

**THE ROLE OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN UK
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

Louise Alexandra Ellis

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Leeds
School of Earth and Environment**

September 2008

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied with the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotations from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Acknowledgments

My journey through this PhD has been a long and interesting one, as for most students I spent the majority of the journey unable to see the end. One thing that has always been a constant and a source of light has been the support of my family, friends and colleagues. I could not begin my list of thanks anywhere else than with my supervisors, William Young and Hugo Radice, along with the support provided by Andy Gouldson. They have given me fantastic academic guidance and emotional support.

This research would not have been possible without the time given by the interviewees, the ability for me to observe policy discussions and access to consultation documents. Thank you to everyone who has agreed to take part in this research; I hope you enjoy the outcome.

An unexpected outcome of undertaking this work has been the friendships I have made along the way, particularly that of William Young who has changed from being a supervisor and colleague to a mentor and a friend. I would also like to thank all my friends in the Sustainability Research Institute and the School of Earth and Environment, who particularly at the end of this process allowed me the time and the space to complete the final push. I promise I will pay you all back. The people in SRI, past and present, have made this experience possible, thank you for believing in me.

My time at Leeds has allowed me to experience University sport for one last time. I thank all the friends I have made playing cricket for protecting my sanity and providing me with fantastic memories.

My family has been unwavering in their support of my decision to leave a 'sensible' job to complete my personal and academic adventure. Although this does not surprise me I am eternally grateful for their support and unconditional love. I especially thank my brother for giving me the courage to make that initial leap. Finally, I would like to thank Rachael, my partner, friend and formatting guru. The last year would not have been possible without you.

Abstract

In a context of globalisation and complex governance systems, the power of multinational corporations (MNCs), and subsequently their role in sustainable development is being questioned. This thesis will enter this debate by investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. Specifically, focus has been placed on the production of the UK National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), *'Securing the future'*. In order to undertake this investigation in a systematic and robust way an original evaluation framework, the Actor Influence Framework, has been designed, developed and tested within this thesis. The AIF has drawn together insights from a wide-ranging debate surrounding power and influence, marrying the dimensions of power with those relating to deliberation and discourse. The AIF has been used within a multi-method approach consisting of; interviews, non-participant observation and document review, which was located within a research framework which has been informed by the social constructivist and interpretist traditions.

This thesis has identified MNCs' influence on UK sustainable development policy-making, and one of the main findings is that MNCs do play a role in the decision-making process; however, this is largely a tacit one, for example through setting the policy agenda. Importantly, in the case of the UK NSDS, MNCs had relatively little direct participation, for instance through taking part in consultation, in the formal production of the NSDS, and moreover considered it to be an unimportant element of UK policy. This also raises the question of whether participation in fact equates to influence. The second main finding of this thesis is that the move to more open, transparent decision-making which has occurred within sustainable development decision-making has in fact led to a displacement effect, with this thesis showing that there is a return, by MNCs, to old style 'back room' informal discussions. The third main finding has been that, through the development and application of the AIF, the proposition that a synthesis approach to analysis was required was correct. Finally, this thesis will argue that through the tacit power held by MNCs, they have gained a 'monopoly of legitimacy' within the decision-making process, with the dominant policy discourse being one which is corporate-centric. This situation means that the concept of sustainable development in its search for environmental, social and economic equity has been tamed and therefore does not challenge the status quo. Subsequently, MNCs do not need to act directly to affect policy in this area.

Contents

<u>Acknowledgments</u>	III
<u>Abstract</u>	V
<u>Contents</u>	VII
<u>List of Figures</u>	XI
<u>Abbreviations</u>	XIII
1. <u>Introduction</u>	1
1.1 OVERVIEW OF STUDY	1
1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION	3
1.3 THESIS FOCUS AND SCOPE	7
1.4 RESEARCH AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS	9
2. <u>Background</u>	13
2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW	13
2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	13
2.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CONTESTED CONCEPT	17
2.3.1 <i>Discourse for Sustainable Development</i>	20
2.4 REALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT	25
2.4.1 <i>National Sustainable Development Strategies</i>	26
2.5 REALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EUROPEAN CONTEXT	29
2.5.1 <i>Development of a European Sustainable Development Strategy</i>	30
2.6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE UK	31
2.6.1 <i>UK Sustainable Development: Current Governance Structures</i>	35
2.7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTI NATIONAL CORPORATIONS	41

2.7.1	<i>The Power of Multinational Corporations</i>	41
2.7.2	<i>MNCs and sustainable development</i>	44
2.7.3	<i>Multinational Corporations and UK Sustainable Development</i>	47
2.8	THE RESEARCH CONTEXT	51
3.	<u>Development of the Actor Influence Framework</u>	53
3.1	CHAPTER OVERVIEW	53
3.2	THE NEED FOR A FRAMEWORK	54
3.3	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK	56
3.3.1	<i>Power within Political Systems</i>	56
3.3.2	<i>Theories of Power</i>	69
3.3.3	<i>A Post-Modernist Perspective</i>	75
3.3.4	<i>Postempiricism and an Argumentative Turn</i>	78
3.4	THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK	82
3.4.1	<i>Primary Level: The Policy Decision-Making Context</i>	84
3.4.2	<i>Secondary Level: Mode – Influence</i>	87
3.4.3	<i>Intermediate influence</i>	95
3.4.4	<i>Tertiary level: Localised Interaction</i>	98
3.5	CONCLUDING SUMMARY	99
4.	<u>Methodology</u>	101
4.1	CHAPTER OVERVIEW	101
4.2	RESEARCH POSITION	101
4.3	RESEARCH DESIGN: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH	106
4.4	RESEARCH SCOPE	107
4.5	RESEARCH DESIGN	107
4.6	DATA COLLECTION	112
4.6.1	<i>Interviews</i>	113
4.6.2	<i>Non-participant Observation</i>	119

4.6.3	<i>Document Review</i>	121
4.7	DATA HANDLING	124
4.7.1	<i>Potential Problems</i>	126
4.8	OVERALL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	128
5.	<u>Results and Analysis</u>	131
5.1	CHAPTER OVERVIEW	131
5.2	REVIEW OF THE UK NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	132
5.2.1	<i>The Review Process</i>	133
5.3	APPLICATION OF THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK	140
5.3.1	<i>Direct Modes of Influence</i>	141
5.3.2	<i>Tacit Modes of Influence</i>	162
5.4	THE NEW UK STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE	176
5.5	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY - A BROADER PERSPECTIVE	177
5.5.1	<i>Non-state actors- Why get involved?</i>	177
5.5.2	<i>Sustainable Development Policy, A Broader Perspective: Using the AIF</i>	181
5.6	SUMMARY	187
6.	<u>Discussion</u>	189
6.1	CHAPTER OVERVIEW	189
6.2	AN OUTLINE OF INFLUENCE	189
6.3	EVALUATION OF ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK	191
6.3.1	<i>Actor Influence Framework – A Successful Framework?</i>	192
6.3.2	<i>Actor Influence Framework – Wider applications</i>	197
6.3.3	<i>AIF Evaluation Summary</i>	199
6.4	APPLIED CONSIDERATIONS - WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN IN THE 'REAL-WORLD'?	200
6.4.1	<i>MNCs: Applied Findings</i>	201

6.4.2	<i>Applied Finding: Policy Making</i>	209
6.6.1	<i>The Policy Implications</i>	217
6.4	RE-ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS	218
7.	<u>Conclusion</u>	221
7.1	RESEARCH REVIEW	221
7.2	REFLECTION AND LIMITATIONS	225
7.3	LOOKING FORWARD: POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE WORK	226
7.4	CONCLUDING THOUGHTS	228
8.	<u>References</u>	231
	<u>APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</u>	249
	<u>APPENDIX II: EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT</u>	251
	<u>APPENDIX III: EXAMPLE OF NOTATION - CODING</u>	255
	<u>APPENDIX IV: COPY OF PAPER PUBLISHED IN THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</u>	259

List of Figures

TABLE 2.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGIME	16
BOX 2.1 WORKING DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	20
TABLE 2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES	28
TABLE 2.3 UK GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	40
TABLE 2.4 THREE GENERATIONS OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND LOBBYING	50
TABLE 3.1 PRESSURE GROUPS: TYPES OF ACTION	66
TABLE 3.2 DIMENSIONS OF POWER	70
FIGURE 3.1 NON-DECISION-MAKING FILTER	72
FIGURE 3.2 OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE AIF: A NESTED FRAMEWORK	81
FIGURE 3.3 PRIMARY LEVEL: THE BROAD POLICY DECISION-MAKING CONTEXT	86
FIGURE 3.4 SECONDARY LEVEL: MODE- INFLUENCE	89
FIGURE 3.5 AIF TERTIARY LEVEL: SPECIFIC POLICY CONTEXT	99
FIGURE 4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	108
TABLE 4.1 POLICY THEMES ADDRESSED BY FIVE METHODS OF POLICY ANALYSIS	109
FIGURE 4.2 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN	111
TABLE 4.2 LIST OF INTERVIEWS	117
TABLE 4.3 CONSULTATION MEETINGS ATTENDED	120
TABLE 4.4 LIST OF DOCUMENTS	122
BOX 4.1 MILES AND HUBERMAN'S ANALYTICAL MOVES	124
BOX 4.2 THREE STAGES FOR ANALYSING OBSERVATION DATA	126
BOX 4.3 POTENTIAL ISSUES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	127
FIGURE 5.1 AIF PRIMARY LEVEL IN THE CONTEXT OF 'TAKING IT ON'	132
FIGURE 5.2: THE REVIEW PROCESS	139
FIGURE 5.3 AIF TERTIARY LEVEL: SPECIFIC POLICY CONTEXT	141

FIGURE 5.4 AIF SECONDARY LEVEL: INFLUENCE IN UK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY	142
FIGURE 5.5 AIF TERTIARY LEVEL: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF CONSULTEES	145
TABLE 5.1 WRITTEN CONSULTATION RESPONDENT STATISTICS	146
TABLE 5.2 BUSINESS ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE TAKING IT ON PROCESS	148
TABLE 5.3 WRITTEN CONSULTATION RESPONSES: BREAKDOWN OF BUSINESS-RELATED ORGANISATIONS	150
TABLE 5.4 BUSINESS ATTENDANCE AT 'TAKING IT ON' THEMED EVENTS	154
TABLE 5.5 ATTENDANCE AT 'TAKING IT ON' REGIONAL EVENTS	155
FIGURE 5.6 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES	158
FIGURE 5.7 TERTIARY LEVEL: INFLUENCE RELATING TO TASK FORCE	159
FIGURE 5.8 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE USE OF 'EXPERT' STAKEHOLDERS	161
FIGURE 5.9 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	165
FIGURE 5.10 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE USE OF WORKING GROUPS	169
FIGURE 5.11 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE USE OF HIGH-LEVEL PROGRAMME BOARDS	170
FIGURE 5.12 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE USE OF EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS	171
FIGURE 5.13 TERTIARY LEVEL: AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO THE USE OF PRE-SELECTED PANELS	172
FIGURE 5.14 TERTIARY LEVEL AIF: INFLUENCE RELATING TO PERCEIVED POWER	175
TABLE 5.6 PRODUCTION OF THE UK STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE	176
TABLE 6.1 SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE: UK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY	191
FIGURE 6.1 REVISED SECONDARY LEVEL : AIF2	196
FIGURE 6.2 SUMMARISING THE EVALUATION OF THE AIF	198

Abbreviations

ACRE	Advisory Committee on Release to the Environment
AIF	Actor Influence Framework
BERR	Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
BTFSCP	Business Task Force on Sustainable Consumption and Production
CBI	Confederation of British Industries
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CR	Corporate Responsibility
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EAC	Environmental Audit Committee
ED(EF)	Sub-committee on Environment and Energy
ENV(G)	Environment Cabinet Sub-committee
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
GO	Government Office
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
LA	Local Authority
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change

MBI	Market-Based Instruments
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
NDPBs	Non-Departmental Public Bodies
NETA	New Electricity Trading Arrangements
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OFGEM	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
OFWAT	Office of Water Services
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
RSDF	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
SD	Sustainable Development
SDC	Sustainable Development Commission
SDTF	Sustainable Development Task Force
SDS	Sustainable Development Strategy
SDU	Sustainable Development Unit
SPTK	Task Force for Sustainable Production
TNC	Transnational Corporation
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UK	United Kingdom
UKBCSE	UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy
UNED-UK	United Nations Environment and Development UK Committee
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCED	World Commission for Environment and Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Publications

Parts of Chapters Three, Five and Six have been published in the paper:

Ellis, L. (2007) Who influences policy? Analysing actor influence on the UK sustainable development strategy, *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development*, 6, 1, 36-52

1

Introduction

1.1 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The aim of this thesis is to provide a systematic investigation of the role played, in terms of influence, by Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in UK sustainable development policy. This problematic is located in a complex situation, in relation to both governance structure surrounding UK decision-making and within the subject of sustainable development, therefore, a flexible, multi-method approach is required. Within such a research approach this thesis has developed an original evaluation framework, the Actor influence Framework (AIF), which has been used to organise and frame the analysis. Power and influence has been widely debated ranging from the decision-making pluralist stance espoused by Dahl (1961) through to the third dimension of preference-shaping introduced by Lukes (1974) to emphasis given by Foucault (1980), and in more applied terms Hajer (1995) and Fischer (2003) to deliberation and discourse. This thesis is framed within the proposition that both construction and action are significant elements in understanding influence within the decision-making process and therefore a synthesis approach to understanding the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy is vital. To this end, this thesis makes three main contributions to knowledge.

The first main contribution is an evaluation framework which enables the systematic, holistic identification and assessment of influence of MNCs within the decision-making process. This framework, the Actor Influence Framework (AIF), draws together a wide ranging debate on influence, and proposes that a synthesis approach is taken, marrying the traditional debates of power with the ideas of deliberative discourse (see Chapter Three).

The second main contribution is the identification of the influence of MNCs in sustainable development policy-making, demonstrating that as non-state actors, MNCs have significant influence. However, what is interesting is that this influence is largely tacit and in the large part is not a direct result of any action by MNCs in specific policy decision-making surrounding the production of a new UK national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) (see Chapters Five and Six).

The third main contribution shows that the UK NSDS is not seen as an important policy document by MNCs (one of the main non-state actors) and perhaps even more significantly, involvement in the policy decision-making process surrounding sustainable development does not necessarily equate to influence. With the increase in transparency, a fundamental tenet of sustainable development, in reality leading to a shift back to private corridor discussions and a reduction in formal participation (see Chapter Six).

It will become clear within this thesis that the response to the debate regarding the power of MNCs in relation to sustainable development is not just simply "Yes, they have power."; more that this power is transferred into influence, not solely by direct action (for example lobbying and consultation) by MNCs themselves, but more significantly through tacit modes of influence (for example agenda-setting and perceived power), which indeed often occur through Government or other non-state actors. Therefore, it is important when addressing the debate surrounding globalisation, MNCs and sustainable development, that the study and debate is not narrowly focused on MNCs at the expense of understanding the wider context and the state and non-state actors which occupy it.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

Globalisation, particularly corporate globalisation, and the subsequent impacts on society have been gaining political momentum and exposure in recent years. Much debate and demonstrations have occurred, creating, in some cases, an aggressive and negative relationship between activist and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and business. Moves to find a middle ground have been made, particularly in the development of politically, the Third Way (Giddens 1998; 2000) and from a corporate perspective, approaches such as the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Elkington 1997).

