actors that take part in networks are often in a privileged position in relation to other actors based on their access to substantial financial, administrative, and political resources, including unique features such as their monopoly on the legitimate use of force, the legal right of sovereignty, and democratic legitimacy. This makes state actors well-suited to act as network managers or meta-governors, enabling and facilitating policy networks (Kickert et al. 1997; Sørensen 2006; Sørensen & Torfing 2007b).

To summarise, the constellation of actors in the policy process ranges from state governing, in which the hierarchically organised nation state leaves the policy process in the hands of public actors, to private governance in which private actors conduct self-regulation without state intervention. Between these two extremes we find a range of governing modes in which both public and private actors are involved. These modes appear under different labels such as networks, advocacy coalitions, corporatism, and others (cf. Treib et al. 2007).

**WORKINGS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

In the state governing model, public administration is subjected to effective hierarchical control by democratically elected politicians. However, this idea has been constantly challenged. Research has, for example, shown that street-level bureaucrats involved in service provision made choices about who gets what from government when interpreting vague political directives within strict budget constraints (Lipsky 1980; Peters & Pierre 2007; Svara 2006b). Bottom-up research also showed that actual implementation structures (Hjern & Porter 1981) were not always hierarchical, but could include horizontal co-ordination between a diverse set of implementing actors.

Public officials are not seen as neutral instruments in the hands of politicians but argued to be more or less autonomous actors influencing the policy process. Public officials are often the experts within their specific field, well-informed about the demands and needs of citizens as well as about new knowledge within their field. This information advantage vis-à-vis the politicians give public officials a central position in policy initiation and formulation, at least when it comes
to incremental change (Lundquist 1992). Thus, instead of being a single hierarchi-
cal relationship, the relationship between politics and administration takes the
form of interacting and overlapping functions and reciprocal influence (Svara
2006). The separation between politics and administration is not only challenged
on the basis of public administration’s influence over public policy, but also as a
result of political interference in public administration. In such a situation, public
administration is not only valued for its neutrality and expertise, but also for its
commitment to the values and goals of elected politicians (Article II; Svara 2006).

Some scholars have gone as far as to characterise public administration as gov-
erned by self-interested, budget-maximising, and out-of-control bureaucrats (dis-
cussed in Kjær 2004; Svara 2006). According to this argumentation, increased
efficiency in the public sector requires that the state be rolled back from deliver-
ing service (rowing) and instead focus on providing overall policy guidelines
(steering). Service delivery should instead be handed over to actors working under
market conditions (Kjær 2004; Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Rhodes 2000). As the
welfare states suffered from fiscal crises in the 1980s and 1990s, a wave of re-
forms following this logic were promoted around the world under the heading of
New Public Management (NPM). NPM involves two types of changes. First, pri-
vate-sector management principles are promoted in the public realm, such as cost
effectiveness, customer focus, and management by objectives and results (i.e.
goals and performance indicators are set by the politicians, but the implementing
agency is free to choose means deemed appropriate to fulfil the goals) (Voss et al.
2007). Second, public functions are transferred from public administration to
non-governmental or semi-governmental agencies and actors. This transfer has
been taking place through such strategies as privatisation, in which public enter-
prises are turned into privately owned businesses, outsourcing, in which private
or voluntary actors provide services contracted and paid for by public actors, and
the introduction of competition, in which citizens are able to choose between dif-
ferent service providers (Kjær 2004; Rhodes 2000).

The winds of change are not only visible in the new tasks and views on public
administration but also in the choice of policy instruments, i.e. the “myriad tech-
niques at the disposal of governments to implement their public policy objectives”
(Howlett 1991, p.2). Within the state governing model, the tools of government
rely on the hierarchical top-down authority of the state. The most prominent
example is command-and-control instruments that assume that a central actor
(the state) has top-down control over the policy process and is able to (i) set the
goals, (ii) assess their effects, and (iii) enforce implementation. Another set of in-
struments is incentive-based steering (e.g. taxes, grants, quotas) in which a
powerful governing actor (the state) influences the parameters of the market to bring about change by making it “cheaper or more expensive in terms of money, time, efforts, and other valuables to pursue certain actions” (Vedung 1998, p.32; Voss et al. 2007). The effectiveness of these tools has been questioned, and softer policy instruments are given preference (Hysing & Olsson 2005; Jordan et al. 2005; Pierre & Peters 2000; Salamon 2002; Treib et al. 2007). This shift from hard to soft includes instruments that are non-legally binding, flexible in implementation (e.g. management by objectives), lack sanctions, and focus on developing procedures rather than requirements (cf. Treib et al. 2007). Information is one traditional soft instrument (cf. Vedung & van der Doelen 1998), but there is also a range of new soft policy instruments under the umbrella New Environmental Policy Instruments (NEPI), e.g., tradable permits, eco-labels, and voluntary agreements. These instruments are often “proposed, designed and implemented by non-state actors, sometimes working alongside state actors, but sometimes also independently” (Jordan et al. 2005, p.481)

**TABLE 3:** Dimensions of Government and Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locus of Authority</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State level</td>
<td>Global governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Multi-level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor Constellations and Power Relations</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political institutions</td>
<td>Private governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Networks</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workings of Public Administration</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weberian bureaucracy</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard instruments</td>
<td>Soft instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Neutral</em> administration</td>
<td><em>Political</em> administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can we understand this development? Are we witnessing a change from government to governance? In the following, we will further elaborate on the concepts of governance and government – cleaning out the conceptual closet (semantic swamp) that governance research has been building up. However, first we will address the question of the alleged novelty of governance.
**NEW OR OLD?**

One of the most persistent criticisms of governance research is that it describes nothing new (Sørensen & Torfing 2007; Walters 2004), i.e., that the hierarchic governing questioned by governance research was never anything but an ideal (Goetz 2008). As Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes (2007) argue:

> The state is never monolithic and it always negotiates with others. Policy always arises from interactions within networks of organisations and individuals. Patterns of rule always traverse the public, private, and voluntary sectors. The boundaries between state and civil society are always blurred. Trans-national and international links and flows always disrupt national borders. In short, state authority is constantly being remade, negotiated, and contested. (Bevir & Rhodes 2007, p. 89)

The review in this thesis shows that the state governing model has been continuously challenged, questioned, and elaborated as a theoretical framework (ideal model). Thus, governance is the latest in a line of theoretical elaborations on governing (cf. Mayntz 2003). In addition, the way society is governed is bound to vary depending on the nature of the object being governed and the political, institutional, and discursive context (Jordan 2008; Sørensen & Torfing 2007). Governing is context-bound, i.e., time and place specific (Jordan et al. 2005; Stoker 1998; Treib et al. 2007). Thus, what is a novelty at one time and place can be a historic artefact at another time and place. In the words of Treib et al. (2007, p. 2):

> Some modes of governance may have been historically relatively new in some empirical contexts, which explains why researchers chose to label them “new”. But the same governing modes may turn out to be long-established in other areas.

