

Sustainable consumption perspectives: progress or digress?



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Sustainable consumption challenge



Environmental improvements
in pollution prevention,
waste minimization and
eco-efficiency

are largely offset by changes
in consumption patterns
and levels

leading to rise of aggregate
environmental impacts and
resource consumption

- 70–80% of national energy use and greenhouse gas emissions relate to household activities
- 10-12% to provision of public sector services
- direct and indirect impacts associated with consumption take place outside Europe (emissions & lifestyles)



Sustainable consumption endeavors of public sector

- Development of policies for sustainable consumption
 - Direct policies (IPP - ?)
 - Infrastructure and institutional conditions (subsidies, taxes)
 - Consumption levels – still a taboo
 - Applicability of policies around the globe?
- Incorporating sustainable consumption practices into own purchasing activities
 - Green procurement (national and local levels)
 - Organic, eco-labelled, local, fair trade, services instead of products



Sustainable consumption endeavors of businesses



- Improvement of production processes and product features
 - dematerialisation and eco-efficiency
- Incorporating sustainable consumption practices into own purchasing activities:
 - P&S & greening chains
- Information provision to consumers
 - eco-labelling, EPDs, direct advertising of eco-sound P&S
- Life cycle costing
- Sustainability marketing
 - creating markets



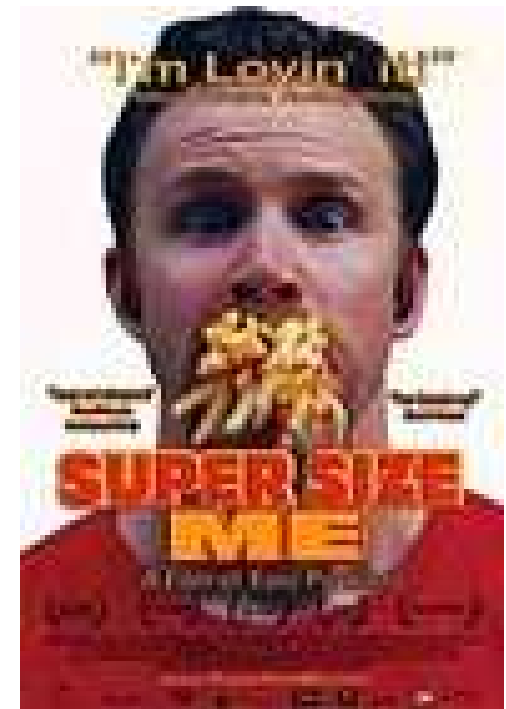
Sustainable consumption endeavors of consumers

- Supply-oriented strategies for engaging individual consumers in consuming more environmentally and socially sound P&S,
 - but lack of knowledge about impacts elsewhere
- Demand-oriented collective actions of people or entire communities devising own ways of using and consuming P&S that reduce rebound effects that haunt many supply-oriented strategies
 - sharing and pooling, LETs, co-housing, ...
 - simpler lifestyles, eco-villages, sustainable communities



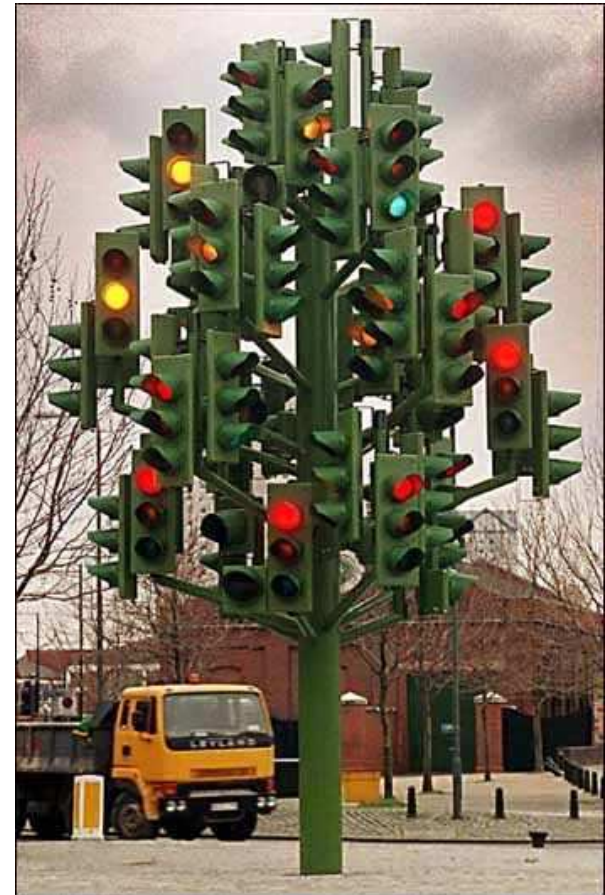
Impediments to further progress in SC

- Consumption complexity
 - goods, happiness, infrastructure
 - individual rationality -> collectively suboptimal results
 - cultural embedding of consumption choices and the level of individualisation in society
- Limitations of information tools
 - knowledge ≠ attitude ≠ action
 - eco-labels – legitimise consumption
 - local products – global suppliers
- Consumption levels and rebound effects
 - larger, multiple, luxury and global P
 - cheaper P – increased consumption
- Deliberate support of unsustainable consumption
 - cheap labour & resources, skewed message
 - irresponsible practices in developing countries
 - use of political power in economic interests



Towards strengthening efforts on SC

- The Marrakech Process
- National Strategies for Sustainable Consumption and Production
- National Action Plans for Sustainable Consumption
- Similar environmental and social standards in countries of operation





Thank you!