In parallel with the rise in corporate globalisation there has been a general shift from a process of government to governance (see Cerny 2000; Czempiel and Rosenau 1992; Rhodes 1997; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002). Within a system of governance the policy process involves an increasing number of actors, both government and non-state actors. Initially 'experts' were used in areas of uncertainty and risk, whereas now there is a move to the broader use of non-state actors. This shift has occurred at a global level, through the integration of international organisations such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with MNCs and to a lesser extent NGOs. More recently the number of partnerships between MNCs and NGOs has also increased (see Eweje 2007; Prakash 2002; Sagawa and Segal 2000). This trend has also been replicated at a national level including in the UK, with a great use of multi-actor decision-making. For some the greater inclusion of business, particularly MNCs, in the policy process has been seen as granting corporations with too much power. Some would argue that MNCs now hold more power than nation states themselves.

"The role of the state is questioned: 'There is little or no role left to states beyond the provision of infrastructure and public goods required by business'"

(Ohmae 1990 as cited in Higgott *et al* 2000: p1)

However, Higgott argues that the state has not lost power but its role has changed:

"The state has been strengthened in some areas, while it has clearly lost power in others. The role of the state has not diminished, but it has changed"

(*ibid.*: p1)

The debate surrounding the changing role of the state and the influence of MNCs has also extended to deal specifically with the question of sustainable development. Both

academics and society alike have questioned the role of business in sustainable development. This has been demonstrated in the growing number of more ‘popular’ texts published in this area¹. There are broadly two schools of thought on this issue, which have been nicely captured by Bullis and Ie (2007) who state that “Corporations have been cast in the role of villain in some cases and in that of hero in other instances” (*ibid*: p321). The first school of thought is that as business is playing an ever increasing role in today’s society through the growth of world markets and extension of governance structures, as outlined above, they can, and should play a pivotal role in the promotion of sustainable development. In contrast, others take the stance that business is ‘hijacking’ sustainable development and it is in fact the system which business is promoting, western capitalism, that is the main source of social and environmental degradation (see Welford 1997). In his discussion of the role of business in environmental protection, with emphasis on the role of knowledge, Jamison (2001) states that:

“the rich and the powerful, who are doing their utmost to commercialize the new ideas and values and turn them into business opportunities”

(Jamison *ibid*.: p19)

The emphasis given by Jamison begins to highlight the need for an investigation which is informed by the social constructivist (Foucault 1972, 1980, 1991) and interpretive traditions (Bevir and Rhodes 2003), as in this thesis (see Chapter Four). Employing a research position which incorporates these views allows for the investigation of how ideas, through discourse, play a vital role in the creation of worldviews. As will be discussed in Chapter Four such a research position also allows for the complexity in which this thesis is situated; a multilevel governance structure addressing the contested concept of sustainable development.

In terms of the global structure, Jamison (2001) also argues that the growing emphasis on business is widening inequalities which already exist between the developed and developing worlds.

“Particularly in developing countries, there is a growing recognition that the corporate quest for sustainable development brings about new inequities in

¹ For Example: Hertz (2002); Klein (2001); and Monbiot (2001).

terms of resource and income distribution, access to knowledge and information, and influence over strategic decision-making (Sachs 1999). In their transfer of responsibility to the private sector, governments and intergovernmental bodies are, perhaps unwittingly, supporting corporate expansion at the expense of local, small-scale initiatives."

(Jamison *ibid.*: p31)

Thomas (2000) also highlights that in addition to increasing inequalities between the developed and developing world, the divides that exist within developed states are also becoming wider, arguing that increasingly within first world states a third world exists. Thomas' discussion of the growing intrastate polarisation demonstrates the limitations of much of the debate on sustainable development, which neglects to debate the importance of sustainable development within developed nations, thus highlighting the relevance of the national focus adopted within this thesis.

In relation to the global structure and the role of international organisations which work within the economic system alongside business, Ledgerwood and Broadhurst (2000) take a more business 'friendly' stance in their discussion of the global structure and the role of business in the agenda of ethics:

"Through international organisations the concept of sustainability will increasingly be extended into a social and ethical agenda. Historically this agenda has been allocated to government, but corporations play an ever-increasing role. Furthermore, electorates are increasingly unwilling to trust government alone with the power and resources essential to meet the enhanced performance expectations for products and environmental excellence"

(Ledgerwood and Broadhurst 2000: p5-6)

This same work argues that as a result of corporate governance and the rules of the market MNCs operate in a transparent fashion, which has resulted in MNCs leading the way in the development of ethical codes.

"[It is] because their conduct [MNCs] is relatively transparent that compared with national companies some large MNCs have led the way in the

development of ethical best practice, a trend which is both desirable and understandable."

(Ledgerwood and Broadhurst 2000: p220)

The UN Earth Summits, since Rio in 1992, have been subject to a high degree of criticism for the increasing role and power which has been allowed to be passed to business, particularly MNCs (Munnick and Wilson 2002). It has been argued that business has been given too much of the discussion platform and space, and is allowed to set the agenda of discussions. The changing relations and interaction between state, individuals and business, has resulted in increased requirements for transparency and governance from businesses, active protests from anti-corporate/capitalist organisations, wider public speculation and interest from the investment community.

At a national level the discussion on the role of business in sustainable development has been more limited. Welford (1997) argues that government had left the promotion of sustainable development largely to non-state actors, including business:

"Governments have demonstrated little real effect directed at reversing these trends, preferring to leave the task to the voluntary efforts of business, pressure groups, other non-governmental organisations and individuals"

(Welford 1997: p3)

In the investigation of business in national sustainable development, it is vital to review the political activity of a corporation as well as direct operational activity. Although John Browne, CEO of BP, states that business had a significant role to play in sustainable development, he also highlights the sensitive nature of political involvement:

"Companies have a very important role in society, but they mustn't confuse that role with the roles of others. Companies can contribute to economic and social development, which is an essential underpinning of the wider agenda of human rights. But these can't and shouldn't go beyond that. In particular they must be particularly careful about the political processes – not because it is unimportant – quite the reverse – but because the legitimacy of that process is crucial both for society and for BP as a company working in that society"

(Browne 2002: p1)

This discussion has highlighted that this thesis is located within the broad debate of globalisation, the power of MNCs and sustainable development as solution for a more equitable world. Specifically, the thesis will focus on MNCs and sustainable development within the complex governance structure of UK policy-making. This thesis is needed to straddle the polarised debate regarding the role of MNCs in sustainable development. However, to provide a useful contribution in this area it needs to be undertaken in a systematic and holistic way which encompasses the multi-disciplinary nature of sustainable development and acknowledges the complexity of power and influence in the decision-making arena. This brief discussion of the research context has also demonstrated that the governance system surrounding sustainable development is one which is complex and multi-stakeholder, therefore this thesis will be useful in breaking down this decision-making process and analysing the relationships which occur between the different actors, thus providing an assessment of the role of MNCs within this context.

Set within the wide-ranging debate outlined above, this thesis will focus on the question of the role of MNCs in sustainable development. This thesis provides a detailed analysis of the question by focusing on the specific context of UK policy-making. A UK focus has been selected as there is little research investigating the relationship between MNCs and national sustainable development policy. This thesis begins to address the gap. In the field of international relations there has been some investigation of MNCs as actors in sustainable development and environmental policy (Newell 2000). Newell argues that lobbying activity of MNCs at a national level is impacting the international policy process, subsequently it would be useful to understand this context a little more.

1.3 THESIS FOCUS AND SCOPE

Within the context of UK policy-making this thesis focuses on two areas, the primary focus the UK NSDS, as an example of a specific policy tool with an investigation of sustainable development in the broader sense complementing the detailed analysis of the UK NSDS. This analysis will focus on the review and development of a new UK Strategy, which occurred between 2003-2005. The inclusion of the UK NSDS is interesting for two reasons; firstly it provided the thesis with a live policy decisions-

making context, therefore allowing for observation to form part of the data collection, rather than relying on secondary data and personal recollection. Secondly, the NSDS is a policy tool which has been promoted in the international arena and therefore provides some connection between the different spatial governance levels.

The question surrounding the changing role of MNCs in society and the blurring of the relationships between them and government and to a lesser extent other non-state actors, such as NGOs, demonstrates the need to investigate more rigorously the role MNCs are playing in the decision-making context. Therefore, this thesis needs to understand how all the actors play a role in decision-making with MNCs as the prime focus of this investigation. The emphasis being placed on MNCs is in-line with the stance of Bullis and Ie (2007), who argue that “because corporations are such central players in terms of economic force, world scope, political power, and environmental degradation, clearly, we cannot adequately understand environmental concerns without considering the crucial roles corporations hold.” (*ibid*: p 321). Following OECD (2000), within this thesis, MNC is taken to refer to a corporation/company which is established in more than one country, which may be through ownership or through subsidiary partnerships. The term MNC encompasses similar terminology, such as Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and Transnational Corporations (TNCs). Although these terms are sometimes distinguished, there is little merit in doing so within the focus of this thesis and therefore the terms are seen as interchangeable.

It has been considered that the most effective way to investigate the role MNCs are playing in UK sustainable development policy is to focus upon the power and influence. By focusing on influence two things can be achieved; a complete picture of the role of MNCs in relation to all the policy actors can be observed, and a real assessment of whether the actions and involvement affect UK policy and thus the UK contribution to sustainable development can be achieved. Power and influence are both, in themselves, contested concepts; there is wide debate regarding the definition of both. Bachrach and Lawler (1981) argue that power and influence are distinguishable concepts in terms of definition, however, they are linked together in a circular relationship. Cox and Jacobsen (1973) also see the two terms as being intrinsically linked, with power being the capacity, and influence being the exercise of this capacity. As a detailed examination of the definitional difference does not add substantively to this thesis, and the close link between the two concepts has been

shown, power and influence have been taken to be interchangeable throughout this thesis.

As a result of the multi-level governance structure within which UK policy-making occurs, a multi-actor approach has been taken within this thesis. The term actor has been used rather than stakeholder. Also for the purpose of this thesis, the term non-state actors will be used rather than that of NGO. NGO will be used when discussing the role of actors such as Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). This distinction is used in an attempt to avoid confusion between the wider actors involved in the decision making process.

Both the subject focus and the unit of analysis within this thesis are complex and are informed by debates cutting across academic (power, policy, social science) instructional (government to governance) and spatial boundaries (International, European, National and Regional) themes. Therefore the research design and approach has been designed to allow for, and to capture such complexities.

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

It has been acknowledged previously that there is a growing debate on the increased power of MNCs and related discussion of their role in sustainable development. Additionally, it has been argued that there is a general lack of robust research into this problematic and that there is a specific lack of research addressing this question at a national level. With this situation in mind, the overall aim of this thesis is to assess the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy; framed within this guiding aim are the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate what type of influence MNCs have within UK sustainable development decision-making.
2. To investigate a specific example of the development of sustainable development policy within the UK.
3. To undertake a systematic review of the influence of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy

In order to be systematic and focused within this research framework and to achieve the stated objectives three research questions have been developed, which break down further the research aim. These are:

1. How is influence exerted in UK decision-making surrounding sustainable development policy?
2. How do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy?
3. What does this influence mean for policy-making and MNCs?

It is useful at this point to set out the assumptions which have been made at the outset of this thesis; these have informed how the research has been framed and designed.

The assumptions are:

1. MNCs have the power to influence government policy.
2. National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) are an important element of UK policy.
3. MNCs will have an interest in sustainable development policy specifically NSDS and will play a role in its development.
4. Business influence will have an impact on NSDS formation.

To answer the research questions and meet the objectives of this research the thesis has been structured into seven chapters. Following the overview provided in this Chapter, Chapter Two then goes on to discuss the background context in more detail, providing a discussion of the emergence of sustainable development, its underlying contested nature and the importance discourse has played in understanding, developing and implementing sustainable development in a real world context. In order to understand the current context of UK policy, a review of its implementation within policy at international, European and UK levels has been given. The second Chapter then concludes with a review of how MNCs have been involved in sustainable development.

The thesis then advances to discuss the need for a systematic evaluation framework and the subsequent development of the Actor Influence Framework (AIF). The AIF takes a synthesis position, drawing together elements of the power debate with the discursive nature of post-modernists and post-empiricists. It will discuss how an

evaluation framework can be developed within this research context and frame in order to holistically and systematically review the influence MNCs have in UK sustainable development policy. Initially, the need for a framework approach will be given along with the proposition that the framework should be located in a synthesis position. The discussion will then turn to the policy decision-making process with particular reference given to how different systems allow for actor interaction along with an overview of power/influence within this context. The wide-ranging debate on power has been very influential in the development of the AIF as has, in line with the methodological consideration of discourse, the work of post-empiricists from the policy analysis tradition.

With an understanding of the research context developed and the need, design and detail of the AIF discussed, Chapter Four goes on to develop the research design through which the research questions will be answered. The Chapter begins with a discussion of the research position taken within this thesis, focusing upon the question of construction, following which an overview of, and argument for a qualitative approach is given. This generic discussion then feeds into an examination of the specific research design which has been employed to collect and handle the data; in order to achieve triangulation of the data a multimethod approach, as espoused by Robson (2002) has been applied. Chapter Five outlines, through the application of the AIF, the data collected and analysis completed, within the research design outlined in the previous chapter. The analysis of the results is split into two broad sections, the first relates to the use of the AIF, systematically outlining the influence which is at play within the development of a new UK NSDS and in relation to UK sustainable development policy in a more general sense.

Chapter Six will subsequently map the influence, which has been identified, relating to MNCs, developing the debate presented in Chapter Three, and will provide an evaluation of the application and appropriateness of the AIF. The chapter will then conclude by addressing the third research question, discussing what the influence found in this thesis means in broader terms and what the findings mean for MNCs. The discussion will reach its conclusion in Chapter Seven where the research aim of this thesis will be re-addressed, and a review of the research, along with a discussion of limitations will be given. This chapter will conclude by introducing some potential

areas for future work which can further develop the findings and the propositions of this thesis.

2

Background

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This Chapter will provide the contextual setting upon which the thesis is based, initially a discussion of the emergence of sustainable development as a concept and a policy option is given. The widely accepted contested nature of sustainable development will then be explored, investigating the various discourses which have developed within such a debate. Following this, a more applied outline of the concept will be given, mapping its implementation as policy at international, European and UK levels. The Chapter then concludes with an exploration of the link which is developing between Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and sustainable development, again at a global level but more specifically within a UK context.

2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The international community has played a vital part in the emergence of sustainable development as an 'acceptable' policy option; therefore it is important to look, briefly, at the historical emergence of sustainable development in the international context. The UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972) marks the first international meeting looking at how human activities are harming the environment

and putting humans at risk. In addition, this is the first time sustainable development was discussed by the international regime with the aim of reaching a satisfactory resolution to the environmental versus development dilemma. The Stockholm Conference led to the development of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP is still today the body which champions the global sustainable development agenda.

Table 2.1 outlines the historical development of sustainable development in the international arena, since the 1972 Stockholm Conference, based on IISD (1997). This is not a comprehensive list of all events relating to sustainable development, it merely outlines the major milestones and those most relevant to this thesis.

The publication of the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' (WCED 1987) provides the most widely adopted and quoted definition of sustainable development, marking the birth of the current concept of sustainable development, as outlined below and the beginning of the current predominant discourse, ecological modernisation (Connelly and Smith 1999):

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

(World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: p43)

An important aspect of the Brundtland report is the introduction of sustainable development as a legacy issue, highlighting long-term needs as well as the maintenance of current economic progress. Due to the wide acceptance and economic emphasis of the report, a significant achievement of 'Our Common Future' and the Commission's work is that it moved environmental issues from the periphery to the centre of political debate (Korten 1992). The main criticism of the Brundtland report is that it is fundamentally based on contradictions, primarily the continued commitment, in fact stated need, to ever-increasing economic growth. This stance is discussed in Section 2.3.

