

5. THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Power has always been problematic for mankind. The exercise of power is an essential part of a functioning, organized society, but it is also legend for its ability to corrupt. Power is sweet. The thirst for power easily leads to the exercise of power for its own sake.

The power of Finland's environmental sector has increased tremendously over the last one and a half decades. This trend has been supported by Finland's accession to the European Union, the urbanization of population, robust economic growth that has created a sense of economic security, and the ideology of sustainable development. The grab for control of administrative space is similar to the territorial expansions of the 19th century, laying the foundation for rapid instating of power structures and subjugating the native people.

As a result of this development, people, land owners, municipalities, firms and other productive organizations have seen their own rights curtailed. They have been, for example, forced to cede much of the power to decide on their own affairs in their land to the environmental bureaucracy. The biggest losers have been those who are trying to build a future for themselves and others through new productive activity.

The calculations and conclusions in earlier chapters suggest that the basis for imposing the wide range of harsh environmental protection measures in Finland is unsubstantial.

This chapter considers the hypothesis that much of Finland's and EU's environmental policy is really not about serving the common good. Rather it is about the struggle for power and resources with little respect to justice, moderation or rational solutions.

Environmental power strategy and the “unknown threat”

German sociologist and political thinker Max Weber defined power as the possibility of imposing one's will upon the behavior of other people /77/. Under the Weberian view, mankind is caught up in an eternal struggle for power.

The basic configurations of the struggle for power and the use of power are ancient. Early scholars of power include Plato /48/ and Machiavelli /33/. Mao Zedung observed that power grows out of the barrel of a gun.

The economist John Kenneth Galbraith /17/ has pointed out that a modern state bureaucracy has a tendency to make the state an instrument of its own purposes. Power of a government organization can be increased through the use of e.g. the media, the legislative drafting process, and alliances.

Finland's environmental power cluster includes:

- The European Commission's Directorate General (DG) for the Environment;
- Finland's Ministry of the Environment;
- Politicians focused on environmental matters;
- Regional environmental centers and municipal environmental administrations;
- Scientific and expert organizations working with environmental issues;
- Non-governmental environmental organizations and political movements;
- Companies producing “environmentally friendly” products or related services.

Many believe that these organizations promote environmental issues to benefit society. They emphasize the importance of environmental issues and support the existing power structure that in return legitimizes their existence and confers credibility and resources upon them.

Emotionally charged slogans are very beneficial in the build-up of power. “Dark forces”, “the flames of hell”, “the Jewish Conspiracy”, “class enemy” and “the Evil Empire” are historical examples. Variations on the “unknown threat!” meme combined with “the principles of sustainable development” have become a core message of the environmental power cluster. It resonates extremely well in the politically correct Finnish nationwide media based in Helsinki.

Case: Risks to drinking water supplies

A recent study commissioned by Helsinki’s water company, Pääkaupunkiseudun Vesi Oy, from the Finnish Environmental Institute examined the water quality risks associated with bringing water to the capital through the 120 km Päijänne aqueduct tunnel. The Finnish Environmental Institute had identified 101 risks to water quality. The arranged press conference was well-covered by the media. To back up the risk, the news anchor on Finland’s commercial television channel, MTV3, shuddered, made a face, and silently let her viewers “decide.”

What emotional messages were contained in the news coverage?

- “Unknown threat!” risking the well being of people living in the Helsinki area;
- Officials at the Finnish Environmental Institute are all over the matter;
- Officials at the Finnish Environmental Institute are fighting the bad, but unspecified, polluters and industrial operators.

When the water company commissioned the study, it apparently was seeking answers to the following sorts of questions:

- What substances in which quantities have percolated or could percolate into the ground?
- What are the levels of hazardous substances seeping into the Päijänne aqueduct tunnel?
- What are the levels of substances in the water when it reaches the water treatment plant?
- What happens in the laboratories and at the water treatment plant?
- Are there any substantial risks to drinking water quality, and, if so, how large are these risks and what is their nature?
- Is there a need for further risk management measures?

Answering the question about the scale of potential risks is easy. Consider a scenario in which solvents enter into the groundwater. The harmful substance content in the groundwater surrounding some wells exceeds the guideline value for drinking water by a factor of ten. If such water enters the tunnel at 3 liters a second, and the water in the tunnel flows at a rate of 3,000 l/s, the harmful substance content is one-hundredth of the guideline value even before it reaches the treatment plant.

The study commissioned by the water company is a standard part of normal organizational risk management. It was ordered from the Finnish Environment Institute in part because of the quasi-official status the environmental protection decree had given the institute.

Finding out what is behind these threats or their actual magnitude is of little interest to the environmental power cluster or the media. Slogans can lose their sting and issues their allure when the threat is quantified. Indeed, the deconstruction of threats works to reduce the environmental cluster's power and rattles their structures. It also reduces the credibility of the media that has a tendency to distort the threats for commercial reasons.

The environmental cluster use of the unknown threat and sustainable development themes can be seen in a press release on the environmental administration's guideline on dredging activities. In it environment minister Enestam notes, "From the environmental standpoint, the guideline looks to sustainable methods, because we have no other options."

Apparently, the environment minister was taking the view that sustainable development was somehow threatened by TBT that is no longer used and is disappearing from the environment through break-down. For some reason, the threat is acute in the specific case when a negligible amount of TBT is in dredged mass being moved from one point in the sea to another. What could be behind this apparent insanity?

Power theory makes such odd remarks clearly understandable. When guideline interpretation ignores the actual scale of an environmental impact and the limit values are to some degree exceeded everywhere within human touch, the environmental administration generates power capital. The minister can then use this capital in struggles over important party issues by deciding which industrial jobs have priority. The environmental administration and its research institutes can use such capital to subdue other organizations and to force them to finance environmental research and other activities.

Classic power theory says that power should be directed at the opponent's most vulnerable spot. A fifth of Finland's foreign trade will eventually pass through the Vuosaari harbor. Helsinki submitted to the unreasonable sediment handling rules, because the environmental administration had the power to sink the project into legal disputes through never-ending permitting rounds. The environmental administration's power position was further strengthened by the fact that by killing the project it would also have sunk the City of Helsinki's plans to renew the city layout.

In 2005, the Finnish state budgeted about €250 million to the Ministry of the Environment (excluding payment of housing supports). The total budget that year was about €38 billion, i.e. less than 1% of state spending went to administration and dealing with environmental matters. This share of funding reflects the actual spending priorities of Finnish society.

In practice, however, the influence of the environmental administration far outweighs its budget. Underlying this appears to be an excellent strategy in which environmental matters are promoted at the expense of others. The environmental administration is focused on the build-up and exercise of power.

According a survey by The Association of Finnish Local and Regional authorities and Statistics Finland, municipalities and industry spend about €1 billion a year on environmental protection. The costs to individuals, small businesses, companies owned by municipalities and state industrial organizations are not included in this figure. Nor are the indirect costs related to zoning and land planning, and measures to protect the habitat. For example, environmental issues that prevent or complicate the construction of new electricity production facilities or transmission capacity are reflected directly in the cost of electricity.

The instruments and sources of power

At the core of the environmental power cluster, we find the EU Commission's Directorate General for the Environment and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. This core has, in accordance to Galbraith's power theory /17/, all the instruments of exercising power i.e. condign power (stick), compensatory power (carrot), and conditioned power (possibility to change beliefs).

The condign power of the environmental administration, like the muzzle of Mao's proverbial rifle, is based on the new environmental standards and vastly expanded discretion. It grants the administration the possibility to destroy someone's business or source of employment and impose heavy economic burdens on others. This instrument of power is continuously expanded by exploiting the sustainable development ideology.

At the same time a carrot is offered. By subduing to the bureaucratic power of the environmental administration a permit is granted. The excellence of the environmental administration gets the high praise. By admitting our sins and paying an indulgence, our salvation is assured and we can again feel good about ourselves.

The conditioned power of the environmental administration is amplified by its alliance with the environmental science community and with the Helsinki based nationwide media. The environmental science community, by pushing its own interests provides credibility for the administration's agenda. The Helsinki based media gets fascinating stories that paint havoc and deliver guilt providing the media itself the role of public savior.

The core of the environmental power cluster also has all Galbraith's sources of power i.e. personality, property, and organization.

Finland's most recent environmental ministers and many of those holding top posts in the environmental administration learned about the struggle for power and methods of manipulation as student activists in the 1970s. There certainly has been charismatic leadership.

The budget of the environmental administration is limited. However, when combined with other sources of funds and when focused to build-up and exercise of power instead of investing in the environment, these funds easily exceed anything that the subordinates of the bureaucracy have available to defend their rights.

The present broad use of power by the environmental cluster would not be possible without an internally disciplined organization. The EU Commission is well recognized as an authoritarian, disciplined organization that dismisses those insiders who criticize.

Some people in the Finnish environmental administration may be even politically incorrect in their thinking on environmental issues and administrative methods. Nevertheless, the organization submits them to pursuit of a single-minded agenda based on the conveniently interpreted sustainable development ideology. The means of bending bureaucrats to a certain mindset and the throttling of diverging opinions are well known. These organizational control techniques range from delivering public praise, promotions and challenging tasks to

marginalizing the trouble-maker, excluding the person out of collegial activity and humiliating an individual publicly.

At the core of Finland's community of scientists and experts working with environmental issues is the Finnish Environment Institute, a central actor in the development of environmental standards that is totally dependent on Ministry of the Environment for funding. Given such an arrangement, it is natural its research results and expert opinions tend to support the official policy.

From the view of the Ministry of the Environment, it is natural to procure the monitoring of the functioning of the environmental permitting process without competitive bidding from the Finnish Environment Institute. This is tantamount to putting the goat in charge of the cabbage patch.

The strength of the power arrangement between the environmental administration, public environmental expert organizations and the media is illustrated by the handling of the tributyltin-issue in connection of dredging. In spite years of extensive coverage of this issue in Helsingin Sanomat and nationwide television with a number of politicians, bureaucrats and so called "environmental experts" all expressing their horror, ordinary citizens did not receive information on the scale of the problem.

Finally after five years of bombardment with one sided information the common man received information on the scale of the problem from a nationwide television program 18.2.2008.