In other words, regardless of whether certain modes of governing (e.g. voluntary agreements or public-private networks) are increasingly being used, are increasingly regarded as effective and legitimate, and are spreading to more areas or having a deeper impact on governing generally, it is only at the level of specific policy areas that the alleged novelty and importance of governance can be assessed (cf. Treib et al. 2007). Instead of repeating the mantra from government to governance, as researchers we should ask ourselves: How is governing conducted in different contexts and policy areas? What modes of governing are used and what actors are actually involved?
CLEANING OUT THE CONCEPTUAL CLOSET OF GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENT

Although the relationship between the theoretical concepts of government and governance is often described as from government to governance (cf. Sørensen 2006), the relationship is far more complex. Taking a look at the literature, governance is sometimes used as a synonym for government, being defined as “the act or manner of governing...to rule or control with authority; to be in government” (Kjær 2004, p.3). Governance is sometimes used as an alternative for government, in the sense of control by the state (Hirst 2000) or as a redefinition of government, indicating changes in the extent and form of public interventions (Rhodes 2000). Governance is sometimes regarded as a form of government that is improved and better managed, a fashionable rhetorical devise to provide “the acceptable face of spending cuts” (Stoker 1998, p.18). In addition, some researchers regard governance as a highly inclusive concept that incorporates the totality of governing activities, governmental and otherwise (Kickert et al. 1997; Kooiman 2003; Pierre & Peters 2000). Others highlight governing without government, equating governance with “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” (Rhodes 1997, p.15). Furthermore, the concept of governance has been hailed as a concept that (contrary to government) is capable of handling the complexity, diversity, and dynamics of contemporary society (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003; Kooiman 1993) as well as criticised for being an empty concept without inherent explanatory ability and for ignoring power, conflict, and democracy (cf. Blom-Hansen 1997; Dowding 1995; Kjær 2004; Walters 2004).

Although acknowledging that governance is an essentially contested concept, the point of departure for this thesis is that the concept of governance highlights a set of phenomena that have previously received too little attention. In this sense, governance provides an understanding of how society is governed that is different from the previously dominating view of state governing (government) (Kooiman 1993b; Rhodes 2000; Walters 2004). According to Pierre and Peters (2005, p.51):

The very use of the term governance represents an acceptance of some movement away from the conventional authority-based style of governing. That movement is in favour of approaches to governing that rely less on formal authority and more on the interaction of state and societal actors.

Governance and government can be used as conceptual frameworks or lenses through which reality can be observed. They “bound inquiry and direct the attention of the analysts to critical features of the social and physical landscape”
(Schlager 2007, p.293). They provide a language and a frame of reference for the examination and understanding of reality (cf. Ostrom 2007; Rhodes 2000). They guide research by identifying what is worth studying, magnifying some aspects while disregarding others, and generating new research questions and fresh insights and perspectives (Judge et al. 1995; Kickert et al. 1997; Rhodes 2000; Stoker 1998; Sørensen & Torfing 2007).

How does this help us to escape from the conceptual deadlock that causes so much fuzzy interpretation? The solution proposed and used in this thesis is to make modes of governing the starting point for analysis and to treat government and governance as two partially different conceptual frameworks for understanding processes of governing (Stoker 1998).

**Governing as Conceptual Point of Departure**

The fundamental components of both governance and government are a multitude of governing techniques or modes of governing society (on the separation of governing and governance, cf. Kooiman 2003). Governing is an activity that presupposes a subject of governing (an actor that governs) as well as an object (the system to be governed) that otherwise would develop in another direction (Mayntz 1993; Voss et al. 2007). According to Jan Kooiman (1993), governing involves

> all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies. (Kooiman 1993b, p.2)

Governing does not presuppose that a purpose, an intention, or a political goal is predetermined in the policy process nor that governing succeeds in fulfilling this purpose (cf. Mayntz 1993). Governing is embedded in, influenced by and influences broader institutional structures such as hierarchies, markets, networks, and discourses that enable as well as constrain governing actors and practices (Scharpf 1997). Goals can be formed in interaction between different actors and are affected by governing structures throughout the entire policy process. It is also important to distinguish between governing as an activity and its effects. Unintended consequences and governing failures are a constant factor in governing and therefore are key concerns in theories of governing (Mayntz 1993; Voss et al. 2007).

How, then, is governing related to governance and government as conceptual frameworks? Governing takes different forms (modes of governing) that acquire
authority in a variety of ways. Using the intensity of state involvement in governing society as our distinguishing factor we can place different modes of governing along a *continuum*. At one extreme of the continuum, the state, authorised through constitutions and popular elections, has the power to directly intervene and allocate values and resources to society. This is the often overestimated notion of the post-World-War-II welfare state with strong political autonomy and de facto power (Pierre & Peters 2000; Walters 2004). At the other extreme, the business of government has been taken over by societal self-regulation, authorised through market power, science, civil society involvement and support, etc. and capable of resisting government interference (Jordan *et al.* 2005; Rhodes 1997; Rosenau 2004; Stoker 1998; Treib *et al.* 2007). From government to governance is a story that portrays a shift along this continuum of government and governance (Article IV).

The framework of governance comprises modes of governing in which the state plays a less authoritative role, that is, modes of governing that do not exclusively rely on the sovereign authority, legitimacy, or sanctions of governments for their governing capacity (Stoker 1998). These are modes in which both public and private actors are engaged in policymaking (e.g. policy networks), voluntary self-regulating arrangements, delivery of public services by private actors (e.g. outsourcing and privatisation), and non-coercive forms of state governing (e.g. informative instruments and voluntary agreements) (cf. Héritier 2002). The framework of government, on the other hand, comprises modes of governing in which political institutions and public actors are the predominant or even the only provider of governing, modes of governing that are more hierarchical and more heavy-handed, and thus depend on the exercise of sovereign authority by government actors, and ultimately on the state monopoly of legitimate force (Jordan 2008; Sørensen 2006). Thus, government and governance include governing modes from different segments of the continuum of state involvement in governing (cf. Jordan *et al.* 2005; Pierre & Peters 2000) (Table 4).
TABLE 4: Modes of Governing on the Continuum of Government and Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>State Intervention</th>
<th>Societal Autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workings of Public Administration</td>
<td>Command-and-Control (Legal sanctions)</td>
<td>Delegating Public Functions to Private Service Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Constellations and Power Relations</td>
<td>Incentive-based Steering (Taxes and grants)</td>
<td>Facilitating and Enabling of Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchic Relationship</td>
<td>Institutionalising Public/Private Relations – State Domination</td>
<td>Multi-level Governance – Circumventing the National Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National State Governing</td>
<td>Delegating Authority and Responsibility to other Policy Levels</td>
<td>Gatekeeping – Controlling Implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government Governance
Table four gives an overview of different modes of governing on this continuum divided into the three dimensions identified in the governance literature: relocation of authority between levels, changes in actor constellations and power relations, and restructuring within public administrations. However, there is no clear dividing line between government and governance. While certain modes are clearly associated with the one or the other, several modes need to be specified on a case-by-case basis; that is, the role of the state in these modes needs to be empirically assessed, i.e., contextualised in time and place. Finally, we should pay attention to the warning by Jan Kooiman (2003, p.130), that even though it seems that certain modes of governing are free of state involvement, i.e. associated with governance, “the state is perfectly capable of giving with one hand and taking with another.” Appearances do deceive!


**Research Design**

To understand governing towards sustainability, we need to learn from real-world policy processes of environmental governing. This requires contextualisation and in-depth studies of actual practices within specific settings. Although a number of research designs and methods could generate important findings in support of this aim, context and depth are the strengths of *case studies*.