Date	Action
1971	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) established in the UK
1972	United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm Club of Rome Published 'Limits to Growth' (Meadows et al 1972)
1974	Bariloche Foundation published 'Limits to Poverty'
1975	Worldwatch Institute established in the US
1979	Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution is adopted
1980	World Conservation Strategy released by the IUCN, includes a section 'Towards Sustainable Development'. Publication of the Brandt report: <i>North - South, A programme for Survival</i>
1982	UN World Charter for Nature published.
1984	OCED International Conference on Environment and Economics, this conference helped shape the later document ' <i>Our Common Future</i> ' produced by WCED. Worldwatch Institute publishes its first State of the World Report
1987	Publication of 'Our Common Future' Brundtland Report. This report makes the 'popularisation' of sustainable development. (WCED)
1988	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is established
1990	International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) established in Canada
1992	The Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD) ² publishes ' <i>Changing Course</i> ', establishes business interest in sustainable development. (Schmidheiny 1992)
1992	UN Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro, establishes Agenda 21 and related conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention for Climate Change.

² Business Council for Sustainable Development became the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

1993	First meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).
1995	World Summit for Social Development. BCSD merged with World Industry Council on the Environment and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) was formed. World Trade Organisation was established. (WTO dna)
1999	Launch of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, the first sustainability index. (Zadek 2007)
2000	UN Millennium Summit, adaptation of the UN World Summit Declaration, which includes values, principles and goals (Millennium Goals) for key priority areas. UN Global Compact launched (Zadek 2007)
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg. National governments re-affirm commitment to Millennium Goals and other previously agreed goals. (van Frantzius 2004)
2003	Restructure the work of the Commission for Sustainable Development into multi-year work programmes (IISD 2005) Launch of the UN Commission on the Private Sector and Development (IISD 2003 a) International Labour Organisation officially embraces sustainable development (IISD 2003b)
2005	UN World Summit – reaffirms commitment to Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (UN 2006) Kyoto Protocol enters into force
2006	Stern Report published outlining the economic impacts and climate change (Stern 2006) UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development begins (UN ESCO dna)
2007	CSD annual meeting fails to reach a negotiated agreement, following ‘take it or leave it’ proposals on climate change and energy (IISD 2007)
2008	Sixteenth CSD meeting (UN DESA 2008)

(based on IISD 1997)

Table 2.1 Sustainable Development in the International Regime

2.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CONTESTED CONCEPT

Alongside the development of international policy documents and discussion papers which have emerged relating to sustainable development, a debate over its meaning has also grown. It is broadly recognised that sustainable development is a contested term; Parkin (2000) identified that over 200 definitions could be found in various texts, with no real clarity being achieved since the publication of Parkin's paper. An important element of this thesis is to investigate how the level of contestation and debate regarding the definition has led to difficulty in policy formation. The contested nature of sustainable development plays a significant role in shaping actors' understanding, and use, of the concept (Gidding *et al* 2002). Due to the all-encompassing nature of sustainable development, different actors bring to the table different experiences and worldviews. In this way sustainable development is unique in that it allows for different social and political orientations to gather under one umbrella. This is reflected in the work of Hopwood *et al*:

"There are so many interpretations of sustainable development that it is safe to say that there is no such thing as sustainable development-ism, in contrast to the schools of neo-liberalism, feminism, deep ecology or socialism. Rather, the existing worldviews of people and organisations flow into their conception of sustainable development"

(Hopwood *et al* 2005: p47)

The absence of a sustainable development-ism could potentially have both positive and negative implications for policy decision-making; it could allow for a policy environment which draws together actors from different, often conflicting, backgrounds and allows for some level of consensus. Alternatively, the lack of a firm ideological grounding may allow for the most dominant ideology to 'hijack' the concept. The latter stance is reflected in the work of McClosky (1999).

"Yet if "the emperor has no clothes on" we must in the end acknowledge it. There was a day when we needed the high hope and the time inspiration represented by the concept. But today, we need a useable line of thought an operational reality. We need a line of thought which can be extended rationally into the detail of research

planning and application. And sustainability does not seem to be that thought. What we now fear is that "sustainability" will prove to be no more than a boon to publicists who will paste new labels on old bottles and claim that every project that makes their client rich is sustainable. In the absence of any operational definition, who is to prove them wrong?"

(McCloskey 1999: p159)

The idea of actors 'hijacking' the concept will be discussed later in this chapter through the exploration of the role of multinational corporations in sustainable development amid general claims that business has too much power in today's society and that specifically that business is 'taking over' the idea of sustainability.

This thesis takes the position that sustainable development is still a concept which is both needed and useful in order to achieve some level of change within modern society. This stance is in line with the work of Daly (1995), who argues that:

"For all the above reasons I believe that sustainable development, properly clarified, is an indispensable concept. All important concepts are dialectically vague at the margins. I claim that sustainable development is at least as clear a concept as 'money'"

(Daly 1995: p54)

The debate surrounding sustainable development is often divided along the lines of 'weak' and 'strong' sustainability, to a degree this debate is mirrored within the conflict of definition. Following Daly and Cobb (2000), Hopwood *et al* (2005) outline weak sustainability as seeing "natural and manufactured capital as interchangeable with technology able to fill human produced gaps in the natural world." (*ibid*: p40). In contrast, proponents of strong sustainability state that natural resources cannot be replaced by human-made capital (Rees 1998; Roseland 1998). For further debate around weak and strong sustainability see Ayres *et al* (1998); Turner (1992); Pearce *et al* (1989); Daly and Cobb (2000) and Naess (1986).

The contested, ill-defined nature of sustainable development is an important consideration for this thesis. The thesis investigates whether the lack of definition and/or the multiple foci of sustainable development definitions affects the policy

decision-making process. The consideration here is two-fold; firstly the lack of a definition prevents action and secondly, the focus of a particular actor's definition affects the overall policy direction. The absence of an 'operational' definition has been 'blamed' for a lack of real political action, particularly in relation to developing policies which present real solutions which can be implemented at either international, regional, national or local level. Burke (1999) demonstrates the usefulness, for some actors, of a loose definition:

"Sustainable development is a wonderful phrase that, like democracy, ends up meaning all things to all people."

(ibid.: p3)

The bias towards one of the three pillars of sustainable development, rather than a definition which accounts for all of the pillars, is interesting within the broader discussion around definition, but also within the boundaries of this thesis, in so much as: Does a biased definitional starting point subsequently lead to a biased policy process? If so, who are the actors promoting such a definition?

The seminal work of the Brundtland Commission, and its definition of sustainable development as outlined in Section 2.2, has a clear economic and technical bias, with the emphasis being placed on continued economic growth. Such an emphasis has allowed for major actors to argue that current growth is acceptable as long as the ecosystem is used in an appropriate way, and in many cases there is no consideration of the 'social' beyond being left an ecosystem which can be used for production purposes. The impact of this technocratic bias is demonstrated in the stances taken by Burke, as outlined below:

"..very simply then, the challenge of sustainable development is to somehow deliver those rising real incomes without declining the productivity of these systems [ecosystems] beyond the point of irreversible change"

(Burke 1999: p 3)

The technocratic nature of the Brundtland definition is investigated in more detail later in this section in the discussion of ecological modernisation and the discourse of sustainable development. The emphasis on continued economic growth has been

criticised by many writers, for example, Redclift (1987) and Korten (1992). A contrasting definition, which provides more focus on the social and environmental concerns is given below. The introduction of quality of life is important in relation to the policy agenda followed in the UK in the 1990s; this is outlined in more detail in Section 2.6.

“Sustainable development is a process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways which protect and enhance the earth’s life support system”

(Forum for the Future 2000)

It should be noted that the aim of this thesis is not to establish a universally accepted definition of sustainable development. However, it is important to clarify what sustainable development is taken to mean within this thesis; to this end the working definition, outlined in Box 2.1 has been proposed.

Development that promotes social and cultural growth, as well as economic growth, in a manner which is equitable and environmentally sound within current and future society.

Box 2.1 Working definition of sustainable development

The importance of the problems of definition and focus surrounding sustainable development is reflected in the use of discursive and deliberative theory as well as traditional assessments of power. The discursive nature of sustainable development will now be discussed.

2.3.1 Discourse for Sustainable Development

As a result of the contested nature of sustainable development, discourse relating to the subject has become very important, with this being mirrored in the number of studies into the area. Discourse plays an important methodological and substantive role within this thesis; the methodological approach will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. The contested nature of sustainable development means that the use of language is important, the debate and conflict which exists within the context means

it is vital to understand the impact this has had on agenda-setting and non-decision making. Therefore an important element of this thesis is an investigation of the discursive nature of sustainable development. To achieve this it is vital to identify the predominant discourse of sustainable development, and to be aware of the fundamental bias within this discourse.

In his work *'The Greening of Knowledge'* Jamison (2001), outlines that the discourse of environmentalism and later sustainable development has moved away from the apocalyptic tones of the 1960s and 1970s, through the course of the 1990s to "the encouraging, good-news rhetoric of sustainable development". He states that terms like 'limits to growth' have been superseded by "more upbeat messages and conciliatory slogans" which include "greening of industry" and "ecological modernisation" (Fischer and Hajer 1999). This shift is evident in the way that environmental/sustainable policy has been approached in the UK, a brief outline of which will now be given.

Within the UK, environmental and subsequently sustainable development policy-making has been dominated by the idea that growth can complement the environment. This follows the technocratic approach of the Brundtland report (Connelly and Smith 1999 and Hajer 1995). The approach has been espoused within the approach of ecological modernisation. Connelly and Smith (1999: p57) state that, "the dominant interpretation of sustainable development is that associated with the idea of ecological modernisation". This stance has been reinforced in a number of texts (Weale (1992), Robbins (2001), Jamison (2001)), including that of Pearce *et al* (1989):

"The modern sustainable development debate has tended to shift the focus away from growth versus the environment to one of the potential complementarity of growth and environment"

(Pearce *et al* 1989:21, as quoted in Connelly and Smith 1999: p57).

To provide context to the discussion of the role of ecological modernisation in the discourse of sustainable development, a very brief overview of the theory of ecological modernisation has been given (For more details see Simonis (1989); Jänickle (1992); Hajer (1995); Mol and Spaargaren (1993) and Mol and Sonnenfeld (2000)). Ecological modernisation theory emerged in the early 1980s principally through the work of German sociologist Huber (1982; 1985; 2000). In contrast to the 'limits to growth'

debate at the time³, outlining the antagonistic relationship between economic development and environmental protection, Huber placed a large emphasis on the role of technological innovations in environmental reform (Mol and Sonnenfeld 2000). As outlined in Robbins (2001), Huber argued that industrial society develops through three stages; industrial breakthrough; construction of industrial society; and ecological shift of industrial system, through the process of 'superindustrialisation' linked to the development of new technologies. For Huber (1985) environmental problems should be addressed through superindustrialisation:

"..the dirty and ugly industrial caterpillar will transform into a(n) ecological butterfly".

(Huber 1985: p20)

This idea provides the fundamental 'conviction' of ecological modernisation, that "the only possible way out of the ecological crisis is by going further into the process of modernisation" (Mol 1995: p42). The theory further developed through the late 1980s and 1990s, expanding to recognise the role of the state and markets. Within ecological modernisation theory the contradictions, which exist between economic and environmental development, evolve and are subsequently integrated to produce a system in which growth and environment are complementary. Fundamentally, ecological modernisation suggests "that economic and environmental goals can be integrated within a framework of industrial modernity" (Gouldson and Murphy 1998: p1). Within a similar view Roberts (2006) defines ecological modernisation as seeking "to achieve sustainable development through adjustment to existing practices in the public, private and voluntary sectors at all spatial levels" (Roberts 2006: p521). This fundamental understanding has formed the basis of environmental policy making within the UK.

Robbins (2001) states that ecological modernisation can be interpreted from three perspectives; institutional learning; technocratic project, and cultural politics. An understanding of these perspectives will provide additional insight into ecological modernisation as a discourse of sustainable development and subsequently as a

³ The publication of 'The Limits to Growth' (Meadows D et al 1972) sparked the debate that environmental degradation is linked to economic growth and that dire consequences would result if growth was not limited/slowed.

concept for policy-making. In his investigation of corporate 'greening', Robbins summarises the perspectives:

“Ecological modernization as institutional learning suggests that corporate management responses are based on a type of incremental shift associated with overall societal processes of ‘greening’. Ecological modernization as technocratic project maintains that corporate management responses are inappropriate response to socio-environmental crises because they support productive and consumptive relations that create and recreate environmental crises. Ecological modernization as cultural politics argues that corporate responses to environmental crises can transform the relationship between society and the environment, through the debate about the future construction of society.”

(*ibid.* 2001: p29)

The discussion of cultural politics is of most interest, as it is through this debate that the rules and norms of sustainable development are set. It is in this arena that some scenarios become thinkable or plausible whereas others are rejected as impossible; thus setting the agenda.

Ecological modernisation has been criticised for the selective way it highlights industrialisation, rather than the capitalist nature of modernity, as being of ecological concern (Gouldson and Murphy 1998). As a result of this acceptance of capitalism, ecological modernisation is “essentially silent on issues of social justice, the distribution of wealth and society-nature relations” (*ibid.* 1998: p4). This criticism raises questions of the legitimacy of ecological modernisation as a vehicle for sustainable development.

A more fundamental critique of ecological modernisation, is based on the argument, and the resulting inability to ‘comprehend the complexity and interconnectedness of ecological and social relations’ Connelly and Smith (1999) argue that;

“Ecological modernisation is seen as legitimising and sustaining the very political and economic institutions that have caused the current levels of environmental degradation and developmental injustices.”

(*ibid.* 1999: p58).

An important consideration, for the purposes of this thesis, again outlined by Connelly and Smith, is that:

“Radical criticisms of ecological modernisation expose those who use the concept of sustainable development for their own ends, particularly those groups and institutions whose very practices are at odds with the ideals inherent within the concept”

(ibid. 1999: p59)

This stance will be acknowledged and further investigated as part of the discursive analysis of this thesis.

Ecological modernisation illustrates the shift in language from ‘doom’ to a positive spin. As a result of this shift, Jamison (2001) argues that environmental concerns are no longer seen as a problem or a threat and rather:

“by many influential actors in both business and government, [environmental concerns] as a contributor to economic recovery and rejuvenation, and , for some, even as an interesting source of profit.”

(Frankel 1998; DeSimone and Popoff 2000, as quoted in Jamison 2001: p18)

The transformation of ecological terminology has become commercialised and that “green business managers have all but reduced the quest for sustainable development to the sustainable growth of individual firms.” *(ibid 2001: p25)*

A discussion of ecological modernisation has been important and significant in environment policy making in the UK; however, it is suggested that in fact the dominant policy discourse is moving towards something which is more corporate-centric, still keeping efficiency as a key ideal but more broadly adopting corporate language, which is reflecting the shift to a broader sustainability rather than one of just environmental protection. The significance now placed on CSR, as hinted at earlier, is an example of this and will be an important consideration for this research. Again, the issue of contested terminology is raised in relation to CSR (see Moon 2007), with the role of discourse in the policy decision-making process becoming even more important.

2.4 REALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The previous sections have provided an overview of the emergence of sustainable development along with a discussion of its contested nature and the importance and nature of sustainable development discourse. This section will now move on to looking at the actions which have occurred at the international, European and national levels in moves towards realising sustainable development.

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit resulted in the production of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED) action plan, Agenda 21. Agenda 21 is one of the most important documents in the international arena, as outlined by the OECD;

“Arguably, Agenda 21 has become the most prominent and influential – but non-binding – instrument in the environment and development field and is a guiding document for sustainable development in most regions of the world. Its most important impact has been to focus attention on the core concept of sustainable development, providing policy-makers with a point of reference for linking environmental, social and economic issues. It stresses the importance of NSDSs [National Sustainable Development Strategies] and supporting policy instruments....”

(OECD 2002: p13).

Agenda 21 sets out developmental and environmental objectives to be followed by participatory states and follows the 27 principles outlined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. A significant outcome of Agenda 21 for UK policy is the production by Local Authorities of Local Agenda 21 strategies. An important aspect of Agenda 21 was the commitment by nation states to produce National Sustainable Development Strategies, as outlined in Section 2.4.1.