Indeed the TBT-problem was miniscule in connection of dredging. The health hazard had been vastly exaggerated. Those considering productive investments in Finland were at the mercy of the environmental administration. The common man had been fooled. The credibility of the environmental bureaucracy and Helsingin Sanomat was shaken.

Helsingin Sanomat and the environmental administration struck back with articles painting the horrors of TBT over a full page in the Sanomat Science & Nature section. The cornerstone of the page was a graph showing the mortality of mussels as a function TBT-content of sediment in a so called aquarium test.

This graph was a product of a several steps of manipulation shown in Figure 5.1.

Changing perspective started long ago in the environmental administration and Helsingin Sanomat with the notion that since the impacts of dredging are minor one should focus on the impacts of TBT instead. It is just mentioned that TBT is released into the water mass during dredging and dumping. The questions of how much is released and weather this has any significance are conveniently avoided.

Next step was a test. The environmental administration decided to study mussels that are known to be vulnerable. It chose to procure the testing from a reliable source, from the researchers of the Southwestern Finland Environment Centre and the University of Turku, who had already made their opinions known.

It is also known that mixing of TBT directly with sediments and using a small amount of standing water exaggerates mortality. This is due to the fact that TBT forms a strong bond

with a suspended particle after leaving the ship bow. This reduces its bioactivity. In nature there is also a huge amount of clean water floating around with currents and flushing the sediment surface. Whether the mistake in test arrangement was intentional or lack of professional skill is not known.

The initial results published in a professional journal (step 3) showed that TBT had no effect on the mortality of mussels in the test at concentrations that have practical significance in Finland.

For some reason the results were changed (step 4). One can only speculate that since the initial results did not support the actions of the environmental administration, there was a need to take a closer look. In any case even these changed results do not show that TBT in dredging mass would have any practical significance on mussel mortality.

The final fifth step in this chain of manipulation was taken by Helsingin Sanomat. The paper removed the results showing mussel mortality in clean sediment from the chart. This face saving forgery produced a chart indicating that TBT causes mussel mortality even in small concentrations.

There is another perspective to this issue. When this text is written, the Finnish shipyard industry is fighting for its life. It also has to do once again channel dredging in order to float world class cruise vessels to a customer. There is a small amount of TBT in the mass to be dredged. Conventional dredging project would release perhaps 0.1 kg TBT in the water mass (half a days release from an ocean liner of the 1990's). The environmental administration has disputed the permit. It is pushing the shipyard towards an unspecified solution that could delay the delivery and cost 10 million euros or more.

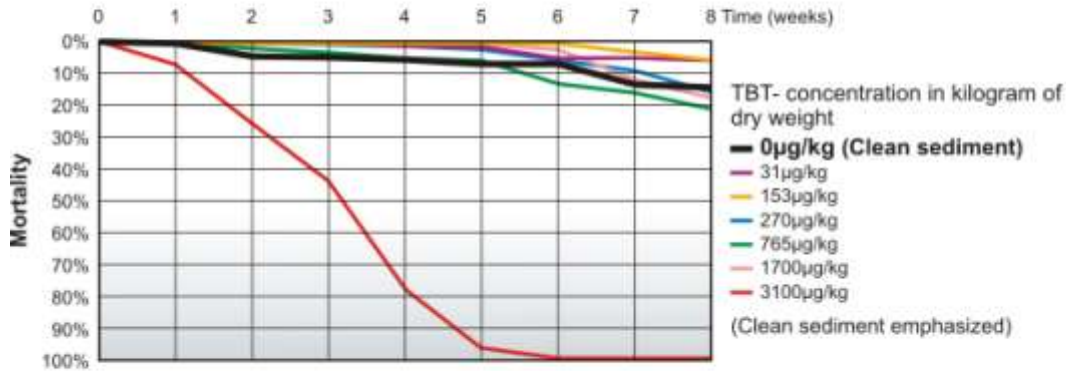
Now let us for a change make the assumption that this dredging operation would have some impact on the mussel population. You have the choice of 5 hectares of dumping area without mussels or 5000 shipyard workers without jobs. Which would you have?

The Danish sociologist Bengt Flyvbjerg /16/ proposes four central theses on the relationship of power and rationality:

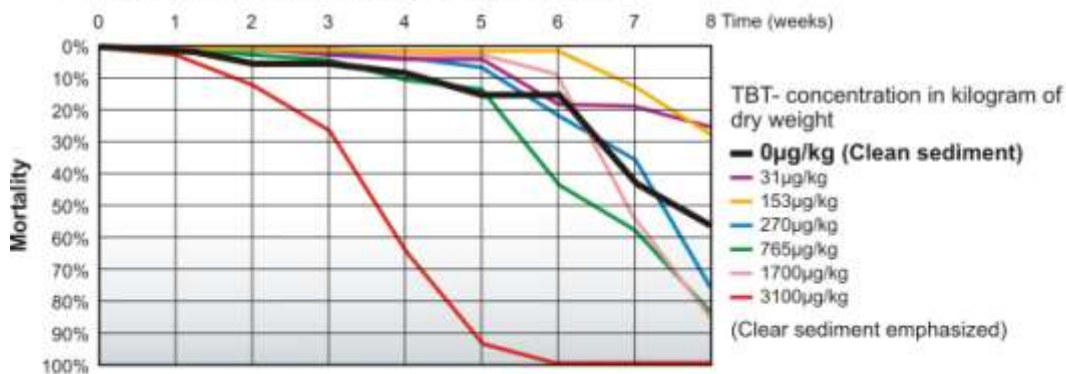
- Power defines reality;
- Rationality is context-dependent; the context of rationality is power; and power blurs the dividing line between rationality and rationalization;
- Rationalization presented as rationality is a principal strategy in the exercise of power;
- The greater the power, the less the rationality.

The theses are appropriate in the case of European environmental policy generally and in the Finnish TBT case specifically. When public administration expert institutes rationalize political objectives and administrative decisions, they are not just pursuing their own interests. They become propaganda departments for the state bureaucracy.

1. **Sleight of hand trick:** Change of perspective from impacts of dredging to impacts of tributyltin (TBT).
2. **Tendency:** Choice of sensitive mussel as research object, procurement of research from a reliable source and choice of method known to exaggerate the impact.
3. **Original results:** Finnish journal for professionals in the water sector 4/2006, TBT has no impact on mussel mortality at concentrations found in Finnish surface sediments.



4. **Changed results:** Chart sent to Helsingin Sanomat. Mortality increased but TBT in dredging mass has no particular effect on mussel mortality.



5. **Scientific forgery:** Chart published by Helsingin Sanomat, mortality curve in clean sediment has been removed. TBT appears to increase mortality even at low concentrations.

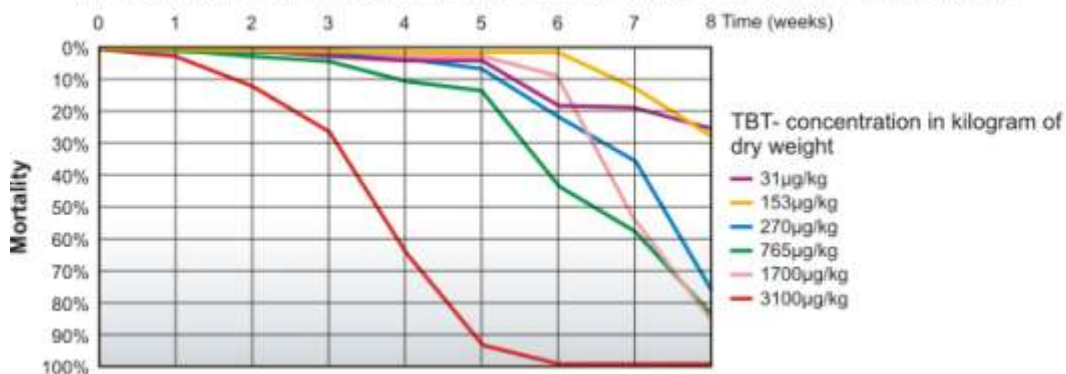


Figure 5.1 Steps of manipulation aimed at restoring the credibility of the environmental administration and Helsingin Sanomat in their handling of dredging projects with a TBT-issue.

The sustainable development ideology as a tool for amassing power

Finns have embarked on making sustainable development an ideology and the European Union is following. When an ideology becomes an instrument of power, it has a tendency to turn against itself.

According to the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, sustainable development is globally, regionally and locally occurring continuous and guided by change of the society. Its goal is to secure for current and future generations the possibilities for a decent quality of life.

The goal is of course, with merit, but far from new. Power enters the scene with the words “guided change of the society”. Those familiar with George Orwell’s work might ask, who guides such change and on what basis.

Officially, sustainable development policy should be evenly balanced across the ecological, social and economic domains. This balance was accepted in Finland without asking if there were any environmental problems similar in scale to the country’s social and economic challenges. Even today, it remains unclear what environmental issues, besides climate change, threaten the possibility for a decent quality of life for current and future generations in Finland.

The latest litany from the environmental administration starts with development that is ecologically sustainable, socially just and mentally renewing. The weighting on ecologically sustainable development is further emphasized by simultaneously bringing up two abstractions in place of economic and social dimensions.

The ecological dimension of sustainable development starts with the assumption that mankind is currently over-consuming its natural capital. This trend must be radically reversed in production and consumption in order to leave to future generations at least the same possibilities we have had. It has become fashionable to speak of the ecological efficiency of production, dematerialization, the de-linking of natural resource consumption from economic growth, and the role of the environmental administration in a coming structural transition that no one has bothered to concretely describe.

The notion of “securing the living conditions for current and future generations” is easy to accept and support. The world has plenty of growing environmental problems, such as diminishing fresh water supplies, illegal fishing, and pollution. Of course, unbridled consumption of limited resources makes no sense at all, and, indeed, many areas are rapidly approaching the point where population growth is unsustainable no matter what we do in Europe and Finland. If nothing else, nature’s own processes will in the end deal with the situation.

We are routinely posed the terrifying thought of what might happen if 1.3 billion Chinese aspired to a standard of living on a par with the Europeans. This marketing theme for the sustainable development ideology is simultaneously both threatening and makes one feel guilty. We are unable to deal with the issue and to see how we are manipulated. Terrorized, we swallow the entire eco-ideology.