In this thesis, the cases are *policy areas*. Policy areas consist of the processes, structures, and actors that are actively involved in the governing of a specific policy issue or problem (cf. Sabatier & Weible 2007). In this thesis environmental problems in Swedish forestry and transport are the objects of study. These policy areas are not limited to one geographical area or one particular public policy but involve multiple embedded policy processes on multiple levels that sometimes support, and sometimes obstruct environmental governing. They also include public as well as private governing at various stages from the initiation to the termination of policy processes. The focus on policy areas is an *open* design that enables studies on governing in practice. One difficulty with this design is that policy areas do not necessarily conform to the *official* policy sectors, i.e., as defined by government institutions and policymaking. Transport policies include roads, railways, aviation, and shipping. However, this thesis emphasises the operation of roads and railways, both as a result of the partial urban focus of the study (Article II) and that the governing of transport is highly complex, which necessitates delimiting the study. Defining the boundaries for the study area has thus been an ongoing process, open to empirical scrutiny.

The boundaries between policy areas and their wider environment are often blurred, making it important to view them in their real-world context (Flyvbjerg 2001; Gillham 2000; Yin 1994). This involves:

*...both the small, local context, which gives phenomena their immediate meaning, and the larger, international and global context in which phenomena can be appreciated for their general and conceptual significance.*  
*(Flyvbjerg 2001, p.136)*

The context is the ideological/discursive, historical, socio-economic, and political conditions in which a policy area is embedded. It consists of structural conditions, like socio-economic factors, as well as institutionalised rules, ideas and mutual expectations (Flyvbjerg 2001). In this thesis Swedish forestry and transport provide the primary context, but it has also been important to locate these areas in the wider context of Swedish governing (e.g. democratic corporatism), the impact
of the discourse of ecological modernisation, and the socio-economic importance of export-dependent industries (Article I). Furthermore, it has also been important to contextualise in time, taking a perspective from the early 1990s onwards (Granberg 2004; Sabatier 1998; Stone 1989).

Case studies also enable in-depth policy research, i.e. generating detailed characterisations and thick empirical knowledge. Although they risk empirical overload, that is, generating massive amounts of data but being unable to process it further, in-depth empirical studies are useful for getting a nuanced understanding of complex and dynamic processes (Flyvbjerg 2001; Merriam 1994; Yin 1994) as well as developing and elaborating theories (King et al. 1994).

The rationale for choosing Swedish forestry and transport is threefold. First of all, the two policy areas offer empirical illustrations of governing towards sustainability – thereby answering the frequently asked question: a case of what. To be more specific, both cases have three key characteristics important to this thesis: (i) they illustrate complex governing situations in which multiple levels, multiple forums/arenas, and a diversity of actors are involved; (ii) the cases are dynamic policy areas in the sense that they have undergone policy changes in line with governing towards sustainability, including far-reaching environmental objectives; (iii) there is diversity in values and interests, involving important environmental values as well as powerful economic interests; i.e., the stakes are high for several stakeholders as policies affect important economic, social, and ecological values (Chapter 2).

In addition to being illustrations of governing towards sustainability, the cases enabled the assessment and elaboration of theoretical reasoning on policy change and governance. This rationale can also be discussed in terms of theoretical generalisation; i.e., by confronting empirical findings with theoretical ideas, the results of these case studies can be generalised in a process of further developed theoretical reasoning (cf. King et al. 1994; Yin 1994).

A third and final rationale for choosing these cases is that they are interesting and important in themselves, and not necessarily only as part of something else (cf. Stake 2000). Governing failure in these cases may have serious environmental, economic, and social consequences, which makes these policy areas worthy of research attention in their own right.

Why Sweden? First, Sweden is often regarded as a forerunner in policies of sustainable development and environmental governing, both in research and in political rhetoric (Lafferty & Meadowcroft 2000b; Lidskog & Elander 2000; Lundqvist 2004). Thus, Sweden offers the opportunity to learn from a potential success story as well as an evaluative opportunity, i.e., to see if Sweden turns...
rhetoric into policy in areas of great economic importance. Second, the Swedish governing model differs from the policy styles in which the storyline from government to governance has mainly been developed (i.e. Anglo-Saxon contexts). Thus, Sweden offers interesting opportunities for assessments and elaboration of these ideas (Article IV). Third, practical circumstances regarding financing and materials, as well as the importance of contextualisation, made Sweden the case from which the highest quality and depth of empirical knowledge could be gained. Fourth, on a more personal level, Sweden is my home. Learning about it and contributing to its governing is closest to my heart.

This thesis is not designed as a strict comparative study. The cases are treated as two separate cases; that is, they are comparable, single cases rather than replications of a single design (cf. Yin 1994). In practice, this meant that although the research questions were similar, the research designs of the studies were not identical. Thus, design decisions suitable for one case were not forced onto the other case. This enabled flexibility and adaptation to context, thought at the cost of negatively affecting the ability to make empirical comparisons. However, what the design lost in empirical comparability it gained in increased capacity to assess and elaborate on theoretical ideas and findings. The theories were tested on two separate cases, thereby strengthening the theoretical contribution of the thesis (cf. Pierre 2005). This was the rationale behind the comparison in Article IV: to assess the story from government to governance in two cases in which state involvement seemed to differ.

**Materials & Methods**

Three broad sets of empirical material form the primary basis for this thesis: (i) previous research, (ii) policy documentation, and (iii) interviews.

Research findings from previous studies are an important source of knowledge and data, both empirically and theoretically. The selection of this material has been an ongoing process throughout the writing of the thesis and it was analysed together with the material from interviews and documents. The selection of documents has similarly been a continuous process. As knowledge of the policy areas has gradually grown, the search for relevant documents has ventured farther and farther from the nationally established policies of each respective area. This has included policies from other policy levels and from a variety of actors within and outside of government. The documentation used consists not only of formally endorsed policies, i.e. courses of action, but also minutes of meeting,
reports, evaluations, statistics, and so on. All the documents have been presented in written form and with clear statements of who is responsible for the document.

Interviews differ from the other sources of data in that they are not ongoing (although some interviewees were contacted several times) but were conducted on one specific occasion. The selection of interviewees and the process of interviewing are, thus, an important part of the research design. However, before elaborating on the interview process some comments on bottom-up versus top-down approaches are in order. In this study a combination of the two approaches was used – while the interview study largely can be described as a bottom-up study, i.e. the study started at the operational level of a policy area, documentation was largely selected top-down; that is, the formal policy decisions formed the starting point for searches for relevant documents (cf. Sabatier 1986).

Why this combination of material? Previous research is a basic component of all social science research. Research is a cumulative process and previous research helps in identifying interesting research gaps and research ideas as well as validating empirical findings. In policy and implementation research, policy documentation in different forms is a key source of information. Policy documentation not only provides the official objectives, instruments, and responsibilities for handling a policy problem but often also the rationales behind these decisions and hints on the workings of the policy process, for example in official evaluations and reports. Interviews add depth to the official view found in documents. Interviews provided factual accounts on environmental governing within the policy areas. Sufficiently validated, these accounts were important for filling in missing pieces and understanding policy processes. Interviews also provided personal opinions, interpretations, and experiences of key actors in relevant policy processes. These accounts went beyond the official picture and provided important insights into the actual workings of different governing arrangements.

The Interview Design

The interview design used in both cases was the so-called semi-structured interviews; that is, the interviews were based on, but not restricted to, a pre-designed interview guide containing open-ended, thematic questions. The strength of this design is that it combines structure with flexibility and openness (Devine 2002; Kvale 1996; Legard et al. 2003). The design is open to diverse and unexpected information and it is flexible enough for probes and prompts to be used to get additional and more nuanced information as well as to elicit clarifications. It provides structure enough to keep the interviewees within the rather limited section
of their life that is of interest to the study. Critics would argue that this design also risks bias through the influence of the interviewer on the interviewee (thereby resulting in invalid results). I would argue that the validity of all research rests on the integrity of the researcher (cf. Stone 1989) and that this design has the advantage of enabling verification of information and interpretations through dialogue with the interviewee (feedback) (Flyvbjerg 2001; Kvale 1996).