In addition to the official work of the summit, the publication of the WBCSD’s report, ‘*Changing Course*’ (Schmidheiny 1992), is an important milestone for this research. The publication of this work demonstrates the increasing interest of business, particularly MNCs, in sustainable development. It also demonstrates one of the tactics employed by business to influence the policy agenda. The World Summit at Johannesburg in 2002

was criticised for not securing any firm commitment to sustainable development and for again succumbing to corporate hijacking (Friends of the Earth 2002b, Munnik and Wilson 2002). A key outcome relating to this thesis was the re-commitment of nation states “to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005” (UN 2002: p1), as this provides an important element of the research design, with particular focus being given to the production of a new UK sustainable development strategy.

The growing emphasis placed on partnerships at the Summit, particularly those between government and business is also of significant interest for this research. More than 200 private-public partnerships were launched as part of the Summit’s Plan of Implementation launched at the Summit (Friends of the Earth Europe 2002a). This figure is contradicted by numbers published by the UN, which states that “around 60 partnerships were announced during the Summit by a variety of countries” (UN 2002). The difference in the figures is likely to be a result of a technical interpretation of when partnerships have been launched/announced.

2.4.1 National Sustainable Development Strategies

NSDSs are important policy instruments for a number of reasons; firstly by their very nature the strategies are integrative, comprehensive and intergenerational. Secondly, they engage a wide range of stakeholders in both decision-making and decisions implementation (Silveria 2006) Bordhag and Taliere (2006) also argue that NSDSs offer an effective way of achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals. These reasons, in addition to the UK’s high profile in this area, demonstrate why it is important to focus on the UK NSDS when investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy.

As outlined earlier, Agenda 21 introduces the concept of National Sustainable Development Strategies, which “integrate and harmonise economic, social and environmental policies” (Tils 2007: p165). The 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session called for all states to implement NSDSs by 2002 whereas the OECD-DAC⁴ has

⁴ OCED-DAC is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee.

set a target date for implementation of 2005. The commitment to produce NSDSs was reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit held in New York (Silveria 2006). As with the concept of sustainable development, interpretation of NSDS has varied between countries and institutions. In the initial period following the 1992 Earth Summit state initiatives included: Environmental Action Plans; Conservation Plans; Climate Change Action Plans and Desertification Action Plans. The names of these initiatives demonstrate the continuing emphasis on the environmental aspect of sustainable development with social well-being largely remaining under-represented. Silveria (2006) states that there is no one way to carry out an NSDS, and there has been little guidance published for use by participating states, either in Agenda 21 or in subsequent documentation. Of the guidance that has been produced, key documents are OECD DAC (2001), UN DESA⁵ (2002) and OECD (2002).

OECD DAC (2001); defines a NSDS as comprising:

“A co-ordinated set of participatory and continuously improving processes of analysis, debate, capacity-strengthening, planning and investment, which integrates the economic, social and environmental objectives of society, seeking trade-offs where this is not possible.”

(OECD DAC 2001 as quoted in OECD 2002: p31)

UN DESA (2002) has highlighted the following elements as being key to a NSDS:

- integration of economic, social and environmental objectives, and balance across sectors, territories and generations;
- broad participation and effective partnerships;
- country ownership and commitment ;
- developing capacity and enabling environment; and
- focus on outcomes and means of implementation.

(UN DESA (2002) as quoted in OECD 2002: p36)

An important consideration for the purposes of this research is that of ‘participation and effective partnership’. Participation and partnerships continue to form an important stance for international negotiations and subsequent documentation. It will be vital to understand the extent to which this is employed by the UK Government and which institutions and groups of actors are involved.

⁵ UN DESA is the United Nations Department of Environmental and Social Affairs.

Tils (2007) provides a useful summary of the key guidelines and literature on the preparation of NSDS, see Table 2.2.

UN principles for Sustainable Development strategies	OECD principles for Sustainable Development strategies	Core categories
Comprehensive, balanced and integrated	Comprehensive and integrated	Horizontal integration
Link national and local priorities and actions, strong role of local government	Link national and local levels	Vertical integration
Public participation, communication	Effective participation	Participation
Partnership with civil society, private sector external organisations	People centred	
Shared strategic and pragmatic vision, link short to medium and long term	Consensus on long-term vision	Implementation mechanism
Country-driven, multi-stakeholder 'ownership', continuity process	Country led and nationally owned	
Strong political commitment, institutional leadership, key role of government	High-level government commitment and influential lead institutions	
Develop and build on existing knowledge and capacity	Develop and build on existing capacity	
Build on existing strategies, policies and processes	Building on existing processes and strategies	
Anchored in sound technical analysis	Based on comprehensive and reliable analysis	
Monitoring mechanism	Incorporate monitoring, learning and continuous improvement	Monitoring and evaluation

Table 2.2 Guiding principles for sustainable development strategies (Tils 2007: p166)

This overview provides a useful context as a starting point to investigate the decision-making environment in the UK surrounding sustainable development. In more recent years the number of reviews of NSDSs in the literature has increased. One key finding is that the shift from environmental policy to broader sustainable development strategies has meant there has been a shift from single planning documents to more “flexible yet focused strategy cycles” (Steurer 2007: p205) Steurer also suggests that NSDSs often lead to new administrative systems and processes which form new policy governance structures. This is reflected in the complex governance structure as discussed in Section 2.6.1. This historical review outlines the intrinsic link between the activity and commitments made in the international arena and the nation state. It is also important from a UK perspective to briefly review the role of Europe in sustainable development policy making.

2.5 REALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EUROPEAN CONTEXT

It is not the purpose of this research to provide a comprehensive review of European politics and decision-making; however, it is important to understand the governance structure of the European Union (EU) and how this affects decision-making within the UK context. More specifically the emergence of sustainable development policy and related programmes is particularly relevant to this research.

The supranational organisational nature of the EU means that the member states are committed to work together and, more interestingly, there are formal constraints on the actions of its members. In this respect the actions and judgements of the EU extend beyond the boundaries of other international organisations (Connelly and Smith 1999). In addition to acting as a supranational body the EU has capability as an independent actor; for example, it can be a signatory of international agreements in its own right, independent of the member states. Therefore, of importance to this research is that lobbying of the EU as a decision-making body can serve two purposes: to affect decisions and agreements made within the international environment and secondly to affect the Directives and policies which will trickle down into Member States.

The EU has a history of developing environmental policies including Lead in Petrol 1978, Environmental Impact Assessment 1985, Large Combustion Plants 1988 and

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control 1996 (Connelly and Smith 1999). In more recent years, mirroring international and national shifts to sustainable development, the EU has turned its attention to sustainability. Currently at a European level sustainable development is described to be “an overarching long-term goal of the European Union” (European Commission dna) within which exist seven key challenges; climate change and clean energy; sustainable transport; sustainable consumption and production; conservation and management of natural resources; public health; social inclusion and global poverty and sustainable development challenges.

2.5.1 Development of a European Sustainable Development Strategy

Sustainable development in a European context was initially laid out in 2001 during the Gothenberg European Council in the document “A sustainable Europe for a better world” (European Council, 2001). According to Steurer and Martinuzzi (2005 :p459) this was never formally agreed as a European strategy but included “fourteen modestly ambitious paragraphs on SD [sustainable development] in Europe”. The early document was split into two broad sections; one outlining possible policy measures and objectives and the other calling for a change in the EU policy process that “ensures that the EU’s economic, social and environmental policies mutually reinforce each other” (European Commission 2007a :p1).

The 2001 Gothenberg declaration until 2006 formed the core basis for sustainable development in Europe, along with complementary policies in related programmes, including the 2000 Millennium Development Goals and the 2002 World Summit in Johannesburg. However, in 2006, the declaration was superseded with a renewed EU SDS. This document was described by the European Council as being an ‘ambitious and comprehensive’ renewal of their previous work. (European Commission 2007a). The Commission set out the aim to produce a strategy with a “stronger focus, a clearer division of responsibilities, wider ownership and broader support, a stronger integration of the international dimensions and more effective implementation and monitoring.” (*ibid* :p2)

The EU, like the UK Government, hold the position that it is the role of all members of society to try and move towards sustainable development, rather than just the role of national and regional governing bodies.

“The EU and its Member States have a critical role to play, but they cannot - and should not be the sole guardians of the sustainable development agenda. Other actors will need to take action; businesses, regional and local authorities, NGOs, social partners, universities and schools – and individual citizens and consumers. Progress will rely on the enormous creative and market power of business, and of regional and local bodies and authorities.”

(European Commission 2007b :p1)

This quote demonstrates the multi-actor approach to sustainable development which involves business and highlights explicitly the importance placed on the market.

2.6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE UK

In relation to sustainable development the UK is seen by a number of international organisations, including the OECD as being innovative in its administration, tools and processes (Russel 2007). To provide context to the current status of the UK's national sustainable development strategy a brief historical overview is useful. Following the commitment to the production of NSDSs at Rio in 1992, the UK Government produced its first strategy in 1994; *'Sustainable development: The UK Strategy'* (Department of the Environment 1994). The publication of this 'strategy' was amongst the first to be published in the EU, and it was the first NSDS to be produced after the Rio Conference (Silveria 2006). Russel (2007) argues that what is more important is that the UK played a role in persuading other EU states to follow suit. He also argues, along with Niestroy (2005) and Swanson *et al* (2004), that the UK has been outperforming its EU neighbours and has indeed become an international leader with respect to this sustainable development policy tool. Such a reputation in the international arena illustrates why the UK NSDS is an important policy tool for this research to focus upon.

In the period between the publication of the 1994 Strategy and the election of a Labour government in 1997 a number of administrative moves were made to create political bodies with some responsibility for sustainable development. Such moves informed the current governance structures which are outlined in more detail later in this

section. However, the focus largely continued to be on environmental sustainability, rather than the three pillars of sustainable development (Voisey and O'Riordan (1998) in Russel (2007)). With the change of government in 1997 the announcement was made that a new strategy would be prepared, resulting in the publication in 1999 of the strategy; *'A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK'*. As outlined previously this research will investigate the role MNCs played in the review of this strategy which has led to the subsequent publication of the current UK NSDS: *'Securing the future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy'*.

It is useful here to give an overview of the UK situation prior to the development of the *'Securing the future'* Strategy; thus providing the context in which the empirical component of this research was undertaken. At the onset of this thesis the UK's approach to sustainable development policy was through the use of an overarching Sustainable Development Strategy, *A Better Quality of Life* (1999), which provides the framework for the development of other strategies and programmes, such as the waste strategy (2000) and the climate change programme (2001).

Development Process of 'A Better Quality of Life'

To understand the network and modes of influence which were at play in the review of UK NSDS it is useful to review the development process for *'A Better Quality of Life'* (the Strategy). It is important to note that this section provides an overview based on information supplied by Government agencies and is not a critique of the process. The development of the 1994 strategy was the responsibility of the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)⁶, under the control of the Deputy Prime Minister. Prior to the development of the Strategy a four-month consultation period was completed, in which a key component was the production of the document *'Opportunities for Change'* (DETR 1999). This consultation document outlined the central themes and highlighted particular areas for comment. Fifty thousand hard copies of the document were distributed to identified stakeholders, with the document also being available on-line (DFID 1999). Supplementary papers, with sector-specific focus were developed outlining specific areas of sustainable development in more detail, including; sustainable business, sustainable forestry and sustainable tourism. A short summary leaflet was distributed to the general public, which included a 'tear-off'

⁶ Following reorganisation DETR no longer exists, and sustainable development now falls under the remit of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

questionnaire. To ensure that all geographical areas of the country were included in the consultation exercise, regional consultation events were organised. A number of NGOs organised these events, including the Sustainable Communities Action Network. In response to the consultation programme, 1100 written responses were received, broken down into: 315 from Local Authorities; 238 Individual responses; 126 from environmental organisations and 88 from the private sector. Additionally 2900 'tear-off' questionnaires were returned by the general public (DFID 1999). On completion of consultation an intra-governmental steering group was developed with the remit to produce the Strategy. The practicalities of this meant that each 'lead' department would draft the chapter referred to them, with subsequent consultation with other departments being completed before the text was finalised.

Brief Review of 'A Better Quality of Life'

A Better Quality of Life recognises the Brundtland definition of sustainable development and expresses it as "the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come." (DETR 1999: p 8). The Strategy recognises that "although the idea is simple, the task is substantial", outlining four strategic objectives:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

(ibid.1999: p8)

It is the fourth object, 'maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment'; which has received the most attention during a recent pre-consultation review of the Strategy. This issue and review will be discussed in further detail later in this paper. The discourse of ecological modernisation is reflected in this objective and can also be identified in other elements of *'A Better Quality of Life'*.

'A Better Quality of Life' covers four main areas; sustainable economics; sustainable communities; resources and environmental impacts; and international co-operation and development. The aim of the Strategy is to act as a 'catalyst' for change, which identifies priority areas, indicators and targets, and provides a framework to guide Government policy (DFID 1999). A fundamental focus of *'A Better Quality of Life'* is the

development of key indicators, by which progress towards the four strategic objectives can be measured. The Government undertakes an annual review of performance against these indicators. The Strategy outlines 150 indicators, which were produced through a review of *'Indicators of sustainable development for the United Kingdom'* and the consultation process outlined above. A subset of 15 key headline indicators has been developed as part of the Strategy. The aim of these indicators is:

"to focus attention on what sustainable development means, and give a broader overview of whether we are achieving a 'better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.'" (DETR 1999: p13).

The headline indicators within the Strategy were:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- Investment (in public, private and business assets);
- Proportion of people of working age in employment;
- Success in tackling poverty and social exclusion;
- Qualification at 19;
- Expected years of healthy life;
- Homes judged unfit to live in;
- Levels of crime;
- Emissions of greenhouse gases;
- Number of days air pollution is regarded as moderate or high;
- Road traffic;
- Rivers of good or fair quality;
- Populations of wild birds;
- New houses built on previously developed land; and
- Waste arisings.

'A Better Quality of Life' has been criticised for being a framework rather than a strategy and for its lack of "new targets" (ENDs 1999). Moreover, ENDs (1999) argues that

"Nothing in the strategy suggests that the Government knows what it is 'aiming for', and there is no clear sense of priorities either."

(ibid1999: p1).

However, ENDS (1999) outline that the Strategy does include some new business initiatives and reflect the Government's stance at the time of 'joined-up' working. It is interesting to note that in an early review of sustainable development in the UK (DEFRA 2003) 'joined-up' thinking is one of the main tools for meeting the challenges of sustainable development. The 1999 Strategy was notable for the shift in policy emphasis on environmental sustainability, introducing a policy focus on "sustainable economy, sustainable communities and international co-operation and development" (Russel 2007: p190). It is interesting to note that Russel considers that: "As a policy instrument with the UK NSDSs have been considered to have failed to make any significant progress towards sustainable development (e.g. Jordan 2002; EAC 2004; SDC 2004; Ross 2005)" (*ibid*: p 190)

2.6.1 UK Sustainable Development: Current Governance Structures

Within the UK, sustainable development and policy making, in general, is taking place in a context which has seen a shift from government to governance, the related change in the power of MNCs as a result of this shift has been discussed previously. In an international context the increase of governance had developed alongside the growth of globalisation, with non-state actors playing increasing role in policy-making and public services. Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002) argue that how governance develops is dependent on the ability of the different actors to undertake public services. They state that nation states are not changing in the same way or at the same pace as global structures and are unable to meet public needs which mirror these changes. Therefore, other actors are taking on this role and thus increasing their governance capacity.