In response, it should be noted that the land surface of China is 9.6 million km² and the population is 1.3 billion. The land area of Germany is 360,000 km² and the population is 82 million. While China has large deserts in its western provinces, the population density is only 135 persons/km², or about half of Germany's 228 persons/km².

In China, the fertility rate has fallen as part of national family planning policies. Both countries will be facing declining populations. Why exactly shouldn't the Chinese, following rational policies and improved technology, eventually achieve for themselves a similar standard of living as the Germans have?

The eco-ideology has been sold with effective marketing techniques. We are presented with manipulative arguments, threatened and made to feel guilty. Eco-ideology calls on us to reduce material consumption to a tenth of present levels and to readjust our lives so that the world can be saved. Yet, excluding our reliance on fossil fuels, at least we Finns already live materially on a sustainable basis in our own country.

The logic of such apparently unreasonable demand is that, with the ideology, the use of power can be extended far more broadly than is justified on the merits. Eco-ideology blurs the boundaries between important and trivial matters. It also blurs the line between problems of others and those of our own.

There is no longer need to specify facts, quantify or prioritize problems. We move straight from the abstract litany to exercise of power as if natural capital were being over-exploited everywhere all the time.

In the autumn of 2005, environment minister Jan-Erik Enestam led a ministry campaign to make mothers and incontinent seniors feel guilty about the use of disposable diapers. It was claimed that disposable diapers violated the principles of sustainable development. The notion that diapers and menstrual pads were filling Finnish landfills was intolerable to the minister.

An assessment of the environmental impacts of traditional and disposable diapers is presented in Appendix 6. From an environmental standpoint, it makes almost no difference if one uses disposable or reusable diapers, which require energy for washing and generate waste water. Dumping diapers in a landfill is a minor part of Finland's miniscule landfill issue. Moreover, disposable diapers can be burned for energy or composted.

The Ministry of the Environment has thus sought to make mothers with small children and octogenarians feel guilty about the condition of the environment with almost no legitimate grounds. It has ignored entirely serious issues related to hygiene and infection risk. No weight has been given to the convenience that might help the mother preserve her energy for taking care of the child or the strength of a family member or a nurse taking care of a bed-ridden loved one.

Through its campaign, the Ministry of the Environment succeeded in killing two flies with a single swat. It managed to make two already suggestible segments of the population feel guilty and it succeeded in diverting attention from failures of European and national waste management policies. Indeed, the emissions generated by a bureaucrat flying the distance between Brussels and Helsinki create an environmental problem similar in magnitude to a person's diaper use throughout the lifetime.

The situation in Finland is nothing new. In the dark days of Finlandization just a few decades ago the official foreign policy was used as an instrument of power in the domestic policy. Politicians played the Moscow card to promote their agendas and to hit opponents. The Helsinki based power media preached the wisdom of official policy and routinely suppressed critical views. Minister Eino Uusitalo proposed the teaching of the Finnish-Soviet Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Treaty in schools.

Subsequently, many people publicly admitted that the chill of Finlandization had caused many politicians, bureaucrats and editors alike to turn their backs on the interests of the people and democracy in their pursue of own interests.

Now sustainable development has become an instrument of power. The EU Commission card has been played successfully against local populations and energy companies (e.g. the designation of the Lake Kemi marshes in the Natura 2000 program to block the Vuotos hydropower project) as well as in unsuccessful attempts block the Vuosaari harbor project. There is also a growing threat that discretion will be used against those who question the practices, actions and justifications of the environmental administration. Views critical to the sustainable development ideology are suppressed at the Helsinki based mass media.

Ecologically weighted sustainable development ideology is even taught in Finnish schools. Children are made to feel guilty and the formation of individual opinions based on one's own analysis of problems is discouraged through deliberate examples.

The Stalinists headed the democratic front in Finnish student politics during the Finlandization period preaching the virtues of their scientific world view. Were they seeking democracy or power? Is history repeating itself?

The pyramid of power

Martti Koskenniemi, professor of international law at the University of Helsinki has focused on fragmentation /37/. He says that international law systematically recognizes different legal standards for different branches. These standards evolve at their own speed and are sometimes contradictory. The state is no longer a single entity capable of having its own opinion under this view. Now sector officials represent interests for their specific branches internationally, and do not put issues in any order of importance. Koskenniemi uses the contradiction of environmental and economic legislation as an example.

Finland has established an extensive network of protected natural areas. To protect biodiversity it has also granted threatened or endangered status to certain plants and animals. The latest appendix of the nature protection decree lists 1,410 threatened species, of which 608 species are given endangered status. Most of the endangered species live at the extreme edges of their natural range, i.e. in areas of strong natural variation. The disappearance or appearance of many species reflects changes in farming practices.

Consider, for example, bats which are on the list of threatened species. At least six of the 11 identified bat species in Finland have established breeding populations. However, information about bat life and their range is spotty. The environmental administration experts cannot say whether the bat population is growing or declining overall, or even provide a

rough estimate of the number of bats in Finland. Nevertheless, the protection measures are justified under the EU habitat directive and the Agreement on the Conservation of European Bats to which Finland is a signatory.

To estimate the size of the bat population in Finland, we relate them first to bird populations. Bats are significantly more common than owls, but less usual than flycatchers. Using this reference, we can infer that the bat population is on the order of a million individuals.

The list of endangered species consists largely of plants and insects. Information on the species range and occurrence is often inadequate. When identified, species such as the fairy grass at Lake Matalajärvi or the beetle in the Espoonlahti Bay, as mentioned earlier, can become vehicles for interfering rather extensively with human and organizational activity.

If it had wanted, the environmental administration could have, for example, demonstrated its commitment to the protection of highly threatened sheep dung beetle *Aphodius ictericus* by financing sheep farming in Finland. Indeed, the ministry could help many threatened butterfly species merely by paying farms for practicing traditional farming methods. But why would the ministry bother? If Finland has 1,400 threatened species, there are 10,000 places of occurrence per species and influence zone is 2 hectares, the environmental administration has effectively assumed administrative control over a major portion of the country.

In a given year, less than a tenth of a percent of Finland's total land area is affected by infrastructure, municipal, and plant investment projects. When the environmental administration has arranged a number of individual species, habitats, cultural heritage sites, landscapes, geological formations, etc. as land use problems, the entire country is effectively mined as far as infrastructure and investment projects are concerned. With a single sleight of hand, much of the legal protection traditionally enjoyed by private individuals, municipalities, infrastructure developers, industrial organizations, and investors is wiped away with rationalization that has very little to do with Finland's environment.

While EU waste hierarchy and waste definition are abstract structures that cannot withstand close scrutiny, they are useful to the environmental administration denying municipalities and firms the power to decide on what is waste, how materials are treated and how much is reused or recycled.

The cost of remediation of the 20,000 areas identified by the environmental administration as contaminated land has been estimated at around €1 billion. More can be found once you start to look for it, of course. When are we dealing with a case of actual environmental threat and how big is that threat?

The build-up of Finland's modern economic structure may have locally affected the environment. Society, however, benefited from what was legal at the time in the form of jobs and prosperity. If the administration now seeks to characterize this legacy as a problem, should it not be the duty of the society to participate in cleaning up the mess?

Noise and illumination, traditionally borderline nuisances, have opened new ways to extend bureaucratic power and increase operating costs. Cities originally formed around productive activities. Now noise guidelines are sweeping natural phenomena like birdsong. Reducing "light pollution" should, according to some bureaucratic opinions, override work safety.

For agriculture and forestry, the landslide is continuing. Finland has millennia-long traditions of raising livestock with no significant negative environmental impacts. Now the environmental protection act is being extended to limit the grazing of cattle, a degrading measure for farm families. Conservation measures and new guidelines are squeezing forestry and forest industry, a major source of income especially outside cities.

Ever increasing efforts to protect buildings, cultural legacies and unique landscapes have also begun to take strange forms. Central administration bureaucrats create different site lists. A property owner and or municipality may wake up to the fact that the possibilities for managing their own property have been limited, while cost accountability has been imposed.

The renovation of Helsinki's landmark eyesore, the "Sausage Building" (*Makkaratalo*) is an example. The sausage-shaped façade on its above-ground parking structure failed get into any protection list. Yet Finland's National Board of Antiquities found it as a historical example of bad architecture. This set the framework and price of the project.

The exercise of power can also extend to the rights of the common man. Scouting and forest orienteering have a century-long tradition in Finland, yet environmental administration has succeeded in limiting unilaterally the ancient Nordic right to move freely in nature – at least in the capital region.

The development of the new situation is illustrated in Figure 5.2 showing the pyramid of power. Finnish politicians, bureaucrats and state researchers along with their Nordic colleagues first push politically correct phrases of eco-weighted sustainable development ideology into international communiqués, agreements and EU-policies. Then these structures act as a Trojan horse.

The upper level of the Finnish environmental administration interprets international agreements, theoretical principles and EU policies for its own convenience. This is reflected directly in the drafting of legislation, the development of lower-level standards and preparation of guidelines. The impact of environmental policies on the rights of others and on society in general can be ignored when matters have already been decided at the international level.

The local level in environmental administration formulates solutions to a vast range of practical matters. Many environmental officials are true believers of eco-ideology and the discretionary power it brings tantalizes them. On the other hand, only few dare to make a decision against prevailing thought or a guideline, even if the law permits it and regional benefit demands it. It is easier to be thought a fool and go along with the principle handed down from above.

Earlier, environmental matters were dealt with at three national levels and the approach was practical. Now there are five levels, and the approach is abstract, even ideological. The power cluster manipulates information and exploits game theoretical position at all levels.

Discussion of the scale of issues and the effects of decisions on society is deliberately avoided, because the use of common sense reduces the opportunities to use power.

It appears the naïve Maiden of Finland is becoming the fatted goose for the environmental power cluster. From above, politicians and bureaucrats shovel strategies, target values, and

directives down her throat. Then at a lower level matters are exaggerated, obfuscated and conveniently reframed in a new context. The fat content in the liver of the bloated goose increases. The cluster drools in enjoying the product of its actions – a ten-fold increase in its authority.

This picture is so dazzling that it is worthwhile analyzing it from another perspective.

