

A Sustainable City of Växjö

A study in policy-making

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Abstract

Starting out from the neo-pluralistic theory and advocacy coalition framework, this study has an ambition to identify which theory may explain the policy-making within sustainable development in the City of Växjö. The first mentioned theory stipulates that business groups affect the policy by for instance lobbying politicians. The latter one focuses on the fact that actors create coalitions in order to impose their idea in the policy. The study is being conducted by applying the theories on cases that illustrates implemented measures and targets. The conclusion of the analysis strengthens the explanatory power of the advocacy coalition framework. Further, the study also confirms that coalitions with different actors might result in improvement within the given issues.

Key words: neo-pluralistic theory, the advocacy coalition framework, local politics, sustainable development, Växjö

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1 Introduction

Focusing on issues within sustainable development is common to a wide extent at several levels of politics, i.e., international, national and subnational level. The consciousness about the effect of living the way people do is resulting in promoting improvement of sustainable development, notably environmental and climate issues. The City of Växjö is a municipality that focuses on improving work within the sustainable development. In several decades, Växjö has implemented numerous environmental projects and in 2007 the British BBC appointed Växjö as “The Greenest City in Europe”. The city has since then marketed itself as being that. Moreover, the politicians as well as the civil servants in the municipality are putting an effort in order to meet their ambition and improve within sustainable development. Hence, the City of Växjö is incessantly being verified internationally and also receives international visitors (Växjö kommun – 2, 2012). With consideration to above mentioned, it is thus interesting analysing the local politics in the City of Växjö in order to interpret what push factors characterizes the policy-making. The study starts out from two theoretical approaches, neo-pluralism and advocacy coalition framework, scrutinizing roles and policy-process and the study has a character of crucial case, hence testing the theories (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 48-49).

1.1 Purpose and problem

Several factors can explain why cities are promoting and being successful in environmental work. There are theories which emphasize different aspects in driving forces in order to understand the phenomena although a combination of theories is commonly. More explicit, more than a few factors might be behind the extensive environmental projects meaning stipulating one theory in order to explain the success is not adequate. Furthermore, the factors to the successful work in environment differ from city to city. It is interesting to investigate which are the main factors behind a city’s extensive work in environmental- and climate work or success by putting several factors against each other. Scrutinizing several areas with the intention to illustrate the push factors of the condition, might be the best way to decipher significant factors. It may not be inadequate, nor sufficient to focus on the political arena, i.e. evaluating significant factors in policy-making at a local level. The ambition of the thesis is to identify which of the two theories, neo-pluralistic and advocacy coalition framework, have most explanatory power on the case that illustrates the City of Växjö, the extensive ambition and success in projects within sustainable development. To put it

differently, it aims to identify the policy-making in Växjö in order to evaluate important push factors of the great ambition in sustainable development. Studying and limiting to the political area and trying to explain the policy-making in sustainable development by two theories may be a contribution to the research community. Thus, the thesis meets the criterion of *scientific relevance* within science (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 18). Testing the two theories may also strengthen the theory with most explanatory power. More concrete, the theory which also explains the policy-making most, may contribute to understand the value of the factors which are driving the development in that direction. Other cities with less focus or developed, sustainable development might also learn from it and make priorities on the basis of the factors illuminated in the theory. Hence, the thesis meets the criterion of scientific relevance outward science (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 18). Based on this ambition of the study the problem formulation is as follows:

- How can the policy-making in sustainable development in the City of Växjö be explained?

In short, the purpose with the study is to identify and explain the policy-making in Växjö. The importance of understanding the policy-making in the case can be argued by mentioning that the city is putting an effort on increasing and developing projects within sustainable development, notably environmental and climate projects. By understanding its policy-making, could also mean responding important factors for success in such issues. Other cities might take advantage and evaluate driving factors correctly.

1.1.1 Disposition of the thesis

The thesis is consisted of several sections which illustrates various parts of the research. The first section is the methodology including the characterization of the study, more particularly, the type of approach. The presented approach is directly followed by a description of the operationalization and the section is ending with the part describing the research material.

The second section illuminates the two theoretical approaches that are being tested on the case. This section also includes a subsection describing the differences between the theories and a scheme which is illustrating the differences more explicit. The third section starts with the background including the fundamental information of the study since it reviews the general information about the City of Växjö and the history of projects as well as the analysis. This section is the weight of the study considering the analysis applying the theories on the case, i.e., the purpose with the study is conducted on this section. The penultimate part of the thesis is the discussion regarding reflections of analysis which is then followed by the concluding remarks. The last section is of importance since it consists of all the references that have been used in the study.

1.1.2 Limitations

The study intends to examine two specific factors that might explain the policy-making in the City of Växjö. As mentioned, understanding the relevance of the factor with most explanatory power could also mean that other municipalities should focus on promoting the factor in question in order to success in sustainable development. The study scrutinizes the phenomena starting out from the two theories. To be able to determine other factors with high explanatory power, other theories need to be applied. However, this time the focus will remain in testing only two theories and the policy-making area.

1.2 Position of the researcher

As a researcher of the study, I am obligated to mention my position in the research. The motive to the selection of the two theoretical approaches, neo-pluralistic theory and advocacy coalition framework, is first, that these theories are considering the political aspect and thus emphasizes the involvement of different actors in political issues. Second, it is argued by researchers that the advocacy coalition is applicable when the purpose is to examine issues within sustainable development (Carter, 2007, pp. 195). The neo-pluralistic theory may be relevant to examine its explanatory power against the ACF. Both theories illustrate almost similar actors and aspects, i.e. both are focusing on interactions between different actors. Third, the City of Växjö is involved in several different networks which in turn mean commitments in collaboration with other meaningful actors (Växjö kommun – 4, 2012).