Governance capacity is:

"The formal and factual capability of public or private actors to define the content of public goods and to shape the social, economic and political process by which these goods are provided" (*ibid* 2002: p 43)

The idea of governance capacity is interesting, in relation to this thesis, as a concept by which to assess the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. However, the term should only be used as an interesting guiding point for discussions as its lack of

consideration of the informal renders it a little limited in relation to this thesis. Knill and Lehmkuhl's view of governance, which includes the activity of social actors, reflects that of the UK-focused work of Bevir and Rhodes (2003) who argue that in the UK the shift has been from a "government of a unitary state to governance in and by networks" (Bevir and Rhodes 2003: p1), although Bevir and Rhodes do place more emphasis on the informal. For more conventional discussions of governance see Czempiel and Rosenau (1992). Bevir and Rhodes (2003) argue that the move to governance in the UK has occurred in three broad phases from the hierarchies of the welfare state, followed by marketisation by the Conservative governments to a system today which is based on networks. In a UK context Bevir and Rhodes argue that governance refers to:

" the informal authority of networks as constitutive of, supplementing or supplanting the formal authority of government. The concept of governance those overlaps with those of the core executive, the hollow state and the differentiated polity, all of which point to a more diverse view of state authority as being located at the boundary of state and civil society"

(ibid: p6)

Governance and policy-making in the UK has been dramatically changed through New Labour's *Modernising Government* agenda which promotes joined-up governance which entails "collaborative working across organisational boundaries" (Cabinet Office 1999) and an increase in public-private partnership (Bevir 2005). Under New Labour, policy making and the delivery of public services is now undertaken by a combination "of government departments, special-purpose bodies, the voluntary sector, and the private sector." (ibid 2005: p 48). In real terms this has meant that the role of the Cabinet Office has moved to encourage policy innovation and better implementation, along with the creation of themed units such as the Social Exclusion Unit, and by 2001 around three hundred taskforces (Seldon 2001). The specific government departments, agencies, groups and task forces relating to sustainable development will now be outlined. An exhaustive review has not been given, and it relates only to government-linked actors and not non-state actors. Although most Government departments play some role in sustainable development they have not been included in-depth here as the focus is on those which have a specific remit for sustainable development. However, the role and subsequent influence of these departments is considered in the full examination of the

policy decision-making process through the analysis and discussion of results within this thesis. Table 2.3 outlines the main administrative bodies which play a role in the governance for sustainable development within the formalised UK political decision-making. The table alone demonstrates the complex nature of governance for sustainable development, it also highlights that influence on sustainable development, by MNCs, can occur through a number of routes.

The key actors to note at this stage are the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) and the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). All three organisations play a pivotal role in UK sustainable development policy, including the development and implementation of the UK NSDS. This said, sustainable development in the UK is led and championed by DEFRA, with all government departments and the Devolved Administrations being responsible for embedding sustainable development into their practices (Jones 2006).

In addition to Government groups there are other organisations which are involved in the Government's approach to sustainable development. As discussed earlier, UNED-UK completed the initial informal consultation process, *'Where Next for the UK on Sustainable Development'*. The United Nations Environment and Development UK Committee (UNED-UK), replaced the United Nations Environment Programme, UK. It co-ordinated the official Earth Summit consultation process in the UK for the non-government side,

"UNED-UK's executive elected or appointed representatives of most of these different major groups on to the Executive. It recognized in addition the media, education community, social groups and the religious community. To date over 120 organisations have joined UNED-UK as full members."

(UNED Forum 2003: p1)

UNED-UK objectives include:

- Helping to mobilise the UK political process, particularly through national and local government, the voluntary sector and the commercial and industrial sector, in order to promote sustainable development in the work of the UN institutions both nationally and internationally;
- facilitating input from the membership of UNED-UK to the policy-making processes of UNEP, UNDP, UNCSD and other inter-governmental institutions
- contributing to the preparation and implementation of a national strategy for Agenda 21 and to support the work of UNCSD including its reviews of national strategy
- encouraging other activities that result in a multi-sectoral approach to the promotion of environmental protection and sustainable development

(ibid.2003)

Organisation/Institution	Brief Description
<i>Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</i>	The government department championing sustainable development, it is responsible for the review and production of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. Therefore, lead department in the 'Taking It On' process. The sustainable development unit is housed in this department.
<i>Other Government Departments (for example Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform(BERR))</i>	For Example BERR: works with others to encourage innovative, enterprising and internationally competitive business solutions to environmental problems and the wider challenges of sustainable development. The BERR is involved in a number of business groups and task forces promoting the link between business and sustainable development.
House of Commons <i>Environmental Audit Committee (EAC)</i>	15 backbenchers, five staff and uses specialist advisors when required. Its remit is to hold Government accountable for its impact on the environment and commitment to meet "simultaneously the threefold objectives of Sustainable Development, economic, environmental and social improvements." (Environmental Audit Committee 2003:1)
<i>Sustainable Development Unit (SDU)</i>	Housed within DEFRA, with the remit to "embed, monitor and report on sustainable development across Whitehall and the UK" (HMG 2005) and to develop the UK NSDS. The SDU sponsors the Sustainable Development Commission.
Cabinet sub-committee <i>ENV(G)</i>	20 'green' ministers. The terms of reference for ENV(G) are; to consider the impact on sustainable development of Government Policies; to improve the performance of Department in contributing to sustainable development, and to report as required to the Committee on the Environment.
<i>Sustainable Development Commission (SDC)</i>	An independent commission, which is made up of 21 members, drawn from a wide-range of backgrounds and from all parts of the UK. " <i>The Sustainable Development Commission is a UK-wide, non-departmental public body, reporting to the Prime Minister and the leaders of the devolved administrations. It is chaired by Jonathon Porritt. The Commission's remit is to advocate sustainable development across all sectors in the UK, review progress towards it, and build consensus on the actions needed if further progress is to be achieved. Its mission is to inspire government, the economy and society to embrace sustainable development as the central organising principle.</i> " (DEFRA 2003 p:26)

<i>Sustainable Development Task Force</i>	The Task Force has been established to help ensure effective follow-up of the UK's WSSD commitments, and to help ensure that the review of the 1999 strategy for sustainable development for the UK, 'A better quality of life', is focused on the delivery of sustainable development. Chaired by DEFRA Secretary of State, the Task Force brings together Ministers across Whitehall with colleagues from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and some key stakeholders.
<i>Sub-Committee on Environment and Energy (ED(EE))</i>	Set up in July 2007 under a new cabinet committee structure. Its remit is "to consider international and domestic policy on environment and energy issues; and report as necessary to the Committee on Economic Development and the Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development." (UK Government 2008b)
<i>Devolved administrations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales</i>	All have responsibility for the promotion of sustainable development in their region. In Scotland this is done through the <i>Cabinet Sub-Committee on Sustainable Scotland</i> . In Wales action is guided through the <i>Welsh Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme</i> and in Northern Ireland the Department of Environment engages in sustainable development through the <i>Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme</i> .
<i>English Regions</i>	A certain level of responsibility has been devolved to the <i>English Regional Development Agencies</i> , all of which have produced sustainable development frameworks. Each English region has its own Government Office (GO). Each region produces a Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF)
<i>Local Authorities (LAs)</i>	Had a responsibility to develop and implement Local Agenda 21 strategies which align the national sustainable development strategy with local conditions. The emphasis on these plans has reduced in recent years. LAs must produce Communities Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships.
<i>United Nations Environment and Development UK Committee (UNED-UK)</i>	Acts as a link, promoting between sustainable development, between the United Nations and UK national and local bodies.

(Developed based on UK Government 2008a)

Table 2.3 UK Governance and Sustainable Development

This limited review of the UK governance system highlights the number of potential actors and the network decision-making structure involved in UK sustainable development policy. It also demonstrates the complex nature of the network of influence which needs to be considered in the methodological and analytical approaches employed in this thesis.

The impact that the move to a complex governance system has had at a regional level in the UK has been examined by Roberts (2006), he argues that

“the allocation of power, resources for regional development is now more fragmented than in the past, the public sector has to secure the agreement of a wide range of organisations and actors in order to enable the generation of a meaningful and implementable regional sustainable development strategy

(ibid: p 528)

Roberts’ statement is interesting in relation to this thesis in two ways; firstly it demonstrates how important state and non-state actors are in UK sustainable development policy and, secondly the regional actors through their involvement in regional strategy play a vital role in national strategy. Therefore, the relationships they hold and development at a regional level will impact upon the way in which they interact with policy at a national level.

2.7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTI NATIONAL CORPORATIONS

In order to focus on the overview aim of this thesis; to investigate the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy it is important to first understand the broader context in which MNCs are operating, how this links to sustainable development and then to focus on the MNCS and sustainable development in a UK context.

2.7.1 *The Power of Multinational Corporations*

Corporations in today’s globalised society play a greater role and have more power than ever before. Corporate influence can be seen both in their size, geographical

coverage, turnover and the extension of their impact. As Henriques (2007) outlines, “corporations clearly now have a huge impact on our lives”. In terms of economic considerations, of the 100 largest economies in the world, 51 are now global corporations and only 49 are countries. The fact that MNCs are powerful organisations is not disputed; it is the extent to which this power has encroached into society which is contested. The increased power held by MNCs historically led to critical research in economic terms, but has also more recently led to activity by civil society groups, and anti-globalisation protests. One of the fundamental stances is that the extent of corporate power has led to a degradation of democracy; as highlighted by Korten (1995) that as the power of corporations and the organisations which are associated with them grows, the power of the general population reduces and therefore democracy becomes less meaningful.

In contrast, proponents of corporations and the global economy acknowledge the role MNCs can play, but argue that this is actually more limited than some would suggest:

“companies do have the power to invest, to direct resources and technology and skills but in reality that is the limit of their power. Indeed that power is limited further by competition, because there’s likely to be great competition for the best opportunities that come up.”

(Browne 2002: p 219)

It is questionable that the decision to invest and its relationship with technology and skills actually represents ‘limited power’.

The increase in the power of MNCs within a globalised society is not only a result of their privileged economic and financial position but also as result of “a long standing governance lacunae” which, as a result of either government inability or unwillingness, corporations are taking on social roles (Moon 2007). Such shifts have been reflected in the move towards a globalised neo-liberal market place and related governance structures.

“Privatisation has been espoused over the last fifteen years and we have seen valuable national assets shifted from the control of government to the private sector in the

name of efficiency. Thus the very role of government has been to transfer more and more power into the corporate private sector”

(Welford, 1997: p11)

The move from government to governance, as outlined above, has resulted in a change in shift in the policy process resulting in an increased involvement of the number actors, both government and non-state actors, affecting decision-making.

The growth of individual corporations has been mirrored by an increase in business groups and coalitions, such as the World Economic Forum (WEF); World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). As highlighted by Beder (2006) the president of the WEF, Klaus Schwab, takes the position that the “sovereign state has become obsolete and that the preference of the chief executives of large corporations is for national governments to become subservient to corporate and financial interests”. (Machan 1999 quoted in Beder 2006). The development of these groups is important in general, and more specifically, in policy terms as one of the main objectives is to influence global and local agendas. For some this is seen as taking over too much public space and attacking democracy (see Beder 2006; Farnsworth 2004; Korten 1995; Monbiot 2001 and Klein (2001)). Notably, the WBCSD has the stated objective “to participate in policy development in order to create a framework that allows business to contribute effectively to sustainable development” as one of its four objectives. In the UK one of the largest, and most notable business group is the Confederation of British Industries (CBI). Their role in lobbying government is well recognised and is increasingly coming under scrutiny, even with some of their members criticising their hard-line approach to government regulation; this issue is discussed in more detail later in this Chapter.

Such an increase in the power of MNCs and the change in governance structures means that their role in society has changed and therefore there is a link with the role MNCs play in sustainable development. This changing role is demonstrated in Browne’s discussion of the argument that MNCs should play a greater role in sustainable development. He argues that “...a compelling case can be made that multinational companies have a key role to play as the 21st century begins to unfold” (Browne 2002: p.218).

2.7.2 *MNCs and sustainable development*

The views of the role of MNCs in sustainable development can be split in three main camps. The first being that corporations cannot play a positive role in sustainable development and it is in fact their actions which are creating a lot of the current problems (Korten 1995, Mayhew 1997, Welford 1997); the second being that MNCs play a vital role in achieving sustainable development due to the role and power they have in a globalised society (Ledgerwood and Broadhurst (2000), Lowe and Ward (1998)). The third sits somewhere between these two extremes; holding that MNCs can play a role; however it must be in conjunction with wider society and some changes in activity are required. The differing stances broadly reflect the debates which were highlighted previously in this section in the discussion of sustainable development as a concept.

The proposition that MNCs have no role to play in sustainable development has been proposed from two differing standpoints. The first that the role of business is to make a profit for its shareholders, whereas the other is that the agenda of sustainable development has been devalued by the actions of business. The first, classic argument, that the sole responsibility of business is profit maximisation was captured in Friedman's (1970) New York Times piece "The Social Responsibility of Business Is To Increase Its Profits". Interestingly, this stance has also been taken by commentators at the opposite end of the spectrum who argue that as the fundamental role of business is profit maximisation they, as organisations, cannot play a positive role in environmental protection and social justice, and subsequently have no role to play in sustainable development within the current economic system. Daly outlines what he sees as a basic contradiction:

"Free traders [MNCs] seek to maximise profit and production without any real regard to the considerations that represent hidden social and environmental costs. In fact, they care little even when they are not so hidden."

(Daly 1993: p 50)

The increasing power shift, as highlighted by Welford (1997), to the private sector and the subsequent increasing role of business in sustainable development, has led to much criticism from NGOs and civil society more widely. They have accused business (and government), particularly MNCs, of hijacking sustainable development and have also

questioned the role of international organisations such as the UN and the World Bank; criticising the level of responsibility and influence they have allowed to be taken by MNCs. Such condemnation has historically been most heavy immediately following the UN Earth Summits; particularly Johannesburg in 2002. The main criticism here is that business representatives are allowed too much control over the agenda of the meetings, having pushed for the use of market-based economic mechanisms and have pressured nation-states to agree on voluntary non-binding initiatives rather than using a regulatory framework. Bruno and Karliner (2002) argue that the first summit marked a great opportunity for environmental protection and social justice, however, it failed to achieve anything and indeed, this earth summit process is “a mere footnote to the dominant trend of corporate globalisation” (ibid: p 6-7). Although there are numerous claims of corporate hijacking, there is still a relatively small amount of investigation into how this influence has affected national approaches to sustainable development.

Ironically, one of the main reasons for taking a negative stance towards the role of MNCs in sustainable development is the same argument for the importance of MNCs; that MNCs have power and ability to effectively make a difference towards achieving a more sustainable world.

“Through international organisations the concept of sustainability will increasingly be extended into a social and ethical agenda. Historically this agenda has been allocated to government, but corporations play an ever-increasing role. Furthermore, electorates are increasingly unwilling to trust government alone with the power and resources essential to meet the enhanced performance expectations for products and environmental excellence”

(Ledgerwood and Broadhurst (2000: p 5-6)

The emphasis placed on the role of MNCs in the success of sustainable development is often linked to their ability to take action and implement the policies introduced at both national and international level. This is reflected in the work of Lowe and Ward (1998); they argue that this ability, along with the potential for investment are the key factors as to why involving MNCs in relevant policies is important;

“Now that both the EC and UK Government recognise the importance of involving business in environmental policy formation, the prospect of getting practicable and cost-effective solutions to priority problems look brighter than ever before. Of course, the real contribution of industry is in translating agreed policies and regulations into practice, via its investment and operating programmes.”