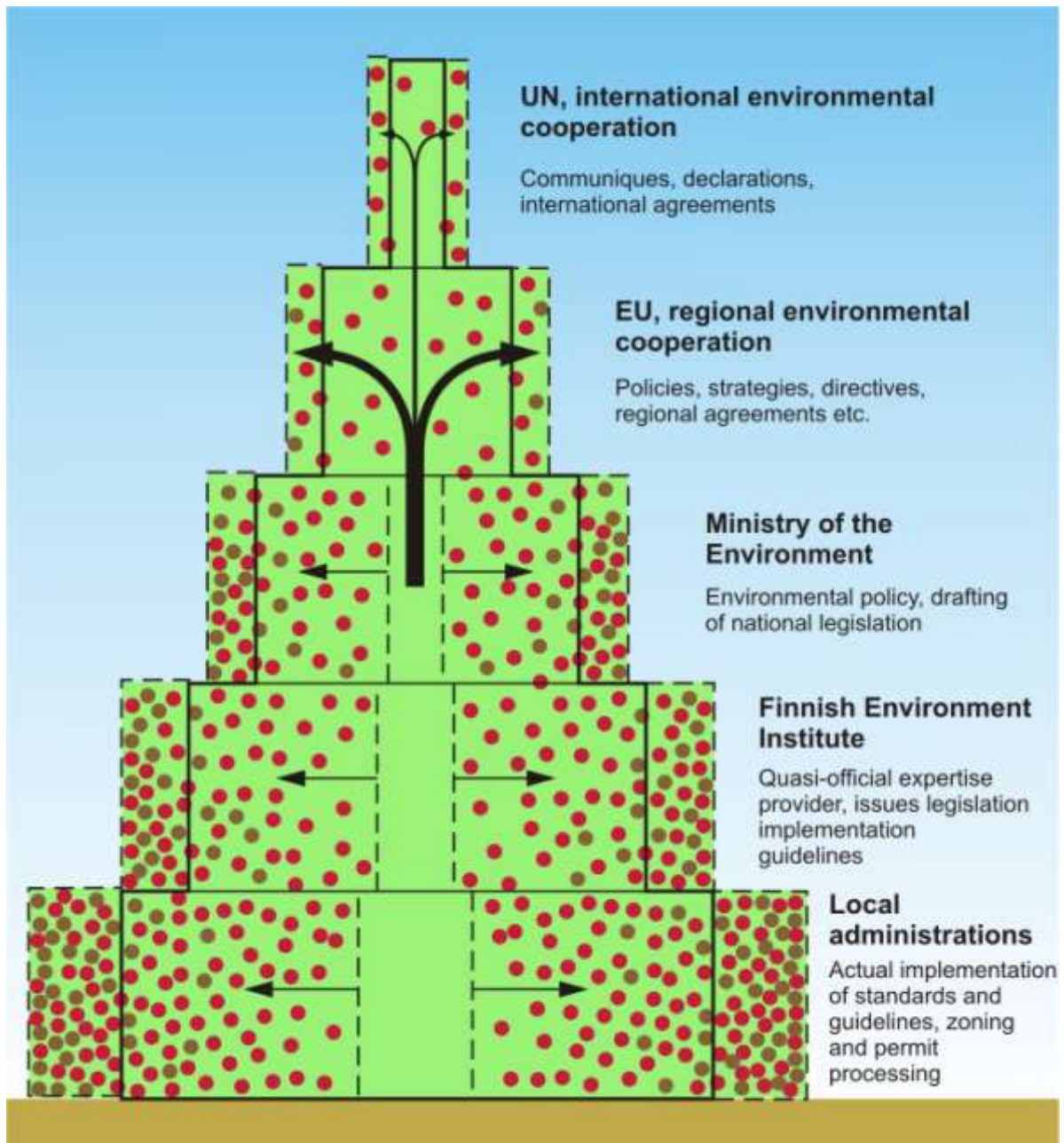


Figure 5.2. The widening pyramid of power. Administrative subordinates of the environmental bureaucracy are increasingly showered with acts of power and arbitrariness.

The vicious circle of power

It is easy to think that environmental bureaucrats are just over-enthusiastic theoreticians. Unfortunately, this is not true. Most of those working in the higher levels of the environmental administration are very talented in their own ways. They have been selected to their positions specifically for their skills in advancing the agendas of the environmental sector or certain political parties.

Figure 5.3 suggests elements that allow the environmental administration to extend its power well beyond what one would reasonably justify.

At the heart of power in Finland's environmental administration we find a disciplined organization with a dominant mind-set (eco-ideology). The environmental administration is involved with environmental policy, strategic planning, management and allocation of resources, drafting of legislation, international cooperation, permit processing and oversight of activities, research and expert work, public relations work and environmental investments.

Under the prevailing view in Finnish society, such instruments of power belong to sectoral administration. The problem is that the acceptance of this view leads to an ever-expanding vicious circle.

International environmental cooperation is manifested at conferences on important environmental problems, often of global scope, such as climate change, biodiversity, and water problems. These conferences are attended by the environmental science community and public officials. Participants at summit-level conferences also include top EU officials and national ministers.

Such get-togethers are well known for the broadly worded communiqués and declarations they generate. Agreements signed on the most important issues carry some weight of international law. These communiqués and agreements are basic elements in the EU environmental policy in addition to the sustainable development ideology, national policies, various interests, political realities, trade policies and core European gestalts.

Political constellations to deal with the environment are distorted in their work for the common good by the fact that the central players, i.e. the EU Commission's Environment directorate-general EDG, environment ministers, leading environmental politicians, senior environmental officials of different countries and their close advisers, and environmental scientists all share similar interests. Few of these people possess more than feeble personal knowledge of the true magnitude of problems or how one can concretely deal with them.

Even more importantly Europe's overall advantage occasionally seems irrelevant to European environmental policy. When the goals of competitiveness for Europe set at the Lisbon summit got out of hand, many began to realize that EU environmental policy may have something to do with it. EU officials came up with the response that competitiveness can be promoted through tough environmental policies. The EU would promote environmentally friendly innovations for e.g. renovation of concrete structures and intelligent cars, as well as phase out ecologically detrimental subsidies and paints that are not water-soluble.

Thus, the EU is focused more on the condition of the tree than the forest. Evergreen themes are linked to sustainable development, even if they have no significance in the matter. The issue of the impact of environmental policy on people's basic rights, jobs and competitiveness is avoided through politically correct phraseology.

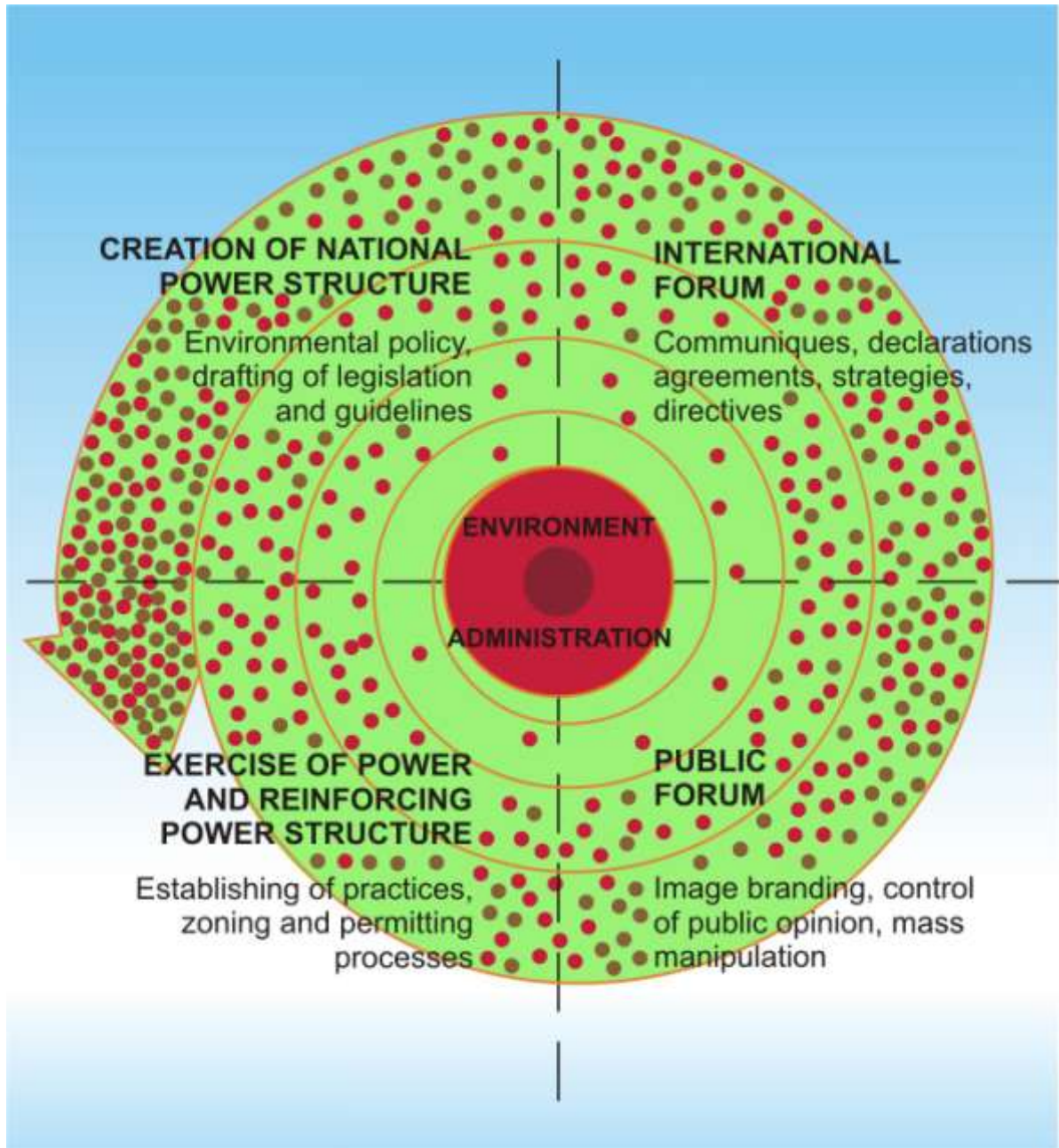


Figure 5.3. The vicious circle of eco-bureaucratic power.