**THE SAMPLING DESIGN**

After having decided on the interview design, the second step was to select a *sampling design*, i.e. the way to decide whom to interview. In both studies, a snowball sampling technique was used. This meant that interviewees were asked to nominate individuals/actors suitable to interview. This request was made at all the interviews (Devine 2002). The rationale behind this choice was that the technique helps in identifying relevant actors, that is, actors who are actually involved (not just figureheads) in the policy processes under study. The validity (or comprehensiveness) of this mapping depends to a large extent on where you start. There is an obvious risk of getting an arbitrarily selected sample based on the personal contacts of the initial interviewee (cf. Devine 2002; Gissendanner 2003). To minimise this risk, the snowball design was complemented with information on important actors from other sources, such as decision records, websites, newspaper articles, previous research, and so on.

The starting point for snowballing depended on the characteristics of the policy areas and on the research questions. Hence, it differed between the two cases. In the forestry study, a random sample of forest owners and managers constituted the *bottom*. This group was identified as being responsible for the implementation of the Swedish forest policy (Swedish Forest Agency & SEPA 2001) as well as having a constitutionally protected right to decide what to do on their land (Swedish National Audit Office 1999). The random sample was stratified based on size of forest holdings within a limited geographical area west of Örebro. This area was selected based on the variety in both ownership forms and forest composition. The stratification was performed to ensure that a few large forest owners were represented in the sample, using the Forest Agency’s register of forest owners as a sampling frame. This local sample was also validated against a list of important actors provided by a centrally positioned local government official – resulting in additional interviews with a few forest owners not in the original sample. Snowballing based on this sample, in combination with information from documents, resulted in successive interviews with actors at local, regional, and
national levels during the period 2003–2005 (Table 4). One category of actors, professional forestry workers, was not mentioned in interviews or in policy documents at the local level. However, their importance had been illustrated in previous research (e.g. Danielsson et al. 2002). Thus, previously interviewed timber buyers were re-contacted and asked to name professional forestry workers active within the local study area. These were then interviewed.

In the forestry study, there was a high rate of non-response among private forest owners. Of the original sample (n=40), 40 percent participated in the study. Most of this non-response is explained by the fact that not all forest owners in the sample were contacted due to perceived diminishing returns of information in later interviews. Nonetheless, in order to check for possible bias due to non-response, a simplified questionnaire containing questions on background and a sample of open-ended questions from the interview guide were mailed to all forest owners in the original sample not interviewed. In addition, the non-respondents were asked why they had not participated. The most common answer among the nine forest owners who answered was either that they had not been contacted or lack of time. A comparison of the respondents and non-respondents revealed no substantial differences, either in terms of basic characteristics such as gender, age, and forest ownership, or in answers to the sample of questions included in the questionnaire.

**TABLE 5: List of Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private forest owners (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Federation of Forest Owners (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local forest managers (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber buyers (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest companies (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forest Industries Federation (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional forestry workers (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forest and Wood Trade Union (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National politician (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry officials (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forest Agency (local office 2, national office 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the transport case, interviews were conducted during the period 2007–2008. The point of focus was the development of a Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP) by the local authorities in Örebro (Article II). Snowballing started from a strategic sample of actors centrally positioned in this process. The importance of these actors was identified in policy documents and continuously verified through interviews. Actors involved in transport policy issues at the local level were also active and knowledgeable about regional, national, and to some extent international policy processes, which limited the need for further interviewing. However, the research emphasis on one local policy process is the primary explanation of the difference in number of interviews between the two cases. In the transport study, one contacted local public official declined to participate in the study but was nonetheless willing to provide information (off the record) by telephone.

A key issue for the interview studies was when to stop interviewing. The answer has in practice been a combination of (i) available time and resources, and (ii) the law of diminishing returns (cf. Kvale 1996), i.e. when the information anticipated from an additional interview did not justify the time and resources needed to continue interviewing. In addition, the transport study benefited greatly from the previously conducted study of forestry. Research questions and theoreti-
cal ideas were largely in place and the experiences from the forestry interview study helped avoid pitfalls and unnecessary interviews in the transport study.

**THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

A third part of the interview study was the actual interview process. As already stated, the interviews were semi-structured, based on, but not restricted to, an interview guide. In practice, this guide was also adapted to suit the particular interview. The guide could include general themes as well as detailed questions for specific data. However, some categories of questions were generally included (cf. Kvale 1996; Legard et al. 2003).

The interviews were opened with questions on the position/background of the interviewee, such as education, title, and a general description of their work tasks. These questions helped to make the interviewees more at ease in the situation (important for private forest owners). However, many interviews began with the interviewee telling his/her story, i.e. saying the things he/she planned to say before the interview. These speeches often provided vital information. The main body of the interviews consisted of open-ended, thematic questions on the governing of forestry or transport. These questions were intended to explore the knowledge and experiences of the interviewee, and thus were relatively broad. However, in order to get more nuanced, in-depth information, probes and prompts generally followed. These questions tried to make the interviewee elaborate on certain issues or more fully explain their reasoning. They could also be used to raise more detailed issues, not mentioned by the interviewee, in order to get his/her insights and thoughts on these issues. Examples are: How would you describe your role in forest governing? (Thematic question) What issues lie closest to your heart? Are you active at other levels than the national? (Probes and Prompts). What are the greatest challenges in your line of work? (Thematic question) You mentioned old-fashioned thinking as a challenge, what do you mean by that? How is this expressed? You also mentioned providing politicians with arguments in favour of sustainable transport as being a challenge, is it difficult to find arguments or difficult to make the politicians buy the arguments? (Probes and prompts).

Probes and prompts were also useful for verifying interpretations of what was said in the interview, as well as confronting the interviewee with opposing views on specific events. An example of such a situation was when confronting a timber buyer with statements from a forest owner that he had neglected environmental considerations when recommending harvest at a specific site. The interview guide also included control questions to check the consistency between answers. For
example; how would you summarise your or your company's vision for forest management was checked against is biodiversity an important objective for you or your company?

Actor mapping questions were an important factor in selecting interviewees (snowballing). These questions were both directly stated—now that you heard the questions, who do you recommend that I talk to?—and part of the thematic questions; for example, questions on co-operation and networking were often complemented with questions on individuals (rather than organisations) involved. The interviews always ended with some closing questions in order to check for missed themes and loose-ends (Do you have any further comments or statements you wish to make?).

Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and three hours and were conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. Some interviewees were simply not available for face-to-face interviews, thus making telephone interviews the only option (e.g. professional forestry workers). The main problem with telephone interviews was that some interviewees did not devote their full attention to the interview and that interviews were interrupted. However, these problems were rare and most interviews, face-to-face as well as by telephone, ran smoothly. In the forestry study, interviewing at the local level was conducted by two researchers. In order to ensure the greatest possible conformity between interview techniques, we used a pilot interview to test our approach; conducted interviews where we both were present; and used continuous debriefing during which positive and negative experiences of interviewing were discussed. During this study, senior researchers also played an active role by actively participating in interviews as well as in numerous methodological discussions.