(Lowe and Ward 1998: p170)

The growing importance placed on business, along with its role in implementation, is also demonstrated in the following statement made by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

“And more and more we are realizing that it is only by mobilizing the corporate sector that we can make significant progress. The corporate sector has the finances, the technology and the management to make this happen”

(quoted by Wade 2005, p 186 in Moon 2007, p296)

An important shift in this debate has been the internalisation of sustainable development by the business community, along with Government and some parts of the academic community, discussing the business opportunity provided by sustainable development. “This is typified by the approach to environmental concerns that holds that ‘sustainable development is a business opportunity’” (Dine 2001: p102 quoting Frankel (1998)). This has been reflected in the growth of business services and advice relating to sustainability and more recently specifically in relation to climate change. In the UK alone the environmental/sustainability sector is now comparable to pharmaceutical and aerospace sectors with a projected growth of 42% by 2010. In 2005 it was worth over £25 billion employing 400,000 people, excluding internal corporate environmental teams, NGOs, charities and public sector organisations. (ENDs 2008). Most MNCs now have sustainability or corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes; implementing policies and procedures to address or (at least) monitor their social, environmental and economic behaviour, producing annual corporate reports and to some degree or other engaging with their wider stakeholder community (see KPMG 2005). A notable change has been a general shift, and acceptance that CSR is the business contribution to sustainable development. The UK Government’s stance on the issue is both enlightening and pertinent;

“The Government sees CSR as the business contribution to sustainable development. Essentially it is about how business takes account of its economic, social and environmental impacts in the way it operates – maximising the benefits and minimising the downsides.”

(UK Government 2004)

This increased activity by MNCs and the positive position taken by policy-makers has helped create a space for the more middle ground of the debate to emerge. Within this space, proponents argue that yes, MNCs do have a vital role to play in sustainable development. However, some changes, to varying degrees, are required to existing business processes and systems. A vital requirement here is that sustainability becomes a core business approach and that it (or related approaches) is not an add-on to business as usual and not a mere public relations (PR) exercise. Along such lines Zadek argues that in order for a corporation to be civil, i.e. be sustainable, it must “take full advantage of opportunities for learning and action in building social and environmental objectives into its core business by effectively developing its internal values and competencies.” (2007: p37) Zadek also stated that businesses should not only get their own ‘house in order’ but should work and lobby for a civil governance structure which aids a move towards the aspirations of sustainable development. Elkington (1997) takes a slightly less ‘radical’ approach promoting the concept of ‘Triple Bottom Line’ reporting, in which the traditional financial accounting framework is expanded to include social and environmental performance. Again, calling for sustainability to become a core business issue, Zadek and Elkington both see the role of, and responsibility to, stakeholders, as being key to a business approach to sustainable development.

2.7.3 *Multinational Corporations and UK Sustainable Development*

More recently, occupying this middle ground is where we find third sector groups and think tanks conducting research on the role of business in UK sustainability. This has led to a handful of empirically based research initiatives; including the Janus programme and work by Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. It is interesting to note in the context of this thesis that all of these studies, to a greater or lesser extent, have focused on the role of business in public policy relating to sustainable development; therefore, it is useful here to provide a brief overview of this work.

The Janus programme is run by SustainAbility⁷ with the aim to:

“..... explore[s] the nature and implications of corporate influence on the politics and policy of sustainable development.” (SustainAbility: DNAa)

The principal outputs of the Janus programme have been the publication of ‘Politics and Persuasion: corporate influence on sustainable development policy’ (2001); ‘Influencing Power: Reviewing the conduct and content of corporate lobbying’ (2005); and ‘Coming in from the Cold: Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility’ (2007). The most relevant and useful to this research is the first report; ‘Politics and Persuasion: corporate influence on sustainable development policy’ which covers the following:

- the nature of corporate influence on politics and policy in Europe and the US;
- the links between the desired outcome - corporate influence - and actual decisions and functions inside companies directed at achieving it;
- how corporate influence has impeded effective policymaking in the climate change and biotechnology arenas;
- the positive role that companies can play in achieving sound policy making;
- how companies can begin to move towards a model of best practice in their political policy engagement.

(SustainAbility 2001)

It is important to note that the Janus programme is run by the consultancy/think-tank SustainAbility in conjunction with consulting group, Government Policy Consultants (GPC) and more recently the NGO WWF. Both of the former organisations have the aim of researching in this area but also advising corporations on their performance. Therefore, the report is written from a business-centric perspective, with the explicit aim to;

⁷ SustainAbility is an independent think tank and strategic consultancy which is “working at the interface between market forces and societal expectation,[which] seeks solutions to social and environmental challenges that drive long-term values” (SustainAbility DNAb)

“.. catalyse debate on how companies can more closely integrate their public policy activities with their public statements on sustainable development.”

(SustainAbility 2001: p2)

The programme is, however, of value to this research as it outlines the strategies and tactics available to business and to a lesser extent highlights the business strategy process relating to public policy.

The Janus report outlines ‘myriad forms of influence’, which require further understanding. These individual influence elements are discussed under the umbrella term of ‘Corporate Public Policy Activity’ (CPPA), with the aim to “describe the functions and individuals involved in making and implementing decisions that are intended to:

- influence the outcome or direction of proposed or existing legislation;
- influence how regulators apply or enforce the laws;
- support external organisations – either directly or indirectly – that seek to influence public policy;
- develop or improve the company’s relationship with elected officials, civil servants, or the judiciary;
- influence the broad direction of government policy; and
- support political candidates or incumbents through, for example, monetary donations or other forms of support.”

The myriad of influences outlined here will be outlined in more detail in subsequent chapters in the discussion of the Actor Influence Framework, which has been developed and employed within this research.

The second major output of the research programme; *‘Influencing Power: Reviewing the conduct and content of corporate lobbying’* (2005) altered the direction of the programme towards how corporations report on their lobbying activities rather than the actual nature of the lobby activities. The study was particularly interested in whether this is in line with core business values, particularly those which relate to “key corporate responsibility issues, such as climate change and human rights”. This work provides a

useful model of linking reporting and corporate activity based on a generational concept see Table 2.4 below.

Lobbying	First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation
State of CR	'CR as PR'	CR as a way of managing reputation or operational risk	CR as strategic differentiator
Role of Lobbying	Links between lobbying and CR are rejected	Transparency and consistency supported primarily as part of reputational risk management	Lobbying as an opportunity to drive stronger social and environmental policy in support of core business

Table 2.4 Three Generations of Corporate Responsibility and Lobbying (SustainAbility and WWF 2005: p 19)

This model provides an interesting insight for this research in terms of the context in which MNCs' influence on UK sustainable policy is taking place and how it links with the broader corporate activity in this area.

The latest work under the umbrella of the Janus programme represents a move to investigation of the relationship between corporate responsibility and public affairs agendas (SustainAbility 2007). Again it should be noted that the target audience for this work are corporate executives; however, the report provides useful context for the research. It highlights that there is an increasing shift in the scrutiny of the activity of corporations and public affairs, also highlighting that this scrutiny is no longer just coming from NGOs but also from investors. A discussion of the impact of technological changes on the policy process is given; arguing that the greater use of techniques such as on-line consultation allows wider input into the policy-making process. The shift in the emphasis of the Janus Programme is interesting as it mirrors a general shift in the business response to sustainability being corporate social responsibility. It also marks a shift anyway from assessing what business is actually doing in this area, and more towards how they are reporting on what they are doing.

The increased speculation and 'spotlight' on corporate activity in public affairs has been addressed further by civil society groups through the work of the Green Alliance⁸ (*Private life of public affair* (Caulkin and Collins 2003)) and Friends of the Earth (*Big Business at Bournemouth* (2003) and *Hidden voices the CBI, corporate lobbying and sustainability* (McRae 2005)). The main findings of this work are that corporate influence on UK policy and political activity is high, and maybe more insightful is the identification between the gap between what businesses say they are doing in public and what they are doing and saying in private. "Whilst leading companies have taken on board the language of CSR they have stopped short of turning it into commitment to put sustainability into action" (Caulkin and Collins 2003: p6) This statement not only identifies this deficit but also highlights the importance which should be placed on language when looking at this debate.

These differing views on the link between MNCs, a more broadly neo-liberal agenda and sustainable development are reflected in the differing discourse and definitions which exist in relation to sustainable development. The use of this discourse to promote a particular agenda and standpoint is an important consideration when looking at the role of MNCs in sustainable development within the UK, with the link between discourse and power informing the theoretical basis for the methodology employed here. The next section will review the existing discourses of sustainability along with their importance within policy decision-making.

2.8 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The review provided within this Chapter has developed a research context which will frame the investigation of the role of MNCs in UK sustainable policy within this thesis. The historical development of sustainable development as a concept and its implementation as a policy has been charted; the overview of the UK setting provides important information which has informed the current political context in which this thesis is located. By highlighting the contested nature of the concept in its wider sense, potential areas of conflict are demonstrated which may exist within the policy-making arena and the role of discourse in both a normative and a methodological sense is

⁸ Green Alliance is an independent organisation which was established in 1979 with the aim of "working to make environmental solutions a priority in British politics." (Green Alliance 2008)

highlighted. Finally, the review of studies into the political activity of MNCs in relation to UK sustainable development provides useful information which has been used in the development of the AIF. Before further discussion of the AIF is given the methodological considerations and research design employed within this thesis will be examined

3

Development of the Actor Influence Framework

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This Chapter will develop upon the arguments and the context provided in Chapter Two and outline methodological considerations which are further developed in Chapter Four. These Chapters have highlighted the growing questions surrounding sustainable development and what role MNCs should, and are playing within it. The argument for addressing these questions through a multi-disciplinary, largely interpretative method within a qualitative design will be presented in Chapter Four. This Chapter will discuss how an evaluation framework has been developed within this research context which enables a holistic and systematic review of the influence MNCs have in UK sustainable development policy. Initially, the need for a framework approach will be given along with the proposition that the framework should be located in a synthesis position. The discussion will then turn to the policy decision-making process in which reference is particularly given to how different systems allow for actor interaction along with an overview of power/influence within this context. The wide-ranging debate on power has been very influential in the development of the Actor Influence Framework (AIF) as has, in line with the methodological consideration

of discourse, the work of post-empiricists from the policy analysis tradition. The AIF is unique in the way that it draws together wide-ranging debate on power/influence and the policy process. The development of the AIF provides the basis of the original theoretical contribution made by this thesis.

3.2 THE NEED FOR A FRAMEWORK

As Newell (2000) outlines, influence within the policy-making arena does not exist in a simple format, for him it exists in a web; in what he considers the 'web of influence'. Therefore, from an analytical perspective it would be useful to have a mechanism by which the researcher can break down such a 'web of influence' in order to fully understand the context in question. The need for such a systematic approach is particularly required within this thesis due to the complex nature, as outlined previously, of both the policy environment (multi-governance) and policy subject (sustainable development).

The AIF has been developed, within this thesis, to draw together the wide-ranging debate on influence and policy; it has been influenced by the theories of power debate, post-modernist stance on the use of language and the argumentative turn provided by the post-empiricists. In addition, the study of pressure groups and business-government relationships have also been drawn upon. The drawing together of this literature provides this thesis with the theoretical basis of the AIF, which in turn is used as a lens to systemically investigate sustainable development policy in the UK in a way which allows for an interpretive approach as outlined in Chapter Four. At this point it should be noted that within this thesis the term "framework" has been used rather than "model". It is considered that "framework" reflects the nature of the AIF rather than "model", as the AIF is used as an analytical tool which can frame and describe the influence which occurs within the policy-making arena. However, it is not used a predictive tool; as the word model would suggest, there is no input-output exercise involved in the analysis employing the AIF.

The AIF has a number of characteristics which demonstrate its innovative nature and progression of the study policy; these are the synthesis position it provides and its nested structure. The AIF inhabits a synthesis position within policy analysis

marrying the theories of power debate with the discursive focus proposed by the augmentative turn. This synthesis position is important as it allows for both direct and tacit influence to be accounted for whilst allowing for the importance of discourse to be recognised. Within this thesis the term tacit is used in its broadest sense to represent indirect (for example influence gained through the action of others) and tacit (for example influence which is unspoken, such as perceived power) influence, this stance has been taken to ensure no influence is missed as a result of the research focus. Newell (2000) identifies the importance of allowing for conceptual power to be accounted for whilst still acknowledging that it is important to account for direct action. The AIF builds on this position by taking an understanding of discourse which is more in line with the post-empiricist school (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Fischer 2003)). However, it has been considered, within this thesis, that the tradition has taken the debate too far in favour of discourse and is in danger of ignoring other influences which occur. It is considered here that in order for an action to have influence it must have, at a point in history, had to be acknowledged through language; however, such direct actions still have consequences within a specific time and place, in this case UK sustainable development policy, and to ignore them would prevent a full understanding being achieved. This stance is supported by Schmidt (2002) who argues that discourse is important but it is not the only cause of political change.

Hill and Hupe (2006) argue that accountability in UK policy-making which is located within the Third Way regime is highly complex policy environment. In response to this complexity they argue that the traditional staged approach to policy analysis is no longer appropriate, calling for a 'multi governance framework' which accounts for decisions which are inter-related or 'nested'. The manner in which the AIF allows influence to be assessed, moves towards solving such problems as outlined by Hill and Hupe. Although a staged approach forms the primary level of the AIF the subsequent levels are increasing in complexity, addressing the interrelationships which occur throughout the policy process, with each level being nested within the other. The concept of using a nested approach within policy analysis is not a new one; Ostrom (1999), Lynn (1981, 1991) and Parson (1995) have all employed it in some guise in their discussion of policy-making. However, none have focused on the role of influence, *per se*, as proposed by the AIF.

As the AIF brings together the different elements, in an innovative, original manner, it provides a holistic reference point for the researcher; it aims to map the interactions which occur during the policy process to be accounted for, allowing for a fuller understanding of the influence at play in the policy process. The AIF does not see the process as a simple input/output process; with the use of the intermediate influence, recognising that influence does not just occur at the final point of the policy process, and such interactions can alter the way actors interact with the process. The AIF aims to account for influence which originates both within and outside of the formal policy process.

Prior to giving a detailed discussion of the AIF it is useful to provide an overview of the theoretical work which has informed the development of the AIF.

3.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK

As the focus of the AIF is influence, the widely debated subject of power has been vital to its development. Power is one of the most contested topics in political science and sociology, and there are a number of fundamental questions which divide the debate; these include questions of distribution, intent, structure and agency (Hay 2002). A wide range of actors and influences, including those which are non-observable, are at play, and therefore in the development of the AIF a similarly wide range of literature has been accounted for. This overview will begin with a discussion of power within political systems.

3.3.1 *Power within Political Systems*

A discussion of pressure politics is a useful starting point in the development of the AIF as it provides a conceptualisation of power relationships between the state and groups through a range of theoretical traditions (Smith 1995). The main approaches are pluralism, corporatism and structuralism with particular reference to government/business relationships and pressure politics. In addition a discussion of policy networks and international relations is given.

Pluralism

Within a pluralist structure, power is dispersed and there is no one dominant group. As Smith (1995) outlines, there is a myriad of groups and organisations with no one ruling class or elite. A basic tenet of a pluralist system is that groups provide a 'means of representation' which is more effective than that available through institutions. Under such a system the ability to join a group is a basic right within society (Kingdom 1994). Pluralist theory does not hold that all groups are equal in influence, however. Checks will occur through the political system that will prevent well-resourced groups becoming too powerful. Smith (1995) outlines that such checks existing within a pluralist political system are;

- development of countervailing groups;
- overlapping of membership between groups;
- what a group may lack in financial resources it makes up for in other resources, e.g. organisation;
- government will ensure those with interest that are weakly resourced will be given a fair hearing, and;
- most groups limit their interest to certain focused policy areas.

Within a pluralist system it is implicit that all groups will have some level of access to government and the policy-making process, and that groups can move freely in and out of the policy decision-making arena. Additionally, based on the theoretical model, pluralism produces policies, which are the products of bargaining and compromise and which tend to be moderate, fair to all and conducive to social stability (Kingdom 1994).