In the beginning of the study I had no preconceptions about which of the two theories would explain the phenomena more than the other one. Not the foremost the interview begun that I received a perception about the explanatory power of the theories. In other words: It has over time been easier to stipulate a theory's explanatory power.

As a researcher I am also aware about the policy about sustainable development in the City of Växjö. The municipality is working with different measures to improve the environment and climate which has resulted in positive performance. The municipality is being ranked high among other municipalities in Sweden. It is essential to mention that there are several municipalities in Sweden that are performing almost or sometimes better and are not acclaimed to the some extent as the City of Växjö in the aspect of sustainable development due to the fact that they have other profiles (Växjö kommun – 5, 2012). Accordingly, City of Växjö is marketing itself as being great in sustainable development. Since the municipality has been appointed as the “Greenest City in Europe”, the City of Växjö has continued marketing itself as that (Växjö kommun – 2, 2012).

2 Methodology

This section illuminates the methodology, used in the study, which is consisted of details regarding the character of the study, operationalization as well as the research material.

2.1 Crucial case

This study intends to test the theoretical approaches on a local case which is the City of Växjö and its policy-making in sustainable development focusing more on the environment and climate. The study is accordingly a *crucial case* (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 48-49). The idea of testing the theories can be discussed in terms of generalization of other cases on the basis of this one. It is important to mention that there has not been a really premonition about which theory may explain the case more than the other. The theory that also explains the case better may contribute to understand the theory and context as an alternative method for cities to success in environmental work.

The study starts from the assumption that generalization based on this case is possible, although it is a *qualitative study* which illustrates a case (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 82).

2.2 Operationalization

To test the theories on a real case it requires that the theoretical definition is transformed to operational definition. To put it differently, the theoretical indicators are being applied, in this case, on the information from the interviews. This transformation is mentioned as *operationalization* (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 39). Since the study starts out from the two theoretical approaches, it is adequate to illuminate the difference between the theories in question. To assess if there are elements of neo-pluralistic theory, the motives of business actors to a measure for a specific issue need to be noted. Hence, the operationalization of neo-pluralistic theory is conducted by scrutinizing if business actors together with politicians or civil servants, have taken commitments concerning sustainable development. The operationalization concerns with the relation between the actors, if the relation provide cooperation.

To operationalize the theoretical definition of the advocacy coalition framework, which emphasizes the coalitions between different actors with the

purpose of receiving acceptance of a suggestion for i.e. a measure regarding an important issue, it is appropriate to study which actors have been the driving force behind a measure. More concrete, the collaboration and adversities between actors need to be scrutinized and identified. It is worth to mention that the study focuses on the important measures which affect large parts of the community, that is to say, to scrutinize the policy of sustainable development in concrete issues which have involved several actors, due to its importance. Hence, scrutinizing the policy-making leads automatically mentioning the implemented measures, though the focus is not on evaluating the conducted investments. Based on the information from the interviews, the theoretical approach which can be inferred in the material is also the one that has most explanatory power.

2.3 Research material

The study is primarily conducted using information from interviews which are performed on persons from various operations. The respondents are considered to have more or less insight in the policy process. Accordingly, those interviewed from different operations might have different perspectives and information about environmental and climate issues and the policy process which will contribute to depict the phenomena regarding the success in environmental and climate work. The interviews are almost consisted of same questions though some questions are more emphasized in other interviews in order to achieve the needed information. As mentioned the questions have not been the same in all interviews since meanwhile the study was conducted, the number of questions came to increase. The questions to the interviews are formulated on the basis of the two theoretical approaches used in the study. Further, the questions are adjusted according to the interviewed person. The aim is to obtain the objective truth, that is to say, to achieve one truth (Hollis, 2994, pp. 8) about the complex in policy process and power among different actors regarding issues within sustainable development. The questions are striving to be answered in terms of reported occurrences and hence not focus much on judgments based on experiences. However, there is awareness about the tendencies of subjective information from the interviews. The study includes six interviews which are also the *primary material* (Esaiasson et al., 2007, pp. 319). The questions for the respondents are structured to some extent since a question asked might also receive answer for the last question and vice versa. In addition, some questions created new supplementary questions depending on the discussed subject during the interview (Teorell et al., 2007, pp. 89). The structuring is not yet deficient because all the questions are being asked. As mentioned, the order of the questions varies from situation and some interviews have been more structured than others and this depends to some extent on the respondent and discussion during the interview. The tree last interviews are done by phone call.

Furthermore, websites like the one of the municipality and the usage of reports of different kinds regarding the environmental projects in Våxjö have been

necessary. Addition to this, general information used in the study about the city and the theoretical approaches are the fundamental parts of the material. This information is retold and the sources are therefore the *secondary material* of the study (Esaiasson et al., 2007, pp. 319).

3 Theory

The section of the theory identifies the two different theoretical perspectives that will be applied and tested on the phenomena regarding the policy-making within sustainable development in the City of Växjö.

3.1 Neo-pluralistic theory

The neo-pluralistic theory is a two-dimensional model of power which underpins the pluralistic model but with a complement (Carter, 2007, pp. 184). Since neo-pluralism is a continuation of pluralism, we need to explain the principles of the latter one in order to understand neo-pluralism. *Pluralism* is a one-dimensional model that starts from the assumption that public policy is formed by different competing groups. It is important to note that dimensions, which are constantly mentioned, refer to the different faces of power among different actors. Returning to the competing groups, these are using their resources to influence the public policy in its formation as well as the part of implementation. Given that the local government is responsible for the economy it has therefore been of importance to cooperate with business groups which in turn means that the group in question have the ability to affect the public policy to a large extent relative other groups. The business groups, also mentioned as producers or interest groups, are considered to be active in different ways like taking initiatives, lobbying politicians and civil servants. Moreover, they are participating in financing campaigns or funding sympathetic pressure groups. With a view to achieve their goals, the producers are prepared to threaten to take different actions that might be contrary to the legislation. Taking this into account, the pluralistic model considers producers as important actors in the policy process. Furthermore the influence of producers might be to a larger extent than environmentalists which becomes apparent in the policy outcomes (Carter, 2007, pp. 182-83).