No interviewee in this thesis is named. Some actor categories (e.g. private forest owners) were systematically promised anonymity as a way to make them more comfortable with the interview and more inclined to go beyond official rhetoric and conventional truths. However, most interviewees had no objections to being named. Nevertheless, interview data was primarily used on an aggregated level, with only a limited interest in the individuals themselves, and was analysed together with other materials. It was not very important to be able to identify individual interviewees. A potential problem is that the interviewees may be intentionally or unintentionally biased due to strategic interests in the policy processes; i.e. they may have something to gain or lose by portraying themselves or others in a certain light. In addition to general validation techniques, the interviewees are placed in context; that is, their position and involvement in the policy processes are described.
VALIDATION

Although getting to some final level of indisputable truth might be impossible, the research findings and results have been continuously validated throughout the research process in the following ways: (i) the consistency of answers has been checked within individual interviews, for example by using control questions; (ii) the interview design has enabled feedback and clarifications on reasoning and interpretations through dialogue between researcher and interviewee; (iii) several interviewees have been asked about the same data concerning both factual accounts and historical processes; hence, different interviews were used to verify each other; (iv) data were collected from different sources to support findings (for example documents and interviews); (v) research findings and results were checked against previous research and comparable studies; (vi) theoretical ideas and concepts were used to guide data selection as well as analyse the material; (vii) the results have been scrutinised by colleagues at local, national, and international seminars and conferences, as well as through the peer-review processes of international research journals.

ANALYSIS – THE USE OF THEORY

How have the data been analysed? Basically all the empirical material has been processed together, using theoretical concepts and ideas as tools for structuring and making sense of the data. There has been a continuous interplay between theory and empirical findings in which theories on policy change and governance have structured and directed the empirical studies. At the same time empirical findings have continuously informed and influenced theoretical reasoning (cf. Read & Marsh 2002; Stone 1989; Yin 1994). The theoretical concepts and approaches used provided conceptual lenses (for a discussion on the use of conceptual frameworks, see Chapter 4). For example, from government to governance is a story that argues that command-and-control instruments are becoming less useful and important. In analysing the empirical materials, such as government bills and interviews, the texts and statements were scanned for this idea as well as for opposing ideas. The actual policy instruments in use were mapped and materials about these were scanned for the role of state and authoritative decision-making. These empirical observations then helped in elaborating on the theoretical ideas of policy change and governance. Although I contend that these elaborations can be a fruitful starting point for future theorisation and empirical studies, I also recognise their limitations.
The interaction of concept and observation is ongoing, and none of us does more than offer a guidepost in the journey ... I can claim that neither my conceptualization nor my use of evidence is unflawed, it is now my responsibility to say: Let the process of challenge and response begin. (Stone 1989, p.256–260)
CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the main arguments and findings of the thesis are summarised and elaborated. The chapter is structured according to the research questions identified in Chapter 1: How has public policy changed? What are the roles of the state? What are the barriers to and enablers of policy change? The chapter ends by reflecting on the prospect of successfully governing towards sustainability and the need for politicisation.

CHANGE IN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND MODES OF GOVERNING

We have witnessed public policy change, that is, the course of action adopted by government actors having changed, both through reformed public policy objectives and through the introduction of new modes of governing. Governing towards sustainability largely characterises the way environmental problems are governed. Environmental objectives and measures have been added to pre-existing economic and social public policy objectives within Swedish forestry and transport (e.g. forestry production and traffic safety). Public policy change has been framed in terms of sustainable forestry and sustainable transport, largely accepted as the right way of talking and thinking about transports and forestry among policymakers and target groups (e.g. forest companies). Despite a rhetorical consensus on sustainable development, there is still major disagreement between different actors about what sustainability actually means and requires (e.g. how much forestry production that must be sacrificed in the name of environmental protection) (Article I). Previous visions, values, and procedures are still influencing practice (Article II).

Although environmental agencies and environmental legislation continue to be vital, deciding the priorities of different objectives is largely the responsibility of the actors within the policy areas. In addition, these policy areas are not delimited to the traditional sectors, but policymaking is instead conducted on multiple levels and arenas, involving numerous actors actively seeking to influence public policy. Some examples in which environmental protection has been given priority over traditional values have been demonstrated. In the case of urban transports in Örebro, measures were adopted that infringed on personal automobile mobility in order to protect the environment (Article II). However, to assess if the hierarchy of objectives has changed or if adding environmental objectives has only established a smorgasbord of objectives to choose from, further research into policy implementation is needed.
New modes of governing have also been introduced in both policy areas, for example voluntary agreements and congestion taxes, and new or reorganised institutional structures such as forest certification schemes. These changes in governing are often labelled from government to governance (Article IV), i.e. a story telling us how the governing of contemporary society is, and should be, conducted, especially in relation to complex, dynamic, and diverse governing challenges like environmental problems. As demonstrated in Chapter 4 the story from government to governance identifies a shift in the modes of governing from strong state intervention towards societal autonomy. However, the governing of Swedish forestry and transport is far more complex than this frequently told story captures. The conclusions drawn from both theorisation and empirical assessment are that (a) government and governance modes of governing exist side-by-side, (b) change is not always necessarily towards governance, but may include moves in the direction of both government and governance, and (c) the state may lose ground in one dimension (e.g. locus of authority) but gain it in another (Article IV). In addition, both new and old modes of governing are used. Thus, since the first forest policy of 1903, informative instruments have been the most important item in the government policy toolkit and continue to be so in environmental governing. Institutional structures such as government agencies and networks have also been, and still are, crucial. In other words, we have witnessed continuity as well as change.

**Changing Role of the State**

Are we witnessing fundamental changes in the role of the state? Comparing empirical findings from Swedish forestry and transport with the ideal model of state governing (identified in Chapter 4) we can conclude that there are major discrepancies and, thus, argue that fundamental changes in the function of the state are occurring. However, if we instead contextualise our findings in relation to the Swedish model of state governing, the changes seem less fundamental. Although networks among government authorities and private actors are less institutionalised than during the heyday of corporatism, consensus-seeking and compromises are (still) an intrinsic part of the political culture (Article I). Public functions and welfare services are provided by private actors, but the public sector is still responsible for financing and regulating these activities with an aim to ensure universal welfare provision (Article IV). Multi-level policymaking is nothing new in Sweden, where local self-government is one cornerstone of the Constitution. Thus, even if joining the EU added one level, the Swedish state has
never had the kind of national domination over domestic policymaking assumed by some governance theorists.

Modes of governing associated with governance exist side-by-side with modes associated with government. Governance modes of governing do not necessarily mean that the state is hollowed-out or reduced in power. Even in the case of forest certification – a mode of private self-governing assumed to be free of state involvement – various state actors played important roles even if they did not resort to hierarchical governing. Thus, even if state actors take on new roles their power has not disappeared (Article III). That politics still matters was also shown in the case of Örebro’s urban transport policy change. A key ingredient in understanding policy change in this case was politicisation, i.e., making urban transport a political rather than an administrative issue (cf. Goetz 2008). In this process, individual politicians played key roles in framing the issue, organising administration, and recruiting public officials to act as policy entrepreneurs for greener transport (Article II).

Environmental governing of Swedish forestry and transport actively involves government (central and local), even if this involvement has not always been exercised through hierarchic governing. In theorising on governance and government it is important to recognise that the state plays multiple roles in policymaking and implementation and not succumb to a black-box conception of the state. The state constitutes a multitude of actors operating within a parliamentary framework (i.e. who are authorised to make decisions on behalf of the people) (cf. Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998). In the cases studied in this thesis, politicians, corporate executives in public companies, public officials, and others have played key roles in governing forestry and transport. This governing capacity is not reducible to structurally invested powers, but also depends on personal attributes and qualifications.