The EU environmental policy process is described for example in /31 and 35/. Policy projects start from a variety of reasons including institutional pressures, international obligations, reactions to emergencies, treaty obligations, harmonizing pressures, political evolution and concrete needs of the people. Then there are strategies, programmes, declarations, white and green papers, recommendations and opinions. The policy process congeals around binding regulations, decisions and directives, i.e. legislative guidelines for member states. Finally there are implementation and court rulings that are supposed to clarify how EU laws should be implemented.

During the formation of policy, a variety of environmental policy principles mentioned in treaties can be exploited. These are not traditional justice principles but rather poorly defined statement principles that the bureaucratic elite has created and is constantly changing for its own convenience.

EU environmental policy typically obfuscates the scale of a problem, fails to demand concrete facts before taking action, and above all is overlapping and redundant. For example, integrated product policy is being pushed onto prepared criteria based on existing prohibitions and regulations without thinking through what might be important. The same goals appear in several programs and bodies of regulation rife with contradictions.

EU environmental legislation to a large extent deals with issues that are limited within the boundaries of a member country supposed to be sovereign. Waste issues provide a good example here.

Are EU politicians, officials, and judges really so enthralled with the wonderful illusion of their own overwhelming capacity for thought that they do not see that interfering with complex local issues from an ivory tower may do more harm than good? Or could it be that in their lust for power they ignore the subsidiary principle (i.e. that decisions by public authorities be made at the level as close as possible to the people affected and that bureaucracy handles every matter at the lowest level possible).

In defense of the EU Commission's EDG, we can say that it has been under intense pressure. The environmental officials and ministers of each member state want to push their own agendas and systems as their contributions to EU policy. Environmental groups have also been active.

While the environmental ministers of "leader states" push for all kinds of legislative projects, the strategy of overlapping and contradictory environmental legislation may be something cooked up in the EDG. Such a massive and contradictory body of legislation is in itself an enormous source of power. If the subordinate does it this way or that way, it is always done the wrong way. Moreover, such a complicated body of legislation is difficult to eliminate.

The top officials in the EU Commission, off course, have been selected from the pool of masters of bureaucratic power. The commissars are among the most successful political actors in Europe.

Now the EU has started to put in place a natural resource strategy. Methods offered to fight climate change have been proposed also in this case. They include:

- 1) Information guidance (reporting duties, environmental systems);
- 2) Certification, verification and eco-labeling (image management);
- 3) Reduction targets (e.g. waste recycling targets);
- 4) Economic guidance (e.g. taxation policy);
- 5) Legislative guidance (e.g. standards);
- 6) Quotas and trading schemes (like CO₂ quotas and emission trade).

In this framework, countries and industries compete to advance their own interests. The Commission is conveniently positioned to decide who wins and who loses, taking, of course, the interests of the largest EU members into account. The Commission's power is thus increased by an order of magnitude. Member countries and their people lose power to decide how to manage their own resources.

When the waste definitions passed EU decision-making machinery, its problems instantly became power capital for the EU Commission. Under the Treaty of Rome, the Commission has the monopoly on introduction of legislative proposals. The price of fixing the definition became negotiable and now requires political horse-trading. This arrangement naturally ties up the resources and political capital of those wanting to fix the problems.

Of course, not everything makes it through the EU decision-making process. The proposals of the EDG include considerable internal and inter-directorate consultation, as well as consideration by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Lobbyists examine these proposals closely to figure out how they might affect the interests of their masters. A proposal may conflict strong national interests. In the drafting of regulations, the rough edges of the content are usually smoothed away.

There is a lot of talk in EU. However, there is little substance. A proper cost benefit analysis is systematically lacking in the EU policy process.

Consider for example the EU habitat directive. How many square kilometers is this directive supposed to cover and how is it divided between different habitats, animal and plant species and sites? What is the value of the rights local people and organizations are losing as a result of this directive and how should they be compensated? Of course, it is in the interest of the European bureaucratic elite to avoid these questions.

But then the European people also finance a court called the European Court of Justice. Is it a genuine court of justice, an institution making decisions on bureaucratic disputes or a vehicle of extending EU power? If it were a genuine court of justice, why has it not ruled on how local people and organizations should be compensated for their loss of rights when the EU is reaching for the important goals mentioned in the habitat directive? In other words, should they be treated like American Indians, should they get full compensation or is justice somewhere in the middle?

The EDG has considerable resources for producing and manipulating information. Environmental groups are also valuable allies for the EDG. The inevitable differing views and clashes of interest between industrial and environmental groups on drafted legislation can be exploited by the EDG to build up its own power. When member states have

disagreements, the EDG can operate as an interlocutor, using its existing power to discipline quarrelsome member states.

The Commission slyly portrays itself as listening closely to the opinions of people and national groups. The programs and writings of Greenpeace and other environmental groups really seem to be studied carefully at the EDG. These groups, however, represent only a fraction of European people and usually those people who are least affected by the regulation. One must wonder if the views of landowners, small rural entrepreneurs, farmers, the unemployed, and those who warn of the dangers of over-regulation are also being listened to as closely.

The activity of Finnish politicians and officials in environmental issues is useful to the supranational amassing of power at the EU level in several ways:

- When these Finns push their eco-ideology and world betterment goals in EU politics, they contribute to the consolidation of EU power;
- By playing off idealists against realists or those pushing their own national interests the EU Commission can operate more efficiently from the center;
- When EU legislation is implemented the active countries naturally adopt the role of model students supporting the EU goals;
- By voluntarily submitting to the EU environmental policies, Finland becomes both a guinea pig and a country footing largest part of the bill for the construction of EU power. Making countries like Italy or France submit requires much more work and concessions from the EU. It succeeds better if the breakthrough occurs first in smaller states; and
- When Finns bring their internal disputes to be resolved by the EU, they concede to the EU more possibilities to extend its power and concede territory that rightfully should be part of the nation's internal affairs.

Building a power structure at the national level occurs largely through environmental policy and legislative work. The EU's environmental policy increasingly forms the basis for power build-up and directives are the cornerstones of legislation.

Environmental directives usually grant considerable national latitude. Some countries skillfully use this latitude to their advantage and are deliberately lax in enforcement. Compliance with the new legislation is not a priority when it creates more problems at the local level than helps.

For Finnish environmental policy, it has been a matter of honor to tighten standards beyond the minimum limits of EU directives. Those phrases and themes that Finns have been pushing at the international level are used in enforcement even before a directive has been issued. Finnish bureaucrats have also learned new ways to build and use bureaucratic power from old EU-countries like France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Appendix 7 contains the environmental policy section of prime minister Matti Vanhanen's 2003 government program. The environmental administration has been searching substance for this kind of abstract eco-programs. If substance and priorities had been considered first, implementing the program would have been easier. On the other hand the bureaucracy would have been left with lesser opportunities to build-up of power.

The working groups preparing national environmental legislation include bureaucrats from several administrative levels and lobbyists. These working groups define the central structures of legislation. The responsible ministry plays a central role, because its official both leads the group and acts as its secretary.

Most of the invited experts come from the public sector. When a member of the business community and a representative of an environmental group are included in the drafting work of environmental legislation, conflicts are inevitable. When the draft has been through the comments round more conflicts arise. Clashes of interests and the prevailing views of society make it possible for the environmental administration, like the EDG, to play sides off against each other and consolidate their own power further.

The impacts legislation on regional economies, on employment and on the rights of bureaucratic subordinates are not considered explicitly. There is a good reason for this. Explicit analysis of these issues would affect the content of the law and limit the possible scope of its interpretation.

The Finnish parliament can always revise a proposed draft. When it holds hearings, typically the same set of experts is called that provided input on the draft. The prevailing views of society influence this process. The environmental administration and the Helsinki based nationwide media play the major role in creating this view.

As the laws begin to be applied, decrees and lower-level standards are needed. The environmental administration also wants to create guidelines on how the laws should be interpreted. Again it exploits its central position and formulates practices based on its own view.

The matter is exemplified in Figure 5.4. Because there are currently no major environmental problems in Finland – with the exception of greenhouse gas emissions – the needs for much of the regulation are simply not there. Thus, the environmental administration's power really starts to grow when hard numbers and common sense are set aside. The organization concentrates on preparation of lower-level standards and guidelines based on viewpoints, ideologies, abstract EU policies and related theoretical interpretations, and playing off interest groups against each other.

Against this background, it is natural that the environmental administration wants to develop legislation on the use of natural resources based on the EU abstract litany on waste policies, sustainable use of natural resources, and sustainable consumption and production. Such legislation can be a wonderful source of power – so magnificent in fact that it would be unwise for anyone to challenge it.

But where is the problem? If concrete estimates of environmental impacts and depletion of resources were used, discretion would become more limited and the prescribed measures would have to make better sense. Moreover, if the estimates were in line with the appropriate level of protection, room for discretion would shrink further. The environmental bureaucracy would have less to bring to the fight over power and resources.