Wilson (2003) specifically discusses the relationship between business and government within a pluralist system; he states that individual businesses are dominant rather than trade associations⁹ or peak organisations¹⁰. In such a system businesses decide to join organisations based on their perceived value for money and effectiveness. Subsequently, in a pluralist system the power of a trade association and peak organisation is limited by the possibility that if they upset even the minority of their

⁹ Trade associations represent the collective interests of business in the same industry

¹⁰ Peak organisations represent the collective interest of business as a whole.

members they can lose income and credibility. In this way the relationship between business and organisations is one of customer-client. Wilson outlines that;

“Indeed, in pluralist systems there is often competition between organisations claiming to be the more effective trade association or peak organisation.”

(ibid.2003: p9)

Wilson (2003) extends the debate of the classic conceptions of the distribution of power to question the shifting balance of power, i.e. what is the relative power that is held by business? Within this debate, Wilson identifies a number of positions; orthodox pluralists and revisionist pluralists.

Orthodox pluralists argue that ‘there is nothing special about business as an interest group’ (*ibid.2003: p10*) and subsequently they have no more power than any other group. This stance holds that there is no such thing as business as a single group. Business is split into a number of different groups (i.e. individual corporations and business sectors) with a conflict often existing between them.

Revisionist pluralist take a similar stance as orthodox pluralists in relation to the basic foundations of the system. However, they believe that business is not ‘the same’ as other interest groups. Revisionist pluralists argue that business has an advantage; it does not have to solve the problem of collective action. Unlike other groups, such as environmental pressure groups, businesses do not have to convince members to join and stay (the group already exists as the corporation) and to find one common ‘issue’ stance. Revisionist pluralists believe that business also has the advantage over other interest groups as it;

“..in fact possesses resources – and therefore enjoys power – far beyond other groups. Business dominates the interest-group system by employing more lobbyists, donating more money to politicians and so on than any other interest”.

(ibid 2003: p12)

An important stance of revisionist pluralists which will be considered in this thesis, is that business hold the ability to manipulate how issues are framed, using techniques ranging from advertising and funding think-tanks. This element is vital in the development of the discursive approach employed by the AIF, which will allow for the investigation of the role of agenda-setting in the decision-making process.

A common factor which exists across the orthodox and revisionist pluralist traditions is the stance that the power of business is more variable than it is constant. However, both groups have different reasons for the variation in power. The orthodox position is that business is just one of the contending forces, whereas for revisionists business power is reduced when “business lets down its guard, fails to mobilise adequately and is caught by a surge of criticism” (*ibid* 2003: p14).

The pluralist approach is said to place too much emphasis on the groups themselves and exaggerates the ease of access for these groups to the policy process. Importantly, from the perspective of this thesis, a pluralist approach concentrates only on observable behaviour, which leads to perceived influence being missed and often consultation is confused with influence. A key element of this thesis is developing the AIF to include perceived influence as well as observable. Another problem with the pluralist stance is that many professional and business groups have an advantage over other groups. Professional groups are seen to have an advantage due to the knowledge they hold and produce, whereas business groups gain an advantage as a result of their importance in the economy. From an institutional perspective, Smith (1995) does not see how the concept of pluralism can be applied to Whitehall, as he argues that specific departments develop policy without consultation with other departments.

Dahl (1961) has been one of the most influential writers within the pluralist tradition; taking the stance that power is evenly spread within the decision-making process, with all groups having access to power and no one group having more power than the other. Bachrach and Baratz argue that the empirical work of Dahl supports his hypothesis. However, this is due to the approach only accounting for power which can be observed and measured, and therefore is ignoring that which is readily observed (Parson 1995; Bachrach and Baratz 1970). The work and influence of Dahl and Bachrach and Baratz will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.2 where a more extensive examination of the theories of power is provided.

Corporatism

In contrast to a pluralist system, organisation within corporatism is structured and hierarchical and the concept of groups moving ‘in and out’ is rejected. In a corporatist system, policy discussions are held in closed committees through negotiations and

with little consultation between groups and their members being carried out. The state is not passive in this system; as in pluralism, it decides who shall be consulted and has clear views on policy. Unlike a pluralist system, groups do not fight for access, they are 'invited in' and some are created by government to represent interests it wishes to work with. There are usually a limited number of groups included in consultative networks and these tend to represent labour and capital, often creating a tripartite system of government, trade unions and employers (Kingdom 1994). An important aspect of corporatism is that the relationship is reciprocal, i.e. the government can influence the groups as much as the groups will influence the government.

A formal model, of an organisation within a corporatist model, has been outlined by Williamson:

- "organised groups representing functional interests show a tendency towards a monopoly position;
- certain functional interests are granted privileged access to the state's authoritative decision-making process;
- membership of groups may cease to be wholly voluntary;
- groups may perform regularity functions over members on behalf of the state;
- groups enter into a closed process of bargaining over public policy whereby consciously or not, they do not fully pursue their immediate advantages but act in a 'system-regarding manner'

(Williamson 1989, as cited in Smith 1995)

In a corporatist system the number of trade associations and peak organisations increases, subsequently the significance of individual businesses is reduced. Although individual business does still retain overall power over the trade association/peak organisation, "the balance of power between them is less favourable to the individual corporation than in pluralist systems" (Wilson 2003: p9).

Smith (1995) argues that a corporatist approach often offers a poor analysis of the British political system. He argues that where business and trade unions have developed close links with government, there has been little evidence that either have had much influence on the policy outcome. Where corporatist relations existed, the closest being in the 1960s and 1970s, relationships were unstable and frequently broke

down very quickly. In addition, groups very rarely hold a monopoly of membership, which would create the level of 'power' needed in a corporatist system. A fundamental constraint of corporatism in relation to this thesis is that it does not reflect the shift to governance which is evident in the UK policy-making process, as discussed in Chapter Two.

Structuralists: Business and Government Relationships

From a structuralist's perspective, business is not in the position of a privilege interest group. Business in fact has more influence than any interest group, as it is "entrusted with the vital task of investing for economic growth, prosperity and employment" (Wilson 2003: p12). The main proponent of this stance is Lindblom (1977), he argues that businesses do not need to 'pressure' governments to change policy decisions as their role in economic success of the state is enough to gain the desired outcome. As with both pluralist stances business power from a structuralist's point of view is not constant; with the level of power being dependant on the environment created by the government, e.g. if business tax is not beneficial a corporation may relocate, thus altering the power dynamic.

Smith (1995) in his discussion on the relationship between business and public policy argues that although business, due to resources and role in the economy, does hold a 'special position' in the policy process, the relationship with government is not fully integrated. He states that 'they [relationships] vary greatly across sector and time and this suggests that the generalisations made by traditional approaches are too simplistic.' (*ibid.*: p136). For this reason Smith (1995) is a proponent of business policy networks, as discussed in the following section, and even within this system of networks, relationships vary depending on: the institutions involved, the nature of the state in general and the current goals and capabilities of state actors. He argues that networks can vary even within subsections of the same policy area. This point has been considered within this thesis and more specifically within the development of the AIF.

Policy Networks

The concept of policy networks draws on the notion that within modern government, policy-making is fragmented. This reflects the highly specialised nature of many of today's policy areas, and more specifically the shift from government to governance as outlined in Chapter Two. As a result of such segmentation, policy networks draw on

elements of both pluralism and corporatism, in that some policy making is open and hence pluralist, whereas others are more corporatist and closed. The differentiation in access often correlates with policy type. For example, economic policy making is often limited to the relevant government department and key 'chosen' pressure groups/non-state actors. Whereas, in theory, sustainable development policy is much more 'open' to all groups with a wide range of state and non-state actors being involved, see Chapter Two. The concepts introduced through the discussion of policy networks are important in terms of the development of the AIF as they highlight that the relationships involved in policy-making are not always straightforward and therefore any evaluation needs to consider this. As outlined previously in this Chapter and in the outline of the AIF, a nested approach is in order to reflect the multi-level governance structure which exists in the UK context.

Marsh and Rhodes (1992) state that a "continuum of policy networks [exist] from very open, issue networks, to closed, policy communities". Issue networks are composed of many actors, pressure groups and government agencies, with access being relatively open and dynamic. There is often conflict and little agreement on policies, values and outcomes. In contrast, within policy communities the number of actors involved is limited, access is stable and limited and agreement over policy issues and agenda is high. Within a policy community the relationships are more dependent than in an issues network, with the government and pressure groups needing each other in order to develop policy. In this situation conflict is more likely to exist with other communities and networks rather than between themselves (Marsh and Rhodes 1992). Issue networks are more likely to occur within policy areas such as social, consumer and environment, whereas policy communities are more likely to be found in policy areas relating to economics, health and agriculture. In terms of power relations, (further discussion of the theories of power is given later in this Chapter), power within policy communities is a positive sum, i.e. both government and actors gain from policy outcomes. Again, in contrast, power with issue networks is zero-sum, that is winners and losers exist within the group.

The use of the policy networks concept provides a flexible approach and helps to highlight the different arrangements and number of actors involved in distinct policy areas (Smith 1995). Lowndes (2002) argues that

“Studies of policy networks show how informal mechanisms for policy making may exist alongside formal arrangements as a parallel institutional framework. A focus on informal as well as formal rules adds breadth as well as depth to an understanding of political institutions. ”

(ibid: p99)

The institutional arrangements, linking the formal with the informal have been considered in the development of the AIF; ensuring that influences occurring from both the formal decision-making process and other sources are accommodated. This is achieved through the inclusion of concepts such as cross-departmental influence and agenda-setting; these concepts are elaborated upon later in this Chapter. The continuum suggested by Marsh and Rhodes (1992) has also been considered in the application of the AIF in order to encompass all possible modes of influence available to business in the role of non-state actor.

Pressure Groups

The consideration of pressure groups, particularly those relating to the environment has also been useful in the development of the AIF as they provide an insight into possible modes of influence which are available to non-state actors within the policy decision-making arena. The specific focus given to environmental pressure groups provides a degree of historical context in which sustainable development policy development has occurred. Firstly, it is useful to give a definition of a pressure group, as an “organisation that seeks to represent the interests of particular sections of society in order to influence public policy” (Smith 1995: p9). Smith provides an important distinction between pressure groups and other non-state actors. He argues that it is “important to distinguish between organisations that try to influence public policy from groups whose principal aim is to represent specific interest in order to influence policy” (*ibid: p8*). In line with this definition business, *per se*, is not seen as a pressure group. However, whilst undertaking lobbying, business will employ some of the same tactics (mode of influence) as pressure groups, therefore this literature provides noteworthy information for the development of the AIF.

A distinction, which is often made in the study of pressure groups, is that of insider and outsider groups. Grant (1989) outlines that insider groups are regarded as

legitimate by Government and are consulted on a regular basis, unlike outsider groups who do not wish to become enmeshed in a consultative relationship with officials, or are unable. Again, although discussion here is related to pressure groups, a similar analysis of the relationship between government and other non-state actors can be undertaken and has been incorporated into the AIF through the inclusion of the concept of accepted insider. Insider groups gain a number of benefits which are not experienced by outsider groups, as outlined by Smith (1995):

- they receive government papers and information, often highlighting early intentions to change policy;
- have the opportunity to consult with government over proposed changes in policy;
- some groups are involved in the day-to-day making and implementation of policy;
- sit on advisory committees; and
- a limited number receive government funding.

In return for such benefits, insider groups have to offer governments something in return. For example this can simply be in the form of information and knowledge or something more subtle as increasing the government's authority in a given policy area. This can be in the form of information, authority; providing government with an alternative to election authority, simplicity; have knowledge of a group of insiders makes policy decisions easier and implementation and compliance. It is vital to acknowledge that even when groups are granted insider status, this does not necessarily equate directly to them having influence. As Connelly and Smith (1999) outline, that;

"..in itself insider status says nothing about the level of influence that those groups enjoy; rather it simply means that they can be considered part of the department's policy community,"

(ibid 1999: p76)

It is also valuable to note that very few insider groups have a universal relationship with all Whitehall departments. Connelly and Smith (1999) highlight that such differential access is likely to continue as departmental responsibilities become more

devolved through the creation of quasi-independent agencies; quangos. A move, as discussed in Section 2.6.1, which has been championed by the New Labour Government.


Smith (1995) outlines that in the study of pressure groups it is vital not only to look at what they do and what resources they have, but also the context in which they operate and how they are perceived. Smith (1995) stresses the point that pressure groups are not inherently powerful, and influence changes according to the existing situation and the way in which they are perceived by government. This stance links to the discussion of the theories of power presented in Section 3.3.2. To efficiently review the context in which pressure groups work, the following elements should be considered:

- present political situation: i.e. what issues are important;
- historical context: what groups and issues have been important in the past and the ways in which they have affected the policy-making process;
- economic and social context: what are the impact of economic and social factors on the resources and perceptions of groups.

Again, although Smith's work is considering pressure politics, the same approach can be applied to the broader study of non-state actors and therefore has been considered in the development of the AIF. Similarly, the work of Lowe and Goyder is also useful in this context. Lowe and Goyder (1983), state that a number of political channels, none of which are mutually exclusive, are available to environmental pressure groups. These include links with administrative agencies, including local government and can be used to affect the way policies and programmes are implemented. Environmental pressure groups may become involved in the earlier, formative stages of policy and the allocation of resources through access to civil servants and ministers. Support for pressure groups at a parliamentary level may lead to amending and occasionally, the initiation of legislation. Environmental pressure groups, like all pressure groups, utilise the media to gain the attention of government and the public.

Table 3.1 outlines the types of action often employed by pressure groups and also includes an indication of cost, which is often the most important selection factor for pressure groups, particularly environmental ones. Selected actions (highlighted in

italics) can be utilised by business. However others are not appropriate; clearly, business will not enter into civil disobedience and demonstrations.

Cost	Type of Action
Low - cost 	<i>Responding to routine consultation</i>
	Petitions
	<i>Lobbying elected representatives</i>
	<i>Mass media publicity</i>
	<i>Testifying before legislature</i>
	<i>Commissioning research and reports</i>
	<i>Continuous involvement in consultation</i>
	Public campaigns
	Demonstrations and marches
	<i>Attempts to obstruct policy implementation</i>
	<i>Non-co-operation with government</i>
	Boycotts or non-compliance, including consumer boycotts
	Court action
Strikes	
High - cost	Civil disobedience, both non-violent and violent direct action

(Adapted from Dunleavy (1991) and Connelly and Smith (1999))

Table 3.1 Pressure Groups: Types of Action

Smith (1995) and Lowe and Goyder (1983) argue that business groups have a number of distinct advantages over pressure groups. As well as the obvious advantage of financial resources, business generally holds a higher status, operates within the context of dominant values of society, is important for the economy and more or less automatically works within the 'rules of the game'. In addition to the role of business and other groups the study of the international arena is also of use to the development of the AIF.

International Relations and Epistemic Communities

Within the development of the AIF the concept of epistemic communities from international relations has been considered. An epistemic community is a "network of knowledge based experts" (Haas 1992). Within international relations the role of such networks of knowledge-based experts has increased to reflect the growing technical uncertainties and complexities of global problems, resulting in a broader governance structure. Such a move towards governance, away from government, as discussed in

Section 2.6.1, has also occurred in a similar way at national level in UK policy-making. Examining the role of epistemic communities is also useful, as the international context of sustainable development has affected the policy-making agenda at a regional and national level. Indeed, understanding epistemic communities aids the understanding of how actors, state and non-state, set the agenda of sustainable development in their attempts to demystify the contested concept.

Epistemic communities traditionally come into play when there is a degree of uncertainty in the policy decision. In such a situation policy-makers often turn to 'experts' to provide information, and offer policy solutions. Haas defines an epistemic community as

"A network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge"

(Haas 1992: p:3)

Epistemic communities can be drawn from a variety of disciplines but have the following elements in common;

- a shared set of normative and principled beliefs which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members;
- shared causal beliefs, derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkage between possible policy actions and desired outcomes;
- shared notion of validity, that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise;
- a common policy enterprise, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence.