The state is also an arena for intra-governmental interaction between multiple public actors. These actors do not necessarily work in unison (Rothstein 1996; Sundström 2005) nor is there always a clear hierarchical relationship between them (Pierre and Peters 2005). The relationship between and relative power of the Forest Agency and SEPA were discussed in relation to forest certification schemes in Article III, and the difficulty of getting different departments within public administration to work in the same direction in the transport policy of Örebro was described in Article II. Dispersion of authority yields multiple decision-making centres, attracting non-governmental actors who promote their favourite policy options by competing and co-operating with various politicians and public officials. This may involve lobbying (Article IV), networking (Article III), or man-
tling the role of inside activist (Article II). The state also structures the behaviour and interaction of individual actors by providing a set of rules of the game. These institutional structures form the context in which public and private actors interact, pursue their aims, and exercise authority (Jessop 2004). These basic rules of governing are established, maintained, and/or promoted by state actors. Changes in this regulatory order substantially influence the strategies of various actors; e.g., the deregulation of the forest policy helped facilitate forest certification schemes (Article III).

Finally, the state can be seen as the embodiment of a specific form of authority based on legitimate power gained through democratic elections. This authority is used differently in different modes of governing, from forcing people to correct their behaviour according to law (command-and-control), to delegating public functions and responsibilities to other actors and levels, e.g. private service providers (governing through delegation), and enabling and facilitating private networks. When scrutinising the governance literature, it is primarily this aspect of the state that is in question. This was empirically shown in the study of forest certification. An important reason why forest certification was perceived as free from state involvement (that is, governing without government) was that forest certification was not subject to command-and-control regulations by the state. Other modes of state governing that were important for the forest certifications, were not perceived as state involvement (Article III). As illustrated in table six, we need to recognise the potential importance of the state in government-, as well as governance-oriented modes of governing.

**TABLE 6: Roles of the State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Actor</th>
<th>Foundation of Authority</th>
<th>Non-government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Command-and-control</td>
<td>Enable and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-government</td>
<td>Governing through delegation</td>
<td>Governing without government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(From Article III)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can we explain policy change in Swedish forestry and transport? The changes can only partially be explained by using existing theoretical constructions. The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), arguably one of the most developed and tested theories on policy change, captures many important aspects of change, such as the importance of coalitions, values, learning, the inclusion of actors based on their actual involvement, and a longer timeframe for the policy process (Article I). However, the abstract theorisation of ACF made it insensitive to explanatory mechanisms specific to Swedish forestry. Thus, lessons from a wide range of theoretical constructions were used to find explanatory mechanisms (cf. Sabatier 2007b). These mechanisms were elaborated into barriers to and enablers of policy change.

In the case of Örebro transport policy, three interrelated mechanisms of change were found crucial. The first was (i) a discursive shift in which dominant policy ideas related to automobile mobility were challenged by new ideas of sustainable transport. This discursive shift supported and was supported by (ii) organisational changes within the local administration, re-arranging the governing authority in favour of an institutional structure that supported sustainable transport. These organisational changes were initiated through top-down political decisions but were continuously promoted by organisational learning and adaptation. This was enabled by (iii) policy entrepreneurs; i.e., politicians and public officials who used strategies such as agenda-setting, discursively framing the policy issue, reorganising public administration, recruiting, networking, and positioning themselves as the expert-based authority. One of the key entrepreneurs was a green inside activist who used his position within the local administration to promote public policy change in line with his personal convictions and beliefs. Thus, in urban transport policy change in Örebro, policy entrepreneurs were key agents of change (Article II).

In explaining forest policy change, policy entrepreneurs did not provide a useful explanation. In Article I, we were looking for a policy broker (a key actor according to the ACF). Both individual actors (such as a high-ranking public official who chaired the FSC negotiations) and corporate actors (such as the WWF who initiated the certification process), were strategically important at different times during the policy process. However, it was difficult to draw a line between advocates, brokers, and decision-makers, as many actors actually held all three roles. Critically examining this result, one could argue that the combination of governing capacity, advocacy of personal beliefs, and being a power broker is the
key characteristics of a successful *inside activist*. Thus, elaborating on the ACF by adding another form of policy entrepreneur would be useful.

A key mechanism of forest policy change was the interaction between advocacy coalitions (a forestry production coalition and an environmental coalition). These coalitions promoted partially different policy options and had previously been involved in intense conflicts over the use of the Swedish forests. Forest policy change was, however, not a result of one coalition gaining power over the other, but can rather be understood as an ongoing learning and co-operative process in which both coalitions accepted multiple values of forests (sustainable forestry). Two primary mechanisms of change were identified as explaining the evolution of this co-operative strategy and, thus, policy change: first, the ideological/discursive impact of ecological modernisation that reframed policy options and problems and facilitated ongoing learning; and second, the dependency of the forest industry on world markets, which made the production coalition susceptible to pressures from other venues (e.g., export markets). In addition, the legacy of democratic corporatism, with its tradition of consensus-seeking, flexibility, and issue-specific argumentation, helped ease the transition from conflicting to co-operative strategies (Article I). The case of forest certification (Article III) adds another key mechanism of change. Central government actions coming from outside the policy area in the form of political statements and changed legislation pressured the coalitions to reach agreement on a forest certification standard. Thus, actors and institutional changes (i.e., new legislation) outside the policy area helped neutralise conflict and facilitate co-operation.

**Governing towards Sustainability?**

GtS captures most of the complexity of environmental governing in the studied cases including changes in policy objectives and measures; that is, attempting to balance more or less conflicting values with the vision of creating a sustainable society has been a key strategy within both policy areas. Characteristics such as multi-level policymaking, the importance of private actors, and soft policy instrument (i.e., governance modes of governing) fit well with GtS. So does the change from a policy process characterised by intense conflict between societal interests to consensus-seeking, as seen in forestry (Article I). On the other hand, other alleged characteristics of GtS, primarily a de-emphasised role of the state in environmental governing, have been questioned (Article II). To paraphrase Andrew Jordan (2008), governments are still alive and well in GtS. Further theorisation is needed on how GtS (as characterised in Chapter 2) helps overcome barri-
ers and supports enablers of change. The question is whether this approach to handling critical environmental problems has a fighting chance to be successful? Some final reflections on this will be outlined below. However, first our main findings will be summarised in four basic conclusions:

- Policy change has taken place within Swedish forestry and transport as environmental objectives and modes of governing have been adopted in central and local public policy formulations.
- Environmental governing of Swedish forestry and transport can largely be characterised in terms of governing towards sustainability, which affects objectives, modes of governing, the relationships between and responsibilities of actors, etc.
- *From government to governance* is too simple a story to capture environmental governing of Swedish forestry and transport. Both government and governance modes of governing are used, and not all change is solely in the direction of governance. The state still plays key roles in governing towards sustainability through governance as well as government modes of governing.
- To explain policy change in Swedish forestry and transport we need an inclusive theoretical understanding of barriers to and enablers of change, as well as a contextual understanding of the policy areas.

**Final Remarks: Is Governing towards Sustainability THE Solution?**

**Politicising Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development requires different forms of action in different contexts. Thus, it is an essentially *contextual concept*. In areas where ecosystems are on the brink of collapse, radical environmental action is needed. In areas with less acute environmental problems, but with severe poverty, other actions are needed to find a sustainable balance. The policy options that are available and are considered legitimate differ between contexts and vary over time, as do the political opportunities for change (cf. Kingdon 1995). Thus, it is important to recognise the possibility that governing towards sustainability is not a suitable political strategy in all contexts. In a global context, Sweden may even be considered an atypical case in terms of its broadly based environmental commitment and state governing capability.