Pluralism as a model has flaws in explaining the influence of the business groups in the policy process since it focuses on one aspect of power. Accordingly, the pluralistic theory only exams the decision-making part and exclude inspecting conflicts among politicians and business groups that occur prior to interests and decisions. As a complement to this a second-dimensional model has been created and stipulated by Bachrach and Baratz (1962). The other aspect takes consequently the non-decision-making part in consideration. That is to say, powerful groups manage the issues of the agenda (Carter, 2007, pp. 183). The developed model has come to be mentioned as the *neo-pluralistic theory* that also

examines the structural power exercised by business groups. In reality, more particularly in capitalist economy, it means that it is possible for business groups to influence decision-making in the policy since the economy is affecting the popularity and the chances of re-election. The implications of governments taking responsibility for business groups is expressed when governments create the circumstances under which producers can make profits. The business is considered not being important habitually and does therefore not always determine the policy outcome. The distinction between ‘grand majority’ issues and the secondary issues is that the first one refers to issues where the influence of public is limited since the issues regard significant economic interests. The latter one is not intruding directly on powerful business interests. According to neo-pluralism, the business does not always determine the policy outcome in environmental issues nevertheless it has a significant position in economic policy (Carter, 2007, pp. 184-85). In short, there are formal as well as informal ways for members of policy networks to interact with interest groups. Thus, neo-pluralism stipulates the relation between the state and interest groups (Smith, 2001, pp. 11-12).

The neo-pluralistic theory is not complete and a third-dimensional model has therefore been identified. The continuation illustrates the distribution of political power that is determined by the economic structure that is underlined. This is of privilege for the ruling class and the theory is known as *neo-Marxism* (Carter, 2007, pp. 185). However this paper is not focusing on the third-dimensional model, the focus is rather on the second-dimensional model. The contribution to the second-dimensional model is of no importance in this study since the ambition is to test if the neo-pluralistic theory can explain the policy-making in the City of Växjö, from a business aspect and not explain it from a class aspect.

3.2 The advocacy coalition framework

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is identified by Paul Sabatier (1988) and is a model that focuses on the policy process (Carter, 2007, pp. 194), in particular, the policy change over several decades (Sabatier et al., 1994, pp. 175). The model emphasizes the role of ideas and information that change the policy process at all ‘stages’. The ACF can also be seen as a network theory where the sub-system is in focus with different actors such as politicians, bureaucrats, professionals, journalists, interest groups, academics (Carter, 2007, pp. 194) and policy analysts who evaluate policy ideas. In short there are actors from the public sector and organizations as well as from the private (Sabatier et al., 1994, pp. 178-79). These concerned actors are seeking to affect the public policy in issues that they consider to be important. The influence is best accomplished by creating ‘advocacy coalitions’ with actors that share the same set of normative and casual beliefs about how to achieve the most adequate solution of a given issue. In other words, by forming a coalition, the actors within the coalition seek to impose its approach on the policy process (Carter, 2007, pp. 194).

The advocacy coalition framework is relevant to be applied on policy issues that are characterized by conflicts such as environmental and energy. The theory is available to be applied on cases with open political conflicts and where policy processes are pluralistic, that is to say several types of actors influence the policy. The AFC can hence explain the policy outcomes (Carter, 2007, pp. 195-96). The framework has four fundamental premises where the first argues is that understanding the policy process requires focusing on a timespan of numerous decades. Hence, focusing on a short-term of policy process is inappropriate since the influences of different actors will be underestimated (Sabatier et al., 1994, pp. 178). The second premise argues that it is adequate to focus on policy subsystems where actors from different institutions interact with one another and influence the governmental decisions. The third premise focuses on the assumption that policy subsystems must include intergovernmental dimension at least for domestic policy. Changes and innovations in policy might stem from a subnational level which may then affect the national level. The assumption is supported by cases such as the cities in the United States, for instance New York and Chicago which had air pollution controls in stationary form two decades before the federals were involved in the issue. The fourth basic premise is that public policies can be conceptualized as belief systems, i.e. value priorities that actors need to realize. The theories of the actors are conceptualized in much the same way as belief systems. (Sabatier et al., 1994, pp. 178-80).

Regardless of the basic premises mentioned above, the study focuses not in detail on the third and fourth premises. It can be argued that these two last premises are fulfilled during the performing of analysis yet not scrutinized and emphasised. Further, the advocacy coalition framework is like neo-pluralism adjusted according to the case.

3.3 The difference between the theories

Neo-pluralistic theory scrutinizes the relation between business groups and politicians and civil servants, whereas the business actors are striving with their priorities that do not need to be in favor for the environment as well as for the climate. Politicians and civil servants are willing to accept it sometimes due to gain benefits. Methods of influencing the policy are for instance by initiatives and lobbying.

Advocacy coalition framework is emphasizing the coalitions between different actors. The coalition is in terms of cooperation about issues that they are worried about. The issues, in contrast to neo-pluralism, may be to some extent affected by interests but on the whole the issues are not just in benefit for the drifting actors but for the community. Furthermore, numerous actors from different parts of the community are involved which are co-operating in order to impose their idea.

3.3.1 Scheme illustrating the differences between the theories

	Neo-pluralistic theory	Advocacy coalition framework
Actor	Business groups, politicians	politicians, bureaucrats, professionals, journalists, interest groups, academics, policy analysts
Act	Lobbying, financing campaigns, initiatives	Coalition

Source: Own creation based on Carter (2007), Sabatier (1994) and Smith (2001)

4 Analysis

This section illuminates concise and general information about the City of Växjö and a part of it is associated with the completed environmental projects and results from it. Further, probably the most significant part of the study, the analysis, is conducted in this section. The analysis starts out from empirical cases of measures and targets within sustainable development, in particular, environment and climate, and applies the theories in order to identify the aspects that the theories include.