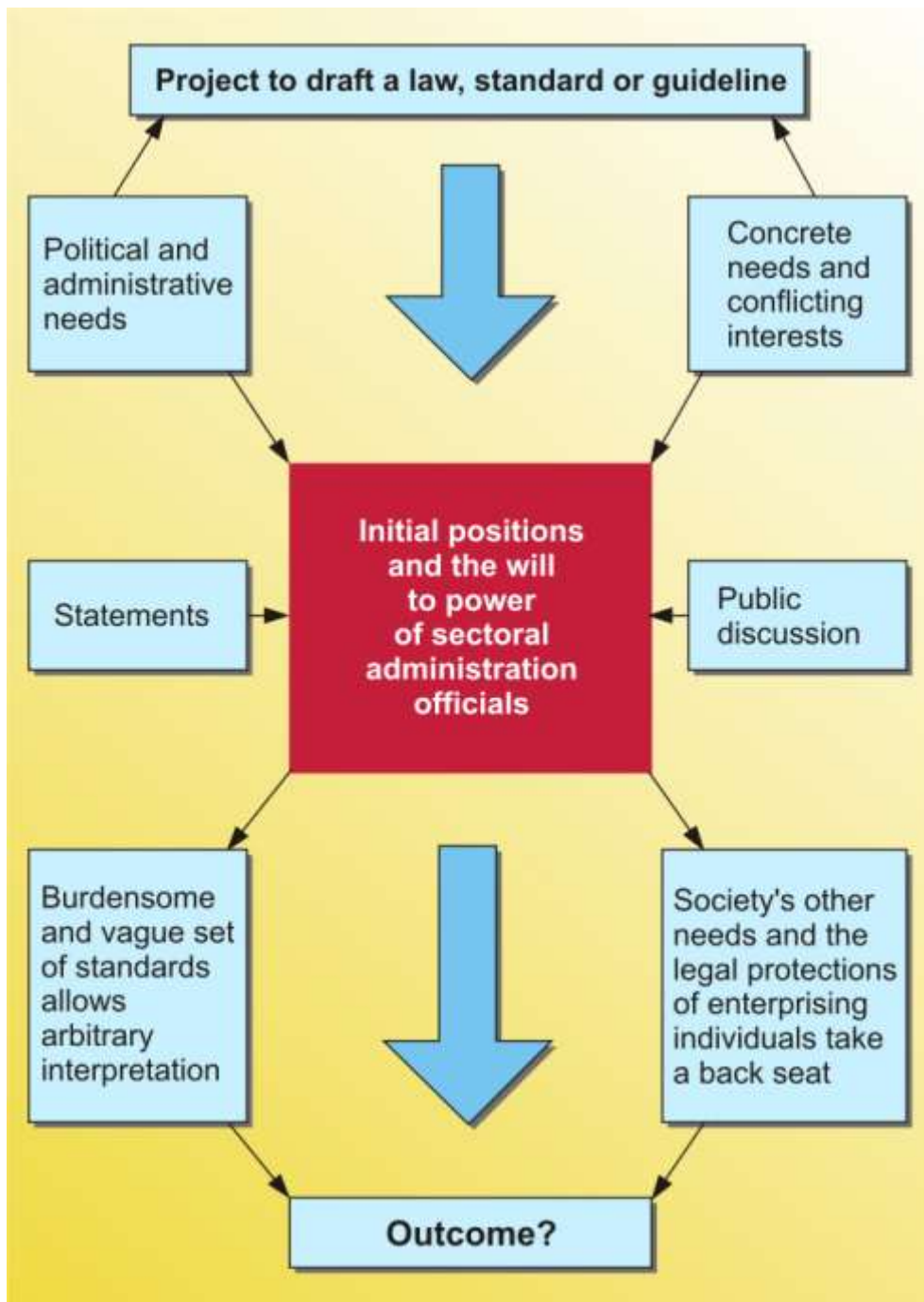


Figure 5.4. Schematic diagram of how a project to draft legislation, standards or guideline is handled in the environmental administration.

Consider **the exercise of power and reinforcement of the power structure** in the case of an infrastructure project. We have the Nature Conservation Act and the Environmental Protection Act. On top of this, we now also have the EU Habitat Directive, the environmental impact assessment legislation, the Natura 2000 network and some absurd waste management regulations.

From society's standpoint it would be worthwhile to consider the benefits and drawbacks (including environmental benefits and drawbacks) of the project and its options as a whole. However, environmental standards do not call for this and the environmental administration does not support this. On the contrary, both are focused more than ever on details. This opens up huge possibilities for arbitrary exercise of power.

Infrastructure projects almost inevitably provoke clashes of interests. Many people tend to oppose any changes in their immediate vicinity. Indeed, in Southern Finland it is difficult to find a project that a private landowner, a nature conservation group or a sector official does not oppose. A suitable legal basis for opposing the project can always be found somewhere in the often contradictory mass of environmental standards and guidelines.

Fighting over the zoning or permit conditions of a project can draw out the project schedule. Getting final decisions from the courts can take years, and even a decade. This can kill a project or at least hamper it so much that the complaining party can extort major changes in the project or walk off with a huge monetary payoff for the nuisance value.

When the state has clung to its methods that have allowed complaint processes to drag on for years, it has unreasonably conferred power on certain individuals, environmental groups, and above all, its own sector officials. Politics is currently fashionable, and many people feel good when their neighbors or representatives of large organizations are forced to sit and listen humbly to their views. If their reaction is not desirable, they pay a high price.

Let us return to the Vuosaari harbor project. It was democratically decided to move the cargo handling harbor from the heart of Helsinki to a remote eastern part of the city. The project helped reduce heavy traffic and traffic jams in the center of the city and CO₂ emissions throughout the greater Helsinki region. It also opened up space for building new apartment buildings and offices in the downtown area, which created jobs and new economic activity.

Yet the project was tied up in the courts for a decade on a range of environmental grounds. Participants in the disputes included environmental politicians, private landowners, nature conservation groups, companies that benefited from sabotaging the project, as well as the Ministry of the Environment, and the local environmental administration.

Opponents even mobilized the EU Commission and European Parliament's appeal's board to study the harbor project. Power is so sweet that the EU could not keep its hands out of city politics in a member state. The project promoter, of course, was the one sustaining damages.

This kind of a conflict situation offers the environmental administration and political opportunists unjust possibilities to submit the project promoter (Figure 5.5). They can burnish their own credentials with a tough line, and mercilessly order further investigations, and further burden the project with baseless environmental investments, research studies and safety measures. All this sets new precedents to be used on the next project developer.

An interesting aspect of development is the building of power positions through zoning and nature conservation legislation. A sector official can rather easily use zoning markers, often for laudable ends, to limit the future land use. When other needs emerge in zoned area, the fact that the area has been marked as special generates power for the department exercising its power. It is difficult to use the area for the new purpose regardless of the dimensions of original zoning aims or the priorities of society.

When a problem has international dimensions, the position of power is further strengthened. The declaration of the Helsinki island fortress of Suomenlinna as a world heritage site is an example. Finland's National Board of Antiquities blocked a small project to straighten the adjacent Kustaanmiekka channel. The purpose of the project was to improve navigational safety at the riskiest spot in Finnish waterways used by passenger ships and tankers.

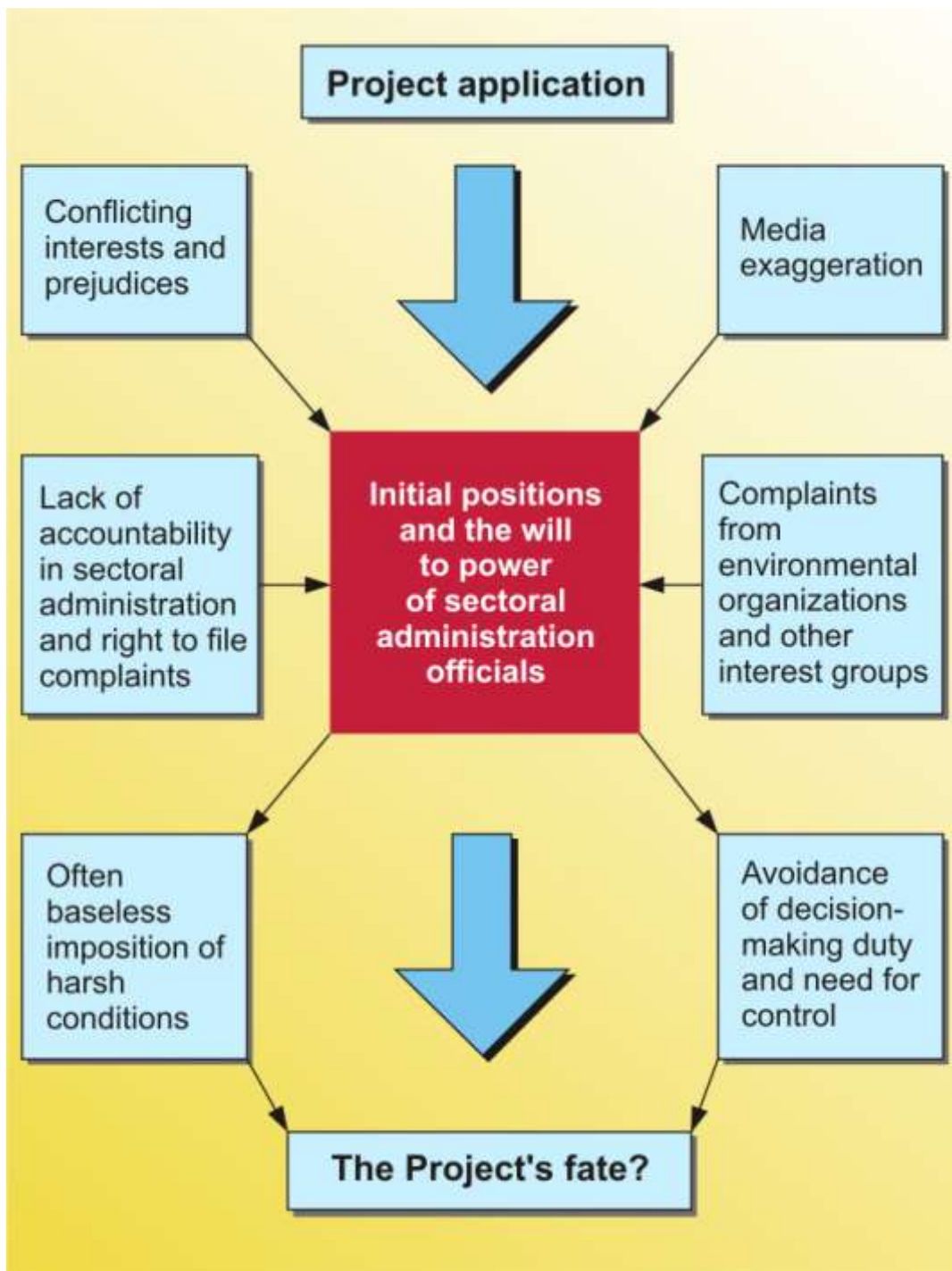


Figure 5.5. Handling of a permit application in the environmental administration.

Companies and industrial organizations operate in the field of marketing by seeking to turn images associated with environmental matters to their advantage. A large construction company markets the ecological and lifecycle properties of its products. A hamburger chain creates an image of social responsibility by recycling its waste.

The cover of an energy company's social responsibility report displays a young woman innocently dressed in white to push its theme of cleaner products. The environmental balance sheet shows side by side ten million tons of CO₂ emissions a year and 40,000 tons of normal trash.