Sustainable development is an essentially *contested concept*; that is, there is fundamental disagreement over its meaning and usefulness. Nonetheless, it has been established as the dominant way of talking and thinking environmentally.
There is a rhetorical consensus on sustainable development as being the way to deal with pressing environmental threats. This consensus largely depends on a conceptual flexibility, which provides a common normative ground to enable actors with diverse sets of interests and values to be engaged in the policy process (cf. Hajer 1995). However, as soon as sustainable development is translated into a specific context and made the subject of governing in practice (specified in terms of objectives and modes of governing), fundamental value conflicts need to be dealt with even among the supporters of sustainable development. Hiding these value conflicts behind a veil of false consensus risks turning sustainable development into a key discursive-ideological barrier to radical change. Instead, sustainable development needs to be interpreted as a political concept that acknowledges ambiguity of goals, uncertainty of policy options, and unequal power distribution, thus granting transparency to different visions of a sustainable society.

*From government to governance* largely frames the political options of formulating and implementing sustainable development. Voluntary action, market-based instruments, networking, and global and local governing are favoured, whereas hierarchic governing by central political institutions is regarded as obsolete. A key lesson of the studies in this thesis, however, is that central and local government actors remain important for environmental governing using a combination of governance and government modes of governing. The discussion on appropriate modes of environmental governing needs to be reframed; instead of discussing it in terms of *from government to governance* we need to discuss it in terms of *legitimate governing*, that is, what modes of governing that combine a healthy mix of input, output, and procedural legitimacy (cf. Granberg 2004). In democratic societies, citizen participation and democratic representation are key elements of legitimate governing. The process of governing should also be characterised by accountability, transparency, fairness, and equality. Finally, governing needs to be efficient (i.e. limited public resources should be spent wisely) and effective (i.e. successfully address societal problems or improve societal opportunities). Notably, these grounds for legitimacy are not interchangeable. All modes of governing need to find support in all three dimensions of legitimacy. Thus, a key question for the governance modes of governing is to what extent building capacity to solve problems and consensus-seeking can replace the traditional structures of representative democracy as a fundament of legitimacy (cf. Klijn and Skelcher 2007; Sørensen 2006). Government modes of governing, on the other hand, have to balance the need for authoritative allocation of values to society (cf. Easton 1965) against the fact that citizens are entitled to, or demand, control over their own lives. The legitimacy of government authority and expertise are
questioned and scrutinised rather than obediently followed. Thus, the legitimacy of political action needs to be argued for.

Governing towards sustainability de-emphasises politics and representative democracy in favour of consensus-seeking and building capacity to solve problems. This risks handing over key decisions that affect our very existence to actors (corporations, international institutions, stakeholders) without democratic legitimacy and with other basic objectives than the common good. As argued in this thesis, sustainable development in most contexts requires trade-offs between different societal values and goals, a process that will create winners and losers. Allocating values and resources in society is basically a normative and political responsibility (cf. Easton 1965). Not to argue that the political system is perfect, far from it, there are nonetheless elected politicians, legitimised through democratic elections, who have been given the popular mandate, the responsibility, and the key resources to govern. That elected politicians play an active role in environmental governing was shown to be vital for policy change (Article II), thus illustrating that politics still matters.

To successfully govern towards sustainability we need visionary political action that is visible to the citizens, not hidden behind consensual rhetoric or conducted in governance networks with limited access and transparency. We also need political contestation between conflicting views on what constitutes a sustainable society, a debate in which politicians have a great responsibility for providing the alternatives and visions. Citizens need to be given the opportunity to have a say, both in general elections and in other forms of dialogue, on what they consider to be a sustainable society and what modes of governing they consider legitimate in getting there. In the end who should decide what a sustainable society should look like if not us?
SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING – SAMHÅLSSSTYRNING FÖR HÅLLBARHET

INLEDNING

De potentiellt katastrofala konsekvenserna av miljöproblem såsom klimatförändringar och utarmad biologisk mångfald har rönt allt mer erkännande och med det har också kraven på politisk handling ökat. Den dominerande strategin för att hantera dessa problem har varit hållbar utveckling, det vill säga miljöhänsyn ska balanseras mot ekonomiskt välstånd och social rättvisa på ett sådant sätt att dessa värden kan bibehållas för evigt, åtminstone i teorin. Miljöfrågorna ska med andra ord hanteras genom att styra samhället mot hållbarhet (governing towards sustainability).

Samtidigt som samhället ställs inför dessa monumentala utmaningar har statens roll och förmåga till samhällsstyrmking ifrågasatts. Det hävdas att miljöproblemen är allt för komplexa, mångsidiga och föränderliga för att staten ska kunna hantera dem. Enligt denna berättelse har statens förmåga att styra samhället urholkats och makt har förflyttats till privata aktörer (till exempel företag och frivillig organisationer) och till andra nivåer såsom EU. Staten kan inte längre förlista sig på hierarkisk styrning i form av lagstiftning utan tvingas istället söka samarbete med andra aktörer och styra med mjuk hand, till exempel genom informationskampanjer (from government to governance).

Syftet med denna avhandling är att bidra till en ökad förståelse av hur samhället kan styras i en mer hållbar riktning genom att beskriva, analysera och förklara hur miljöaspekter hanteras inom svensk skogspolitik och transportpolitik. Baserat på dessa empiriska resultat bidrar avhandlingen också till att utveckla vår teoretiska förståelse av policyförändring och samhällsstyrning.

- Hur har policy förändrats i termer av nya mål och styrningstekniker?
- Vilken roll spelar staten? Ser vi en förändring/urholkning av statens roll?
- Vad försvårar respektive möjliggör policyförändringar?

Avhandlingen består av två huvuddelar. Den första delen introducerar syftet med avhandlingen, dess centrala begrepp (hållbar utveckling, policyförändring och samhällsstyrning) samt den metod och det material som använts. Denna del avslutas med ett slutsatskapitel där forskningsfrågorna besvaras och de huvudsakliga resultaten från artiklarna i del två sammanfattas och utvecklas. Den andra delen består av fyra artiklar som blivit bedömda och publicerade i internationella vetenskapliga tidskrifter. Det är i dessa artiklar som empiriska och teoretiska resultat ingående presenteras och analyseras.

I de följande avsnitten ska innehållet i de olika avhandlingskapitlen kortfattat sammanfattas.

HÅLLBAR UTVECKLING


Hållbar utveckling är trots ett till synes brett samförstånd, ett i grunden omtvistat begrepp där det råder delade meningar om vad begreppet innebär. Ska till exempel framtida generationers intressen av en bra miljö väga tyngre än nuvarande generations intressen av ekonomiskt välstånd? Vissa forskare och praktiker menar att hållbar utveckling kan uppnås utan omfattande förändringar i livsstil, ekonomiskt system och politisk styrning. Miljöhänsyn kan utifrån detta perspektiv kombineras med fortsatt ekonomisk tillväxt till exempel genom teknikutveck-

Samhällsstyrning för hållbarhet har vissa särskiljande karaktärsdrag vilket påverkar både innehållet i policy och hur policy utformas: (1) målet att skapa ett hållbart samhälle är ambitiöst och kräver att många ofta motstridiga mål och värden balanseras; (2) kunskapen om såväl problem som lösningar är osäker och omtvistad; (3) miljöhänsyn (liksom andra värden) ska integreras i befintliga politikområden (till exempel skogsbruk) snarare än hanteras som ett eget område; (4) resurser och problemlösningsförmåga återfinns hos privata så väl som offentliga aktörer på många olika nivåer snarare än hos staten; (5) nya styrmedel så som märkningssystem, utsläppsrätter och frivilliga avtal kompletterar statlig reglering; och (6) konsensussskapande och problemlösning ska prägla politiken snarare än intressekonflikter.