4.1 City of Växjö

Växjö has been a city since 1342 (NE, Sellers) and is the residential city in City of Växjö which is located in the province Småland, more practically, in Kronoberg County (NE, Larsson). The total area of the municipality is 1 676 km² and the number of inhabitants is estimated to be over 80 000 (2012). City of Växjö has since the 1960s had a constant population increase. Today 85 percent of the total population lives in urban areas and 70 percent lives in the residential city (NE, Jönsson). The business in the municipality comprises 50 percent of service- and service industries as well as public administration. The county administration, the central hospital and the university are located in the residential city Växjö (NE, Jönsson). The university, Linnaeus University is a combination of Växjö University and the University of Kalmar since 2010 (NE, Linnéuniversitetet). The private sector in the municipality consists of several companies within computer industry. The manufacturing industry represents 15 percent of the employment in the municipality where Volvo Construction Equipment AB (manufacturing haulers) in Braås and Rottne Industri AB (manufacturing forestry machinery) in Rottne are important companies. Further, the municipality preserves the traditions within the trade sector, more particularly, the grocery terminals that includes ICA Handlarnas AB and Coop Sverige AB. (NE, Jönsson)

4.1.1 Environmental work

The measures within sustainable development, with focus on environment, in the City of Växjö started in the 70s with restoration of lakes (Växjö kommuns informationsenhet, 2011). The Lake Trummen was the first lake to be restored followed by the restoration of Växjösjön. In the beginning of the 1980's Växjö Energy Ltd started using bio-fuel in order to make district heating. Later, in 1993,

the City Council approved adoption of an environmental policy about the contribution of long-term sustainable development. In addition to this, the environmental policy was also the fundamental base for what came to be mentioned as 'Agenda 21' (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 1). In conjunction with the adopted policy, it has since then provided continual control and accounting of the environmental state in order to achieve the vision (Växjö kommun – 1, 2012). A political Agenda 21 committee was created in 1998 with the purpose of being responsible for creating dialogues with the community's different actors. Also the Local Agenda 21 strategy was adopted in 1999 and includes the subjects: Fossil Fuel Free Växjö, Växjö Water, Nature Conservancy and Sustainable Land Use, Sustainable Housing, Sustainable Trade and Industry as well as Democracy and Education (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 1-2). This document is replaced by the Environmental Programme for the City of Växjö (Växjö kommun – 6, 2011). The same year as the Agenda 21 committee was created the Local Investment Programme for ecological sustainable development received over 90 million SEK from the Swedish Government. This amount was dedicated to the implementation of the 30 planned investments regarding the reduction of the impact on water systems and fossil fuels (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 1). In association with Agenda 21 there has been collaboration with the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation during 1995-97 where the ambition was to train for instance politicians and civil servants, who acquired knowledge and awareness and thereby responsibility, in order to easier reach controversial decisions. The cooperation continued 1998-2000 including multiple municipalities (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 1).

City of Växjö created the Fossil Fuel Free Växjö programme in 1996. The program consists of different activities for instance bio-mass-based district heating, energy efficient building or construction, energy efficient street lightning, environmental friendly cars and biogas production. The share of renewable energy is today more than 56 percent (Växjö kommun – 6, 2011). City of Växjö was the first municipality about a commitment of being a municipality free from fossil fuel, year 2030. The latest environmental programme was adopted by the City Council in 2010 and covers environmental policy on long- and short-term targets. The including subjects are considering consumption and waste; nature, biodiversity and lakes; energy and transport (Växjö kommun – 7, 2012). The Agenda 21 Strategy also concerns the planning of new residential areas, mentioned as 'Sustainable Housing', being constructed according to the aspect of ecological sustainability and economy. Worth to be mentioned is that extensive education in sustainable development for 6000 municipal employees was committed in 1993. By attending a course the employees acquired knowledge about sustainable development (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 3).

Furthermore, except the adoption of energy-measures, the City of Växjö has lately adopted a target about fair-trade consumption. Växjö became certificated of Rättvisemärkt in 2008 as a Fair-trade City. There is a commitment in the municipality about increasing the proportion of ethic food in the consumption. Hence, the city has been certified four times since the certification (Växjö kommun – 8, 2012). At the same time the municipality is also investing heavily in

ecological products, labeled with i.e., KRAV. Of the total food in the municipality, the ecological foodstuffs represented 30 percent in 2011. The target is that in 2015 the consumption of ecological foodstuffs and locally produced shall be comprised of an increase to 45 percent of the total food (Växjö kommun – 10, 2012).

4.1.2 International attention and awards

Probably the most important confirmation of a success in sustainable development may be what has been mentioned as “The Greenest City in Europe”. The title stems from a report in 2007 from the British BBC (Växjö kommun – 2, 2012). The British BBC asked the question to an international environmental organization for municipalities all over the world, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) (ICLEI, 1995-2008) : “We want to tell about the greenest city in Europe – where do we go then?” The answer was: “Go to Växjö” (Växjö kommun – 11, 2012). The title has since then been the trademark for City of Växjö (Växjö kommun – 2, 2012). The Greenest city in Europe is defined as:

[...] The sum of all environmental measures that have been and will be carried out within City of Växjö, both private as well as public. The greenest city in Europe is based on the vision of where you want to go. Växjö is an eco-municipality with a political agreement on ambitious targets and active environmental work. We are approaching a fossil fuel-free Växjö where each resident has a low energy consumption and carbon footprint. A multifunctional city with efficient land use means short distances and choices thus choices for people to choose environmentally friendly means of communication. The proximity to water and greenery provide quality of life and attractiveness (Växjö kommun, 2011).