Nokia and the World Wide Fund of Nature (WWF) joined forces to launch a cellphone recycling operation that was noted in the national television news broadcasts. The image given to the viewer was that Nokia would give the WWF two euros to the "Save the polar bear" campaign for each old cellphone mailed in. In an interview, Nokia's representative emphasized his company's sense of environmental responsibility.

Finns dispose of about a million cellphones a year. Assuming each handset weighs about 100 grams, the amount of waste is about 100 tons, mostly metal and plastic. What is the actual benefit of returning 100 tons of metal and plastic directly to Nokia as compared to returning it via cellphone retailers for recycling? The campaign made Nokia's smaller competitors look bad, which may have been the whole point.

Through manipulative shield-burnishing arguments, large corporations and industrial organizations conflate the scale of problems and reinforce the image of a universal problem.

Thus, the dominant images of environmental problems facing society come pre-packaged and pre-distorted. This gives the environmental administration broad possibilities to influence the images of the problems from its strategically central position. We get a constant stream of images on environmental threats, mountains of trash, and bucolic settings ready to be destroyed.

The theme of environmental crime as marketed by the environmental administration also provides an interesting insight into manipulation. A deliberate release of, say, bunker fuel, into the sea is a clear case of an environmental crime. But what about some minor dredging activity near the beach of a summerhouse without a permit? The environmental administration has extended its authority under the waters act into gray areas, ignoring the traditional rights of use and enjoyment attached to one's land and the fact that that the state has no business of getting involved unless it has a real reason to do so.

Consider now the farmer who sees his possibilities for making a living gradually vanishing. His tractor is falling apart and he doesn't even have enough money to take it to a special dump site. Thus, he tows his tractor into the barn with the other junk to await better times. At some point the barn may be classed as an illegal dumping site under formal interpretation of new waste legislation. The bankrupt farmer can be charged as an environmental criminal.

Such things are reminiscent of the Catholic Church during the period of inquisition. Through the absurd regulatory bramble, productive people and organizations are made to feel sinful. Administration, interest groups, the environmental movement and the media all cast aspersions on these bad actors, while the environmental administration makes it clear that

forgiveness and rehabilitation require traversing a path of humility and acceptance. Attention turns away from the environmental administration's own unreasonable acts. The illusion of its helpfulness and beneficence is strengthened.

The vicious circle of amassing power continues to widen.

Power and accountability

There is a lot of effort to influence public power for own ends. The role of bureaucratic and industrial organizations, media, environmental groups, expert organizations and interest groups has been discussed above. Also professional organizations routinely seek to influence the state to advance the cause of their members in the society. The existence of the lobbying industry indicates that those with the resources and organization do have influence on public decision making.

There are also individual bureaucrats, media reporters, scientists and others who are using their public positions to promote their own views or to satisfy their own subconscious needs.

The Economist /62/ wrote a story of 830,000 hectares of pristine tropical rainforest in Cameroon that would combine three major national parks. Instead of leasing the area for logging it is offered for conservation at a prize of 1.6 million dollars a year. This looks like a bargain for any government or organization worried about the fate of biodiversity or old forests. For some reason there have been no takers.

If the exercise of power is to benefit an organized society, those who make decisions and exercise that power should be accountable for their actions. There should also be limits on that power.

When the EU-constitution was being drafted, the EU Commission wanted, according to then environment commissar Margot Wallström to help Europe in environmental matters /75/. That can be done if 1) the principle of sustainable development, 2) environmental conservation and 3) the principle of participating democracy are included in the constitution and if 4) the division of power on setting environmental policy between the EU and member states remains blurred.

This helping line sounds oddly familiar. Conquerors have used it to justify their actions. Were Wallström and the DG of environment genuinely seeking to help Europe or were they after something much sweeter? To what extent can the ideologically guided sector organization based in Brussels help Europe – and how much damage might such an organization inflict with all this power?

The EU-commission has been aggressively pushing the use of biofuels in Europe. Any serious expert could have figured out in a week that the carbon balance of producing biofuels from maize and other agricultural plants is not good with present technology. It is also quite obvious that taking fields away from food production increases the price of food. Now the EU policy has contributed to driving a hundred million people into a hunger trap. Who shoulders the responsibility and how?

When Finns voted to join the EU, most thought that they were voting for a free-trade area or increased national security. Now we find ourselves in a system in which the EU's power encroaches on many aspects of our social activities in quite surprising forms. Certain characteristics of the new bureaucratic constellation of power explain some of this:

- Finns generally recognize at least some of their own politicians elected to the European Parliament, as well as the one holding Commissioner post, but they have very little awareness of the representatives of other countries. They know even less about what goes on in the EU and how this may affect their lives. So far Finnish government is being held responsible for developments in our country, not the EU institutions.
- Politicians, sector bureaucrats and judges exercise the EU's power. This administrative elite lives well paid in a golden cage far away from the problems of average Europeans. They interact in their official capacity mostly with politicians, sector bureaucrats, lobbyists, lawyers and experts that have specialized in serving the power structure.
- Although the EU is basically an economic and monetary union, the central actors rarely have the personal experience needed to promote European welfare in their work.
- There seems to be an unrealistic view prevailing within the EU that its bureaucracy possesses skills to deal with any kind of matter. The EU Commission, for example, has told the City of Helsinki how to handle its zoning matters.
- The goals of EU environmental policy are already set in its strategies, programs, and framework directives. Bureaucratic wisdom, eco-ideology, and political horse-trading are so highly valued that the real basis and risks of policies are seen as a minor aspect that only deserves brief consideration.
- When eco-ideology and unnecessary, over-dimensioned environmental legislation projects are transformed in the hands of politicians and officials into fungible power capital, the temptation to use this new capital easily becomes overwhelming.

Juhani Ylimaunu tells the story of the seal wars in his study on the relationship between man and seals /80/. Basically, certain environmental movements, including Greenpeace, started several decades ago a campaign against seal hunting that used images of baby seals being clubbed to death. Seal hunting was portrayed as barbaric slaughter. The cubs screaming like human babies were killed and cut under the crying eyes of their mothers. The campaign received considerable media attention. There was less discussion of the reports on increased seal populations and of worries on the part of local people about the threats that the ending of seal-hunting posed to their livelihoods and cultural identity. As a result of the campaign, the EU forbade the import of seal products and the market collapsed.

In Northern Canada and Greenland, seal and whale hunting are part of Inuit cultural identity. Inuit lifestyles and ways of earning a living were ignored by the EU in this case. The collapse in the price of seal skins forced many Inuits onto welfare. Communities fell apart and villages were deserted, while suicide and alcoholism increased.

Thus, the EU ignored local conditions and cultural issues. EU decision-makers were interested in responding to politically correct images prevailing in the continental Europe. They were not interested in facts or in the social, cultural or even ecological consequences of their actions.

The European Union's basic problem is, that none of its party groups, administration sectors or individual users of power is really accountable for anything, nor are there any clear limits

on the powers they exercise. The EU, however, increasingly decides how European countries and people should live and use their money.

Even if the EU was run by the most competent and disinterested politicians, officials and judges, it still can't serve the interests of member states very well in this setting. Without accountability and clear limits of power the system continues to rot from within. Opportunities connected to the co-operation of European countries turn against themselves when bureaucratic power under the demagogic disguise of making a better world becomes an objective in itself.

Finland's environmental administration is making Finland a model for EU environmental policy. First, along with the other Nordic countries, it is pushing an abstract eco-weighted version of sustainable development ideology into EU policies. After that, we are supposed to pursue strategies, targets, and tougher standards than those set in directives regardless of whether it makes any sense.

This is building up EU power and promoting sectoral agenda at a heavy cost to the nation.

Finland's self-schooled Natura 2000 expert Markku Sahlstedt asks why Finland ceded its decision-making power and jurisdiction of over a fifth of the country's area to the Natura 2000 network (including areas where activities might impact Natura values, an extension of power aggressively implemented by the administration) to a super-governmental agency (through the environmental administration), when most of the species and habitats mentioned in the directive already enjoyed a level of protection so good that the relative level of protection provided by the directive only called for a setting aside 5% of the country's area.

Sahlstedt further asks why Finland did not present the EU with a bill for the area ceded, as permitted under the directive. He suspects that the EU auditors would have refused to pay for the areas not explicitly covered under the directive and that those areas would have been cut out of the Natura 2000 network. For example, the bill alone for the lost electricity production from the controversial decision of protecting the Vuotos area with Natura from a proposed regulating dam was cautiously estimated at more than €10 million a year.

In principle, the environment minister carries the political responsibility for the environmental administration, but the political memory is short and its connection to facts rather facile. For example former environment minister Jan-Erik Enestam now enjoys the salary and prestige of a director at the Nordic Council, at taxpayer's expense.

In practice the environmental administration is not merely a machine that serves a democratic society but a source of power of its own. It may currently have much more power than its political masters. Even individual bureaucrats are strong users of power. It looks like the tail has started to wag the dog.

Yet the environmental administration is not accountable for its actions or the consequences of its decisions in any way. Bureaucrats are nearly impossible to fire, and they enjoy tremendous legal protection of their pension benefits. The good life for environmental bureaucrats will be protected as long as the Finnish government maintains some semblance of creditworthiness. They can safely promote their own views and quests for power through legislation and governance at taxpayer's expense.

Finland's environmental administration typically responds to criticism by noting that the parliament writes the laws or that it lacks sufficient funds to do the job properly. The parliament, in turn, blames the experts for their bad advice in designing legislation and later implementation. Both blame the EU.

In reality, the environmental administration has itself participated in the EU policy process, planned the central structures of legislation and focused its resources on the drafting of legislation and standards. The Finnish parliament and its standing committee on the environment have full power to use their common sense and decide which experts to listen to. They also have the power to set the policy direction and the power to put administrative organizations in their place.

Indeed, the juggling of blame is rotting of accountability.

Finland's public administration lacks a tradition of reviewing unfortunate events. For example, certain politicians and bureaucrats reputedly enjoyed over-cozy relations representatives of foreign governments using them to hit political opponents and selling national sovereignty to advance their own careers during the days of Finlandization. This has never been investigated openly. The unwillingness to examine failures of the public administration has two effects on the environmental administration: 1) nothing is ever learned, and 2) abuses of public power are allowed to continue.

The media has an important role in democratic society by bringing views with merit to the fore in public discussion. The media possesses a great deal of conditioned power.