**Policyförändring**

Policyförändring betyder en förändring i den handlingslinje som offentliga aktörer antagit och/eller driver. Förändring kan innebära att nya mål inrättas eller att redan existerande mål omprioriteras, och att nya styrningstekniker inrättas, men också att existerande tekniker modifieras (t.ex. förändrade skattesatser). Policyförändring kan också innebära radikala förändringar i grundläggande samhällsstrukturer, inte minst när det gäller statens roll i samhället (för vidare läsning, Hall 1993).


Ett vanligt hinder mot policyförändring är att policys skapas och genomförs inom ramen för formella och informella *institutioner* som sätter gränserna för vilka policys som är acceptabla i termer av lämplighet, nytta och tradition. Ett
annat hinder är förekomsten av nätverk av aktörer som gynnas av den rådande ordningen. Ett tredje hinder är att policyprocessen underbyggs av specifika idéer (tankemönster, paradigm) om vad som är problem och inte, vad som är bra och dåliga lösningar, vilka aktörer som är viktiga och inte och så vidare. Ett fjärde hinder är brist på pengar, kunskap, legitimitet, administrativ samordning och andra resurser.


**SAMHÄLLSSTYRING**


För det andra är statliga aktörer inte autonoma eller dominanta i relation till privata aktörer. Staten är beroende av privata resurser för att fullgöra offentliga

För det tredje är gränsen mellan politik och förvaltning ofta diffus. Privata aktörer tar över offentlig verksamhet (till exempel genom privatisering) och arbetsätt från privat sektor införs i offentlig verksamhet (till exempel mål och resultatstyrning). De instrument som används inom offentlig förvaltning har också förändrats. Reglering och beskattning får stå tillbaka för mjukare styrmedel såsom informationskampanjer och frivilliga avtal.


**Material & Metod**

Denna avhandling studerar samhällsstyrning för hållbarhet genom två fallstudier. Dessa utgörs av politikområdena svenskt skogsbruk och svenska transporter. De två områdena är föränderliga i betydelsen att de har genomgått policyförändringar där hållbar utveckling varit ett ledord. Områdena är komplexa eftersom många nivåer, fora och olika typer av aktörer är inblandade i skapande och ge-
nomförande av policy. De är också mångfacetterade i betydelsen att många olika värden och intressen är inblandade. Detta gör dessa politikområden till intressanta illustrationer av samhällsstyrning för hållbarhet. Fallstudierna är inte gjorda på exakt samma sätt utan ska betraktas som två olika fallstudier som belyser gemensamma forskningsfrågor.


**Artiklarna**

Den andra artikeln syftar också till att förklara policyförändring, denna gång genom att studera utvecklingen av en ny hållbar transportplan för Örebro. I denna policy infördes mål och åtgärder för att minska transporter i staden och göra dem mer miljövänliga. Tre förklaringsmekanismer identifierades som avgörande; (i) att hållbara transporter hade blivit ett viktigt förhållningssätt, (ii) att det skett en omorganisering av den lokala förvaltningen och bildandet av en hållbar transportenhet, och (iii) att politiker och tjänstemän agerade för en miljövänligare transportplan. Gemensamt för alla tre förklaringarna är att urbana transporter blivit en politisk fråga, både i termer av att politiker agerat aktivt i frågan och att transporter ramats in som en politisk snarare än administrativ fråga.


Den fjärde artikeln är en jämförelse mellan skogsbruk och transport med avseende på statens roll i miljöarbetet inom dessa områden. Till skillnad från den ofta förekommande berättelsen om att statens roll och förmåga till samhällsstyrning minskat, så visar denna studie att staten fortsatt spelar en central roll. Staten spelar viktiga roller i användningen av nya så väl som gamla styrningstekniker och det finns olika förändringstendenser mellan de båda politikområdena: medan styrningen inom skogsbruket går i riktning mot mer statlig inblandning går styrning inom transportområdet i motsats riktning. Dessutom visar studien att förändringstendenser i en dimension, till exempel att funktioner flyttas till andra nivåer, kan vägas upp av förändringstendenser i en annan dimension, till exempel relationen mellan privata och offentliga aktörer. Berättelsen om en ensidig förändring mot minskat statligt inflytande ger således en allt för förenklad bild av samhällsstyrdning.


Vad hindrar respektive möjliggör förändring? ACF är en teori om policyförändring som är användbar för att förstå förändring, men den missar också viktiga förklaringsfaktorer som är kontextuellt betingade. Därför krävs en öppen och inkluderande ansats där lärdomar från olika teorier bildar utgångspunkt för
empiriska studier. I studien om utvecklingen av en transportplan för Örebro identifierades tre viktiga förändringsmekanismer: (i) hållbar utveckling har blivit ett viktigt sätt att förhålla sig till transporter, (ii) omorganisering av den lokala förvaltningen, och (iii) politiker och tjänstemän agerade som förkämpar för mer miljöhänsyn. I studien av svensk skogspolitik var det interaktionen mellan en produktionskoalition och en miljökoalition som var viktigast för att förstå policyförändring. Skogspolitikens förändring var ett resultat av en kontinuerlig läroprocess inom och mellan koalitionerna där hållbart skogsbruk etablerades som en samlande idé. Tre faktorer underlättade denna process – idén om ekologisk modernisering (det vill säga att produktion och miljöskydd är möjliga att kombinera), skogsindustrins beroende av utländska exportmarknader (gjorde miljöorganisationernas legitimitet till en resurs) och den korporativistiska traditionen i Sverige där konsensussökande, kompromisser och flexibilitet är viktiga värden.

Samhällsstyrning för hållbarhet beskrevs relativt väl utvecklingen inom politikområdena. Miljö ska balanseras mot och integreras med andra värden inom enskilda politikområden. Flernivåpolitik, inblandning av privata aktörer, användningen av mjuka styrmönster och att konflikt förbytts i (retorisk) konsensus kring hållbar utveckling kännetecknar också de studerade politikområdena. Där emot har denna avhandling visat att den centrala rollen är att hållbar utveckling måste förstås och användas som ett politiskt begrepp som tydliggör de delade meningar som råder om mål och verktyg för att nå ett hållbart samhälle. Det är också viktigt att de styrningstekniker som används är legitima, det vill säga att de genomgår representerativitet, deltagande, genomskinlighet och tydlig ansvarsfördelning. De måste också vara effektiva, det vill säga att de bidrar till lösningen av samhällsproblem eller skapa utvecklingsmöjligheter, men också att de hanterar offentliga medel på ett ansvarsfullt sätt. Detta är utmaningar för nya så väl som för gamla styrningstekniker.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACF  Advocacy Coalition Framework
CEC  Commission of the European Communities
CUReS Centre for Urban and Regional Studies
ENGO Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
EPI  Environmental Policy Integration
EU   European Union
FSC  Forest Stewardship Council
FUS  Forskarskolan Urbana Studies (Research School of Urban and Regional Studies)
GAMUT Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport
GtS  Governing towards Sustainability
NEPI New Environmental Policy Instruments
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
NPM New Public Management
PEFC Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
SEPA Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
SOU Statens Offentliga Utredningar (Governmental Official Report)
SUTP Sustainable Urban Transport Plan
UK  United Kingdom
UN  United Nations
UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
US  United States of America
WCED World Commission on Environment and Development
WWF  World Wide Fund for Nature
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