Växjö explains the nomination by, for instance, referring to the unique results of environmental commitments. The carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by 30 percent since 1993 while the economic growth has increased by 63 percent, in 2007. (Växjö kommun, pp. 6) The reduction of carbon dioxide emissions between 1993 and 2011 was 41 percent (Växjö kommun – 3, 2012). Other examples that the municipality refers to when reporting about the success in environmental work is the ICLEI that awarded Växjö in 2000 with “Local Initiatives Award Winner for Excellence in Atmospheric Protection” associated with the target fossil fuel free municipality (Planeringskontoret, 2007, pp. 2).

Växjö was awarded from Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) in 2007 with the justification that the municipality adopted a long-term target of becoming fossil-fuel free, and has since then worked actively with measures. Moreover, City of Växjö has been awarded from the Sustainable Energy for European Campaign of European Commission the price ‘Sustainable Energy Europe Awards 2007’, because of the extensive work in order to become free from fossil-fuel. The results of the environmental work of Växjö are resulted at the Swedish rankings. For instance, the Nature Conservancy has ranked the cities in Sweden in a ranking of

climate where Växjö shared the third place with Malmö. Hence, Östersund and Stockholm were more successful. These mentioned awards are yet just a few (Växjö kommun – 9, 2012).

4.2 Analysis of the case

4.2.1 Fossil fuel free Växjö

In conjunction with the United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED) that was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (UNCSD, 2011), the discussions about starting cooperation between City of Växjö and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), begun as a result from the emphasis from the conference about local commitments. The idea of SSNC was to intensify the collaborations with selected municipality, including Växjö as one of them. An important issue that was discussed concerning the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions which resulted in a decision in the City Council in 1996 was about adopting a target of being a fossil fuel free municipality in 2030. The decision received media attention and parts of the community did not understand the seriousness of the decision, thus the environmental work was difficult. Civil servants from the technical services administration at the municipality were hesitant and argued that the agreed target was too ambitious. Not until 2006 when a significant part of the municipality came to understand the target. The carbon dioxide emissions were reduced with 41 percent in 2011. The possibilities of conducting measures increased associated with the applications of government funding. The funding are from what have been mentioned as Klimatinvesteringsprogram (KLIMP) and Lokala investeringsprogram (LIMP) and the application for the funding became more usual after 1998 (Interview 4, 6, 2012).

With consideration to the case regarding the decision about becoming a fossil fuel free municipality, the case could be explained by applying the advocacy coalition framework. As the theory emphasizes the creation of coalitions among different actors in the community and the striving of influencing the agenda or even impose their idea of an issue that they are concerned with, the process to the decision of fossil fuel free Växjö has required enhanced interactions between the municipality and the interest group, SSNC, since the two ‘actors’ in question were concerned about the carbon emissions. Even though a decision was made in favor for the two actors, parts of the community like the personnel from the technical services administration were not pleasant and as ACF claims, the concerned actors promoting the adoption of the target need to strive against the opposing ones, the technical services administration, for instance.

Applying the neo-pluralistic theory on the empirical case, fossil fuel free municipality, makes it virtually impossible receive support from the theory in

order to explain the case. Taking for instance the fact that neo-pluralism focuses on the interaction between politicians and business groups, the involvement of the latter actor is not actual in the made decision at the City Council regarding fossil fuel free.

4.2.2 Biogas production of biological wastes

A decision at the City Council was made in 1998 – associated with the received funding from the European Union and LIMP – on building a biogas plant. The idea was that the biological wastes and fertilizers were going to produce biogas for the busses in the municipality and county. The initiative of adopting this measure came from several civil servants from different parts of the municipality and politicians joined the idea. The wastes from the households were going to be sorted, yet although the decision was made, the handling of the wastes continued according to the traditional method, i.e., continued running the wastes to another city, Ljungby, where the wastes were fired. For the reason that the investment, which included other municipalities like Ljungby and Alvesta, was too comprehensive and became more costly than expected a new decision in 2002 was made to discontinue the project. The project was sold to another city, Västerås. The Social Democrats was in majority in the City Council yet voted against the project since they requested greater majority. The Green and Left Party granted the proposal while the Moderates, Centre Party as well as the Liberal Party and Christian Democrats rejected. Further, a new investigation of wastes was adopted in 2005 and in 2007 a decision on producing biogas was made where the mayor of Växjö, Bo Frank, is being responsible. The project is consequently ten years delayed and includes only Växjö. Moreover, the investment has become more expensive given that there is no funding. Nowadays the households are sorting their wastes and the biogas production has commenced, yet the biogas for the busses is supplemented with the mainly propellant used before since more households need to implement the sorting of wastes (Interview 4, 5, 6, 2012).

The enforcement behind the project regarding the biogas production is several actors with different assignments within the municipality. As ACF explains, actors concerned with an issue and share the same beliefs about it, are prone to create coalitions. This claim may explain the phenomena in the empirical case mentioned above. There was initially consensus among the actors which later turned into separated opinions among the politicians. The Left and Green Party which voted for the project were remaining within the originally coalition but still inadequate in the sense of being a minority for the proposal. In short, since numerous actors interact together with the purpose of imposing their idea, the advocacy coalition framework therefore gives the support in understanding the policy-making concerning biogas production. Hence the case is explained most by ACF and perhaps to an insignificant part by neo-pluralism due to the fact that business groups are not involved in the description of struggling actors.

4.2.3 Energy efficient houses

The City of Växjö applied for funding in association with the European Union's project mentioned as 'Sustainable Energy Systems in Advanced Cities' (SESAC) and international networks in order to conduct energy measures. A project was granted in 2005 continuing until 2011 and included different measures within sustainable energy solutions such as building energy efficient houses, increasing the production of renewable energy, establish solar photovoltaic and wind energy. City of Växjö received 35 million Swedish kronor to conduct investments. As mentioned, a part of the project included investments within building. The advocates behind such measure were the civil servant Sarah Nilsson, politicians, energy companies as well as housing companies, like the owned housing companies of City of Växjö, Hyresbostäder and Växjö hem. The private housing companies, for instance Midroc, came to take such measures as well since it generated lower costs. In addition, the private housing company has received architectural award for its successful work (Interview 1, 4, 2012).