A *Helsingin Sanomat* article on high heavy-metal content in soils in southern Finland /55/ was spiced up with a map bearing the caption "Fallout from Chernobyl still affects the Finnish environment." The map showed distribution of soils with cesium isotope in the humus layer. The radionuclide content varied between a tenth of a bequerel to a few dozen bequerels per kilogram.

The article did not explain, however, that typical agriculture soil contains about 300 bequerels per kilogram of radionuclides. Publishing that fact would have taken much of the edge off the story. The facts as such were correct in the story, but unless the reader was up on his local bequerel content, he could easily get the wrong impression of the situation.

Ari Valjakka, editor-in-chief of Turku's main paper, *Turun Sanomat*, characterized the current media principles at a Port Seminar on September 22, 2004, with the following comment, "One should always speak the truth, but there is no reason to reveal the entire truth." In the same context, Valjakka said he had only once been held liable for the paper's reporting. The paper paid a few thousand euros in damages.

When the *Turun Sanomat* sensationalized the "large amounts of TBT" in the Naantali harbor, it put the final nail in the coffin in concert with environmental bureaucrats in destroying the port development plans. The economic sacrifices and the opportunities for good jobs for hundreds of people vanished.

An award winning British journalist Nick Davies has written a book of falsehood, distortion and propaganda in modern media /5/. He starts with the Y2K, i.e. the worldwide disaster that was supposed come after computers would crash at the turn of the millennium. As it turned out nothing such happened. The hysteria was cooked up by the media.

Fabricating and recycling stories is now a way of life in an industry that is supposed to tell the truth. Telling outright lies is not out of the picture, but as Davies puts it “in a free society lies rest quietly and in comfort inside clichés”. Professional courtesy and the game theory associated with tackling media power makes this easily understandable.

Media organizations are accountable to their shareholders for their economic performance. They are not responsible of the images people are drawn to in their publications or any resulting developments. The writer and editor strive to fit existing narratives in creating stories that touch the reader. In environmental journalism this has meant fabricating or copying emotionally charged stories of unknown threats and delivering guilt and then recycling them without making any elementary checks.

As soon as the general public began to comprehend how insignificant the environmental impacts of the waste water releases at the Kaukas mill really were, the media started to blame the poor communication of the plant for the media catastrophe. The media noted that fortunately there was no serious damage to the environment, as was known to anyone who wanted to know from the beginning.

But what would the *Helsingin Sanomat* have offered its urban readership constantly driven by the paper to meddling with other people’s affairs if this matter was made clear from the beginning?

Media organizations do not generally tolerate information that undermines their credibility. They act like other unaccountable power machines trying to ignore it first. If this comes impossible they use strategic misrepresentation to defend themselves and to ridicule the messenger.

Only top-tier publications such as *The Economist* and *The New York Times* have had the backbone to print retractions and correct misinformation rapidly and honestly. They have not done this because they like to do it, but because other powerful media organizations with different values compel them.

When public administration and the single minded nationwide media push to the same direction we are dealing with a strong sociological process. This kind of a power concentration is worrying.

The environmental movement started out with quite honorable aspirations and goals /41/. In a democracy it is necessary for people and citizen groups to bring up other perspectives and information that conflicts with the prevailing official view.

Environmental groups have done valuable work in dealing with a variety of environmental problems creatively, including helping to recover populations of birds of prey decimated by PCB and DDT in the food chain, as well as monitoring of the effects of forest clearing in the Amazon. These acts can be seen counterbalancing ruthless exploitation of the natural world.

Now that Finns have gradually got the country's environmental problems fairly under control, environmental groups have turned to manipulating information to secure their own well being. The marketing of environmental groups has begun to resemble corporate marketing. Some groups even brag about their ability to handle public opinion.

Consider the following case of street marketing. A young man stops you on the street and starts a story. Their organization has scientific evidence indicating that the containers planned for end storage of nuclear fuel (copper capsules surrounded by bentonite in bedrock) will start to leak in 100 years (highly improbable). This claim is followed by the unknown threat that in the next 50 years the waste will leak to the sea (the radioactive impact of such a leak in sea environment would be minuscule compared to background radiation). The deal closing line follows in form "Please sign here to become a regular contributor in our efforts to establish a research laboratory".

In recent years, some of the most important focus areas for environmental groups in Finland have been the forest industry, energy projects and harbors. These have been attacked by conjuring up threats, exploiting appeals processes, and mobilizing allies in the state bureaucracy and media. Finland's industrial customers in Europe have been pressured.

Forest industries are a major pillar of Finland's economy, access to reasonably priced energy supplies is essential for the success of Finland's primary industries, and 80 % of Finland's foreign trade passes through domestic harbors. Thus, the environmental movement focuses its efforts directly on the core economic activities. From the movement's point of view this approach has been extremely fruitful in terms of money and power.

Nothing prevents environmental groups from buying old-growth forests or engaging directly in environmental remediation work. The movement, however, is not known for selfless sacrifice to help nature, but rather for media stunts. In other words, it is not ready to give up anything for reaching its goals. It expects others to make sacrifices. It is ready to cause a lot of harm to other people, but does not bear any responsibility for the harm caused.

It is important to note that those who finance the environmental movement either in good faith, sanctimoniously or to buy protection also finance its acts of manipulation, aggression and power.

With the swelling of environmental standards, broader opportunities to file appeals and longer permitting times, **interest groups** have also become major users of power. This is illustrated by the history of two families seeking to build a condominium together in the Helsinki region.

The families with small children purchased an expensive lot on which to build. The plan was to build their condominium quickly over the year so that both families could move in under their own roof by Christmas. The neighbors, however, were not happy with the proposed construction plans. Although the building plan had been approved by the municipality, complained about, among other things, a simple car shelter that, in their opinion, reduced visibility of a curve in the road and thus endangered traffic safety. Before construction, however, a row of spruce trees blocked visibility of the curve in the road altogether.

The families spent the following months trying to get their building permits by negation and accepting changes in their plans. The construction schedule was lost. Winter hit when the

foundation work had started. In the meantime, the construction business began to overheat. When workers were available, there was a shortage of materials. When there were materials, there were no workers. The cost of the project skyrocketed. The families failed to get under the roof even after two Christmases. When they did move in, they lived in a construction zone. With a minor interest of their own, the neighbors inflicted a long nightmare and massive economic losses on the families.

Unfortunately, interest groups include people who are ready to cause firms, industrial organizations, small businesses or their neighbors, considerable damage with only the slightest justification. Some are even ready to take economic advantage of the situation. There are also those that see the use of power and humiliation as ends in themselves. The more interest groups there are, the greater the likelihood that there is someone ready to make frivolous complaints.

Interest groups, of course, are not accountable for the possible harms they might cause.

Under normal conditions, the lion's share of environmental impacts is caused by **companies, other productive organizations, small operators and average people**. These organizations and people are responsible for their economic performance and work. They also contribute the most to our material well being.

Especially large firms are often accused of indulging in psychopathic behavior. Blindly pursuing profit targets in the fray of competition, they stand ready to use their unfettered economic power and to manipulate people. They are ready to crush the competition, harming employees and customers, damaging the environment unhesitatingly and without empathy or regret /63/. There is some truth in this.

Western companies, industrial organizations, small operators and people, however, cannot act as they please. Their activity is being monitored and regulated in many ways. The company or the sole proprietor can easily be held to answer publicly, financially, and even legally for their actions. This imposes strict limits on productive activities in many respects.

Power resides with the people

In Western democracies the power of the state is supposed to reside with the people. This is true to the extent that people's values, beliefs, opinions, and even imagination, do direct the development of a democratic society. This is why there is so much effort to influence people. Manipulation is a very effective way to influence. The greatest resources for engaging in manipulation are in the state administration.

Most of us prefer to leave complicated matters to the state bureaucracy and experts. Under this arrangement, we expect that bureaucrats, experts and their political leaders possess superhuman wisdom, accountability and the ability to balance interests in promoting the overall needs of society.

World history is littered with utopia-seeking ideologies. The ideology of sustainable development (not to be confused with rational, forward looking and responsible behavior) is just another in this group. Although all attempts to build societies on ideology have failed, mankind has yet to figure out that ideology is merely an instrument of power.

Some societies have also attempted great leaps forward. Now we try at the same time through heavy-handed administrative action to make large strides on energy issues, efficiency in material use, environmental protection, waste management, and nature conservation. Can we succeed in all these things at the same time? And if we succeed, what have we actually achieved? What is the price and what are the risks?

Above all, we are responsible for our own nation's future. We can, and should, help others, but only when our own affairs are in order. Helping others only makes sense when these others really want our help. It succeeds best when we help others to help themselves.

Just a few years ago during the information technology boom, people were told to get into stock market through mutual funds as a way to save for retirement. The sales pitch was that the returns on shares were always better than bank savings. Anyone with basic education could have checked that this was not true even in the United States of America in the time span of retirement saving. Yet many people fell into this sales pitch because investment bankers and other fine experts convinced them.

Now the IT bubble has burst. The marketing men and the market operators have received their percentages. The portfolio managers are enjoying their fees. However, none of them is responsible for anything. The money belonged to the pension savers. They are responsible for their investment decisions.

Similarly, the environmental cluster markets us a secure future under the guise of sustainable development. People with basic education can easily discern that Finland faces no imminent threat of ecological cataclysm or raw material shortages. They also understand that even if the population explosion continues elsewhere, there is little the Finns can do about it.

We Finns, however, have not bothered to analyze matters ourselves, when our own environmental politicians, administration, research institutions, environmental groups, and media organizations in Helsinki paint an alternate reality. We have become the objects of manipulation.

Now we surrender considerable power on environmental matters to these groups. We have failed to notice that many have grabbed on to the opportunity like an unscrupulous psychopath. Blindly seeking their own gain, they have trampled on the rights of others and destroyed conditions needed for good life – without empathy or regret.

If we trust uncritically in a comprehensive ecological problem, massive administrative blessings, as well as the idea that democracy includes a broad right to appeal without responsibility to other people or the parts of society that suffer the resulting damage, we give the environmental cluster an open mandate to exercise its power unilaterally.

The power cluster is responsible for nothing, of course. It is us, the people, who are responsible, because we will ultimately pay the price.