Once again, there are numerous actors involved advocating a specific issue and measure, in this case the energy issue and its measures in energy efficient building. With support from the advocacy coalition framework this case could be explained by mentioning, first the involved actors from different operations such as politicians, entrepreneurs and civil servants; second the involved actors share the same motive, i.e., releasing the importance of the measure, the cost and climate aspect. The actors created what the theory in question mentions as 'advocacy coalition', which in turn made it possible to impose the idea, *here* the adoption of energy projects.

Theorist of the neo-pluralistic theory stipulates the interaction between politicians, civil servants and business groups in terms of lobbying, financing campaigns and initiating. Neo-pluralism may explain a part of the empirical case, more particularly, the involvement of politicians and business groups. The theory in question supports the occurrence of collaboration between the mentioned actors but to some extent it is limited due to deficiency of sufficient details of the case. Put it differently, we do not know anything about for instance lobbying which is marked by no transparency.

4.2.4 Locally produced and ecological foodstuffs

In the Environmental Programme that was adopted in 2010, one of the targets was to change the consumption pattern. The focus was on the increase of purchasing ecological foodstuffs or locally produced (Environmental Programme, 2010, pp. 9). The idea was advocated by numerous civil servants from the municipality who realized the importance of this environmental issue which in turn co-operated and drifted the idea. There were officials from, inter alia, the Environmental Health Office and Planning Office and the dietary manager of the upper secondary schools in Växjö. The drifting actors who strove to impose the issue received support from politicians thus a decision was made in the City Council (Interview,

4, 2012). The target says that these specific foodstuffs shall make up to at least 45 percent of the total purchased foodstuffs by 2015 (Strategic Planning, 2010, pp. 9). In order to improve in this issue, more focus was dedicated to the follow-up of the purchases. The ecological foodstuffs represented 13 percent of the total purchases and by 2012 it was accounting for 35 percent. The unexpected increase could be explained in terms of more explicit targets and follow-up, i.e. clearer information. The measure is, inter alia, performed in retirement homes and schools. Furthermore, the private companies have been adapting this measure, though it is complicated and cumbersome (Interview, 4, 2012).

The target concerning the increase of ecological and locally produced foodstuffs was proposed by several co-operating actors from the public sector. As the advocacy coalition framework emphasises the entering of actors into coalition agreements, this claim may identify the empirical case. With the justification, from the actors within the coalition, that improvement on this issue is necessary, ACF may explain it. Seeing it from aspects of ACF, the phenomena can be illustrated in terms of being concerned with an issue requires attention from powerful actors in order to impose it in agenda. According to the ACF, co-operation among the drifting actors resulted in attention from politicians. This is a success from the civil servants and the dietary manger that influenced the agenda by receiving attention from politicians which in turn endorsed the proposal. Moreover, private companies or interest groups, proved to be positive to such a target as well, though the entailed circumstances.

As theorists from the neo-pluralism would claim, business groups influence politicians in different ways this is not actual in this case. Business groups, who then accepted the proposal by implementing measures, i.e. purchasing ecological and locally produced foodstuffs, were accordingly not affecting the agenda since they were not the drifting actors of the issue. Inter alia, the business groups were not striving to influence politicians by campaigns or lobbying or even initiatives in order to impose such a measure. With consideration to this, the neo-pluralistic theory proves not be applicable on this case.

4.2.5 District heating plant in Braås

Volvo Construction Equipment AB which manufactures haulers is located in Braås in the municipality. The manufacturing required large amounts of oil and energy and the company decided to replace the oil with biogas in favour for the environment. Moreover the oil was too expensive. A new, environmentally friendly energy plant needed to be constructed, resulting in interactions with the company Växjö Energi AB (VEAB) (Interview, 5, 2012). VEAB is a part of the City of Växjö and is operated within the framework of national and municipal decisions. During the last two decades, VEAB has contributed to the decrease of carbon dioxide emissions in Växjö because of the reduced use of oil (VEAB, 2011). As mentioned, Volvo commenced collaboration with the municipality owned company of energy, which occurred in 1997-1998, in order to build a smaller than usually district heating plant in Braås. Växjö Energy Ltd was paying

for the investment which was necessary to build since, inter alia, schools and households in Braås could connect to the new district heating plant. Furthermore, this measure was possible to implement because of the industry and its large usage of energy (Interview, 5, 2012).

With consideration to the fact that the private company Volvo Construction Equipment AB with its initiative to construct a district heating plant commenced cooperation with the municipal owned energy company, the neo-pluralistic theory may explain the case. Theorists from the neo-pluralistic theory stipulate business groups, which in this case is Volvo, as the actors influencing politicians and civil servants. In details, this means that Volvo has affected the municipal operation, Växjö Energi, by taking initiative. Volvo argued by refereeing to the environmental as well as to the economic aspect in order to build the energy plant of biogas. As neo-pluralism claims, business groups promote its ideas which may be in its own interests. The empirical case illustrates the economic aspect as one of the important reasons for Volvo to implement this measure. Since Växjö Energi agreed on the commitment, the cooperation among these two actors occurred. The measure was in favor for the municipality as well. In short: neo-pluralism explains this case to some extent in the view of that no sacrifices are needed in order to implement the investment, which the theory usually starts out from, but explain the fact that the business actor, Volvo, act according to its interests and influence civil servants or other from the public administration. The ACF is not able to explain the case since no coalition is formed.

4.2.6 The Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden

The Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden is owned by an association where regional councils and municipalities in Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg are members (Energikontor Sydost). The agency creates interacts among other actors, official, politicians and business groups as well as the Linnaeus University (Interview, 2, 2012). Further the board of the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden consists of politicians as well as people from the business community. In order to involve the industrial community the agency is offering campaigns and energy savings of various types. The Swedish Energy Agency is financing the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden and the latter one is obligated to work with the industrial sector in order to develop in climate measures. For instance one of the projects that the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden has conducted regards the 'Night walks' which more particularly means that a person walks at nights visiting the companies in order to control their energy consumption and providing advice. The agency is involved in numerous types of networks were, for instance, companies are members (Interview 1, 2012).

When referring back to the fact that persons from the business community as well as politicians serves on the board at Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden, it is worth mentioning that it is uncertain whether the politicians are affected by the persons from the industrial sector. With consideration to this, the neo-pluralistic theory may support this claim. Hence, since the agency is obligated to work with

the business groups, the initiatives from the industrial sector might have affected the political agenda at the City Council, though yet uncertain.

4.2.7 The business community within sustainable development

Since the environmental and climate work is important to the City of Växjö the fact of interacting more with the university, residents and business community is meaningful for the municipality in order to be a predecessor among other municipalities. There are different methods of accomplishing the aim. There have been several measures adopted, inter alia, formation of different associations and application for funding, in order to support the businesses in adaptations within sustainable development. All the companies are environmentally certified. The City of Växjö also offers energy campaigns for the companies. Projects for reducing the energy consumption for the private housing companies have been conducted. Another method for the City of Växjö to force the development is to order environmentally friendly products and services from companies (Interview, 3, 2012). The companies often take measures without the involvement from the public administration, including politicians and civil servants. As mentioned, associations are founded and by supporting companies in the municipality might contribute to more interactions and development within sustainability in Växjö. It is of importance for the City of Växjö to develop and invest within sustainable development considering that Växjö has been appointed to 'The Greenest City in Europe'. With consideration to the aforementioned, Växjö has then adopted methods in order to involve parts of the community. A prime example of initiated co-operation among business community and the City of Växjö is the formation of the association 'Sustainable Småland' which initially was founded with the purpose of selling the services of the companies within the organization. Hence, the companies that joined the association paid membership dues and their services were marked by international visits. The initial idea proved to be ineffective resulting in another function, more particularly, a place for knowledge and technological solutions (Interview 4, 6, 2012) (Energikontor Sydost). Another example that illustrates the fact of interactions among actors in the municipality is the enterprise network 'Expansiva Växjö' which consists of several companies (Interview 6, 2012).

Another method for the City of Växjö to improve in environmental work is to set requirements on the business community. More particularly, this means that for instance housing companies need to fulfill the requirements from the City of Växjö, such as connecting to the municipal heating district, when purchasing land for house building, yet not force the housing companies to conduct other energy measures (Interview 1, 2012).

5 Discussion

This section receives space for reflection over the results of the empirical case. As the analysis illustrates, the dominant theory is the advocacy coalition framework and the neo-pluralistic theory is not able to explain much of the case. As mentioned several times in the study, it is of great importance for the City of Växjö to become a predecessor in environmental as much as in climate work. Being ‘The Greenest City in Europe’ and market itself as that, means an ambitious work and in order to interact with the other parts of the municipality, i.e. private as public, has become important. Further, being incessantly international controlled in the environmental and climate work forces the city to put an effort on these issues. As also mentioned, the City of Växjö is working for a better collaboration with the business community. It also appears that networks and sorts of associations are formed in order to increase and strengthen the interactions among public personnel and private. With this in mind, companies should improve their work within environment and climate. The City of Växjö do not make requirements for the companies but instead urges them, by offering them specific campaigns and funding, to take measures in the favor for the environment and climate. Since Växjö is constantly scrutinized within environmental and climate work, it is therefore of importance to avoid what may prevent this development, i.e. agreements with companies that are not in favor for the environment and climate. This claim may be one reason to the result that neo-pluralism is not able to explain a significant part of the empirical case, Växjö. Lobbying and other methods to influence politicians and political agenda might be more frequent in other cities were the profile of the city is not the environment or climate. Also creating several networks and associations means that it is important to engage private companies in dialogue about improvement within environment and climate. Of course, there might be lobbying and other types of informal contacts between politicians and entrepreneurs, yet not to a significant extent. As the case with the district heating plant in Braås, business actors may take initiatives which are in favor for the environment and climate, but other minor measures can be taken without involvement of the public sector. The City of Växjö is promoting such measures. Accepting measures which prevent them in the direction of becoming a precursor in especially environmental and climate work is not the fact. Furthermore, business actors realize the fact that environmental certification benefit them. As the interview illustrate, all the industrial actors are environmentally certificated.

The advocacy coalition framework explains the most cases in the analysis. Coalitions among several actors could be interpreted as interactions, which in the case of Växjö is important to a large extent. The interviewed persons also emphasized the cooperation as a significant part in its politics in environmental

and climate work. The question is why coalitions or co-operations are being important in the politics in Växjö? One reason could be that in order to solve issues within environment or climate, it affects and involves many actors, since improving these areas need to be improved in all operations and activities in the municipality. For instance, the measures that have involved housing- and energy companies as well as civil servants from the municipality means that they all have something to say about the idea since they all become affected by the made decision. Further, in order to improve and continue an ambitious work, associations and network have been created were many different actors can connect and discuss but also share their knowledge. This may also explain why informal contact to companies within sustainable development is not usual as much as co-operations. In order to achieve targets, obstacles need to be avoided.

6 Concluding remarks

As the City of Växö became appointed as ‘The Greenest City in Europe’ in 2007 the environmental as well as climate work have been their most important priority. With this shortened reason to study its policy-making regarding sustainable development with a more focus on environment and climate, the study has started out from two theories in order to explain the policy-making within sustainable development, especially with a focus on environment and climate. The neo-pluralistic theory emphasizes the occurrence of business groups influencing the public policy through initiatives, financing campaigns or lobbying politicians or civil servants, with the purpose of implementing their interests. One case illustrating a part of this claim was the case with the district heating plant in Braås. Volvo Construction Equipment AB had an interest of constructing an energy plant in favour for the environment and climate but also argued with the economic aspect. For Växjö Energi AB this meant a great investment since it is an environmentally friendly measure and it was necessary to construct it due to the fact that other operations in Braås could connect to the energy plant.

As the advocacy coalition framework considers the coalitions with different several actors in order to impose their idea in the public policy, the study has illuminated several cases that are supported by the theory. For instance, the case highlighting the measure of producing biogas from house wastes as fuel for the busses, civil servants and politicians *formed* a coalition in order to impose their idea. Also, the example with the investment concerning energy efficient houses involved various drifting actors such as a civil servant, energy- and housing companies as well as politicians.

As it has been stated numerous times in the study, the City of Växjö is working towards becoming a predecessor in sustainable development, especially in environmental and climate work. The city avoids what may prevent them continuing in this direction. Applying neo-pluralism on the case with Växjö might be difficult. As business actors act according to their interests by lobbying and other ways in order to affect the policy-making in the city, the City of Växjö might not accept ideas that is not in favour for its profile, i.e. ‘The Greenest City in Europe’. Since interactions among actors are necessary in order to engage and develop in many operations, networks and associations have been formed. Take for instance the associations that have been created in order to conduct a dialogue between civil servants and the business community. Also it is of importance to connect with other meaningful profiles and operations in a municipality in order to impose ideas. The ACF is therefore more applicable.

Considering the unequal number of cases in the analysis which start out from the theories, it could be justified by mentioning that as noted before, the study focuses on major measures, i.e. investments with affection on significant part of

the municipality. I am also conscious about the subjectivity that might feature the interviews. Hence, there might for instance be unrevealed information regarding informal contacts between politicians, civil servants and business actors. With consideration to this a subjective assessment has been done. Further it has been claimed several times that drifting actors interact together in the municipality. Starting out from these assumptions and the results, strengthen the assertion about that advocacy coalition framework explains the policy-making within sustainable development in Våxjö more than the neo-pluralistic theory. Finally, promoting a developed sustainable development presupposes an engaged community with interactions among different actors, something that other municipalities may invest in.

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7.3 Interviews

1. Sarah Nilsson, Project Manager, Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden, conducted 2012-11-27
2. Hans Gulliksson, Project Manager, Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden conducted 2012-11-27
3. Bo Frank, Mayor of Växjö (2006-2012), Moderates, conducted 2012-12-06
4. Julia Ahlrot, Head of Environmental Sustainability – M.Sc Aquatic and Environmental Engineering, Strategic Planning – Executive Office, Växjö municipality, conducted 2012-12-11
5. Carl-Olof Bengtsson, City Council (2010-2014), Social Democrats, conducted 2012-12-13
6. Henrik Johansson, Environmental Coordinator, Strategic Planning – Executive Office, Växjö municipality, conducted 2012-12-19

8 Appendix

8.1 Interviews 1, 2

- Vilka specifika miljö- och klimatfrågor har ni varit bekymrade över som ni också anser att ni har kunnat påverka? Vilka är de viktigaste för er?
- Vilket årtal?
- Varför var miljö- eller klimatfrågan viktig för er och vilka initiativ för åtgärder kom ni med?
- Vilka andra personer eller verksamheter fick ni stöd av, respektive vilka motsatte sig ert förslag?
- Anser ni att möjligheterna till att påverka den offentliga miljöpolitiken är större vid stöd från andra verksamheter?
- Vad blev utfallet, det vill säga vilka blev åtgärderna? Var det ert initiativ eller andra verksamheters?
- Hur ser relationerna mellan olika företag och kommunen ut?
- Vilka andra personer eller verksamheter i kommunen kommer ni bäst överens med gällande miljö- och klimatfråga generellt sätt?

8.2 Interview 3

- Vad inom hållbar utveckling har ni varit bekymrade över som också har kommit att åtgärdas?
- Hur har ni drivit frågan/problemet?
- Vilket årtal?
- Varför var problemet viktigt och vilka förslag på åtgärder kom ni med?

- Hur ställde sig olika personer och verksamheter (företag) till förslaget för frågan/problemets, det vill säga vilken syn hade de på frågan/problemets?
- Vad prioriterade personerna och verksamheterna (företagen) i samband med frågan/problemets?
- Hur kompromissade man om frågans/problemets åtgärd?
- Hur fattades beslutet angående förslaget för frågan/problemets?
- Hur ser relationerna mellan olika företag och kommunen ut?

8.3 Interviews 4, 5, 6

- Vilka är de viktiga årtalen i Växjö's arbete inom hållbar utveckling?
- Kan ni nämna konkreta åtgärder för olika problem inom hållbar utveckling som ni på kommunen varit bekymrade över vilka också har åtgärdats? (vilka åtgärder?)
- Hur har ni drivit frågan/problemets?
- Hur ställde sig olika personer och verksamheter till initiativet för frågan/problemets, det vill säga vilken syn hade de på frågan/problemets? Alltså vilka personer eller verksamheter var inblandade i syfte att driva frågan? (vilka personer?)
- Vad prioriterade personerna och verksamheterna i samband med frågan/problemets?
- Hur kompromissade man om frågans/problemets åtgärd?
- Varför var problemets viktigt för er och vilka förslag på åtgärder kom ni med?
- Hur fattades beslutet angående förslaget för att lösa frågan/problemets?
- Hur ser relationerna mellan olika företag och kommunen ut, det vill säga vilket utrymme får (privata) företag i projekt om hållbar utveckling? Ge exempel på konkreta fall