Haas (1992) also considers that what differentiates epistemic communities from other actors in the decision-making process is that if there are questions within policy knowledge which act to undermine the claims of the community, they will subsequently withdraw from the policy debate. In contrast, this is often the time when some actors increase their 'pressure', by consolidating their stance and often 'exploiting' uncertainty, within the decision-making process. Based on such collective

agreement to withdraw from policy debates, and the emphasis placed on connection through values witnessed in epistemic communities, business is not considered, within this thesis, to represent epistemic communities. This proposition is in line with the stance taken by Haas in his discussion of professionals as epistemic communities, arguing that professionals seldom limit themselves to work that is closely congruent with their principled values. However, short term links between professionals and epistemic communities may occur, and therefore, influence through such links may occur. Hence, for the purpose of the developing the AIF it was interesting to look at the different roles epistemic communities can play, as this provides examples not only of the modes of influence but also the structure in which these communities operate. This highlights a context which other actors, outside epistemic communities, can utilise.

The work of Bernstein (2001) investigating environmentalism and economics, also supports the stance that MNCs are not classified as an epistemic community. It is suggested within this thesis that as MNCs are essential economic bodies and frame their operations within an economic context, Bernstein's discussion of economists in the context of environmental policy links directly to a discussion of MNCs in a similar context, i.e. sustainable development policy. Bernstein argues that within the context of environmental policy economists do not act based on values which promote social change with a more environmentally sound focus.

In addition, Bernstein outlines that although economists and scientists often interact in the policy process and occasionally work together on technical work, making the distinction between them seems arbitrary. He suggested that the two should be considered separately, with scientists being the epistemic community, stating that

“treating both equally as epistemic communities undermines the logical basis of the explanation that a single community is granted legitimacy based on its claim to authoritative and policy-relevant knowledge in a certain issue area. If more than one such community exists, the reason for adopting the position advocated by such a group could not be accounted for simply by looking at its privileged position owing to its knowledge claim”

(Bernstein 2001: p125)

Of use is Haas' outline of the roles which epistemic communities can play within uncertain policy environments;

- can elucidate cause and effect relationship, and provide advice on likely courses of action;
- shed light on complex interlinkages between issues and chain of events;
- can define self interest of states or factors within it;
- can help formulate policy.

Haas also suggests influence can be gained through interactions between epistemic communities and the following bodies; think tanks, regulatory agencies and government policy research bodies. Although MNCs are not considered to be epistemic communities, similar roles and relationships outlined above are considered to be available to business, and therefore Haas' work provides useful insights into policy-making which have been incorporated into the development of the AIF.

As discussed above, the process by which epistemic communities operate within the policy process will be utilised in this thesis. In addition, some of the methodological elements set out in the epistemic community literature will be used. However, in this context MNCs will not be dealt with as an epistemic community. Primarily, the approach outlined by Haas is too narrow to reflect the complex nature of the network of influence which is present in the policy process, as Newell (2000) outlines; Haas' work implies a one-way transfer of knowledge/power from expert to policy community.

3.3.2 *Theories of Power*

The debate on power, focusing around dimensions of power, is fundamental to the understanding of influence within policy decision-making and has been key in the development of the AIF. A comprehensive historical review of the power debate would include the works of Machiavelli and Hobbes. However, for the purpose of this thesis it is sufficient to begin with the work of Dahl and other pluralists. This review has split the debate into the 'dimensions of power', and post-modernism and the work of Foucault. The 'dimensions of power', based on Lukes (1974), are split into three dimensions, as categorised below.

Dimension	Characteristic	Principle Proponent
One Dimensional	Decision-making	Dahl (1961)
Two Dimensional	Agenda-setting	Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963, 1970)
Three Dimensional	Preference-shaping	Lukes (1974)

Table 3.2 Dimensions of Power

Dahl's one-dimensional approach reflects a classic pluralist stance as outlined in Section 3.2.1, based on a practical, objective approach to the study of power. Such an approach can be explored through the simple A-B formation. Within the pluralist approach an 'overt conflict of interest' has to exist between the two parties, i.e. A has power over B in order to get B to do something they would otherwise not. Crucial to the pluralist hypothesis is that they "concentrate their attention, not upon the sources of power, but its exercise" (Bachrach and Baratz 1970) and focus solely on the action of decision-making.

Hay (2002) states there are four noteworthy elements to the one-dimensional approach to power:

- power is understood in terms of its *effect*; if A's action has no effect on B then there is no power relation;
- a *behavioural* stance its taken, in which power is an attribute of the *individual*, exercised in relations with others;
- power is associated with *domination* or power 'over', i.e. it is not a capacity to affect outcomes, but to dominate others in so doing;
- power is unproductive, it is *zero-sum*, i.e. some gain only to the extent that others lose out.

A key limitation of the one-dimensional approach, resulting from Dahl's behaviourist stance, that he and other pluralists provide no direct analysis of the question of intention. The one-dimensional approach is criticised as it is limited to observable actions and does not account for "less obvious ways in which the political agenda can be controlled in a political system" (Lukes 1974: p57).

Pivotal work responding to the pluralist approach is that of Bachrach and Baratz, (1962, 1963 and 1970). Bachrach and Baratz developed the two-dimensional approach to power¹¹ which includes the key aspect, non-decision-making. Non-decision-making is “a decision which results in the suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker” (Bachrach and Baratz 1970: p44). They argue that the assumption that power is “totally embodied and fully reflective in “concrete decisions”” is wrong.

“..power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. Power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and the institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A’s set of preferences.”
(*ibid.*: p7)

Non-decision-making provides a mechanism by which critical issues such as mobilisation of bias, anticipated reactions and negative decision-making can be captured. Schattschneider (1960) demonstrates the idea of mobilisation of bias as:

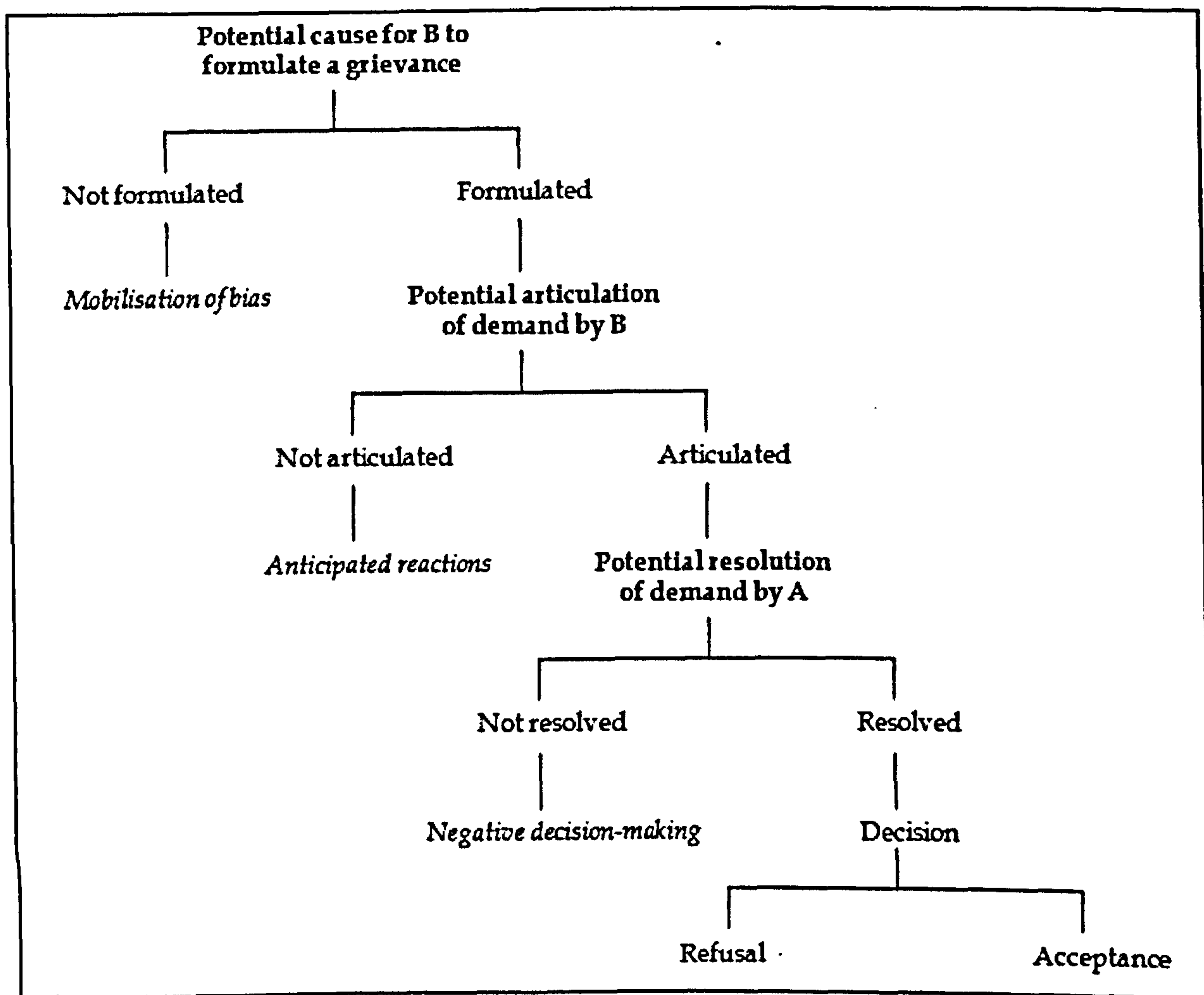
“All forms of political organisation have a bias in favour of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organisation is the mobilisation of bias. Some issues are organised into politics while others are organised out”

(ibid.: p71)

The concepts of anticipated reactions, after Friedrich (1937), can be used to explore the situation where one actor anticipates the reactions of another and consequently does not raise an issue or alter their stance. Negative decision-making, as termed by Parry and Morriss (1974), refers to the case where those in power do not pay attention to demands, or even if demands are considered, the issue becomes diluted through the

¹¹ Bachrach and Baratz used the term ‘second face of power’ in their 1962 work ‘Two Faces of Power’.

processes of bureaucracy. As cited in Clegg (1989), Saunders (1979) summarises the argument in the form of a 'non-decision-making filter', as outlined in Figure 3.1.



(Saunders (1979: p29) as cited in Clegg (1989: p77))

Figure 3.1 Non-decision-making filter

Bachrach and Baratz's two-dimensional approach does not dismiss the central one-dimensional notion of decision-making, but extends the analysis of power to cover agenda-setting. This allows for latent power and subsequent non-decisions to be considered as well as influence exhibited in the formal decision-making arena. The two-dimensional approach provides important aspects, which have been included in the AIF.

The two-dimensional approach is often criticised for being more complex and subjective than the 'assured approach' employed by the classical pluralists. This is one of the reasons why the AIF will draw on elements of this approach in conjunction with others. A further criticism of the neo-elitist approach is the continued reliance on behavioural indicators. As in the pluralist stance, for power to be present there needs

to be an explicit conflict of interest; such an approach allows for no consideration of the less visible process by which preferences are shaped (Hay 2002).

The problem of restricting power to the actual and observable conflict leads to the development of the three dimensional approach, primarily of Lukes (1974). As Hay states

“his [Lukes] analysis suggests that the societal consensus which pluralists and elitists would take as evidence of the absence of systemic inequalities of power is, in fact, the consequence of highly effective and insidious mechanisms of institutionalised persuasion”

(Hay 2002:179)

The key characteristics of Lukes’ three dimensions are that of latent conflict and the affecting of interests. “Latent conflict exists when there would be conflict of wants or preferences between those exercising and those subject to power if the latter were to become aware of their interests” (Connelly and Smith 1999: p137). A key difference between the three-dimensional approach and the earlier dimensions is that power may have been exercised even when those affected are not aware of the existence of power. This raises the issue of ‘false consciousness’¹², one of the main areas of criticism of the three-dimensional approach. The question of ‘false consciousness’ is a contentious one, however, even if Lukes’ idea of power as a capacity is put to one side. Lukes’ suggestion that “power is a capacity and not the exercise of that capacity” (Lukes 2005: p12) is still useful within this thesis as it opens up the idea that not only may actors not be aware that they are ‘subjected’ to power, actors may also not be aware that they are ‘wielders’ of power. This use of Lukes’ argument is supported by Dowding (2006), who argues more broadly in favour of Lukes’ analysis but also in relation to this argument. Dowding argues that Lukes’ *Power: A Radical View* “also makes distinctions between those who dominate knowingly and those who dominate without realising they do so” (*ibid*: p 136). Following such a position, it is vital that the AIF does not only frame the direct actions employed by actors within sustainable development policy but

¹² Rosen (1996) concept of false consciousness describes a situation where the subject is incapable of perceiving their true interests, with the elite setting societies’ acceptable norms. False consciousness, is a Marxist term which explains the presence of powerful ideologies, false depictions of the world, which make up a large part of the superstructure of a class society.

also allows for the non-observable, and indeed passive influence which may occur. This has been achieved by including elements such as anticipated reactions.

Connelly and Smith (1999) provide a number of practical examples of the three-dimensional stance, two of which have been reproduced here. It is argued that the World Bank has considerable power, which includes “the way that it shapes the agenda of economic growth and development, insisting that certain approaches to national economies are not acceptable” (*ibid.*1999: p114). At a national level, Connelly and Smith argue that power has been wielded which has also made alternative solutions to certain policy decisions not possible:

“the British Road Federation has succeeded in capturing the mind of a department; its practical success consists in simply making alternatives unthinkable. For many years it has been ‘obvious’ that we need new roads and motorways; to think or say otherwise has been regarded as cranky and absurd.”

*(ibid.*1999: p114)

Lukes provides this research with important methodological considerations, which the development and application of the AIF has considered;

1. strategies, struggles and practices that characterise the decision-making process;
2. actions and inactions involved in shaping the agenda for the decision-making process; and
3. actions and inactions similarly implicated in the shaping of perceived interests and political preferences.

A key problem with the three-dimensional approach is the need to demonstrate that B acts in a way they would not otherwise have done, as a result of A. The main critics of this approach argue that it is extensively value-laden, with power also having negative impacts and the idea of the implied ‘false consciousness’, of which there are many critics. Hay (2002) argues that the key problem underlying Lukes’ approach is

“his failure to differentiate clearly between analytical questions concerning the identification of power within social and political settings, and normative questions concerning the critique of the distribution and exercise of power thus identified.”

(*ibid.*: p184 emphasis as in original).

This critique is also reflected in Clegg (1989), where in his discussion of the problems associated with Lukes’ three-dimensional approach, he states ‘certain consequences which flow from epistemological decisions which Lukes implicitly and explicitly makes in the course of constructing his ‘radical view’. (Clegg 1989: p13).

Although these critiques stand, Lukes’ identification of preference shaping will still be borne in mind in the development of the AIF. The aim is to combine the idea of preference shaping with that of agenda setting as outlined in Bachrach and Baratz (1970), and include a conceptual debate of power and policy which is linked to a more discursive approach. A similar approach was taken by Newell (2000) where he began to be more conceptual in his approach. However, this thesis will take this further primarily through the use of discourse (as outlined in Chapter Three). More detailed discussion on this element will be given in Section 4.4. The usefulness of the three-dimensional approach in relation to sustainable development has been highlighted by Connelly and Smith (1999). When looking at the interpretation of sustainable development from an ecological modernisation perspective, an alternative to current economic and consumption trends is impossible. The key to this interpretation is that sustainable development is seen in such a way which allows “for the continuation of economic growth and production and consumption patterns, which are modified to reduce their adverse environmental impact but remain otherwise unchallenged” (*ibid.*1999: p114).

3.3.3 A Post-Modernist Perspective

More recently the debates around power have moved away from the ideas that individuals are ‘power seekers’ and institutions are ‘power wielders’ and ‘bearers’ to the ideology of post-modernism (Goverde *et al* 2000). Key within the post-modernist

debate is the work of Foucault, and his emphasis on knowledge and discourse in relation to power. The importance of discourse and the influence of Foucault within this thesis has been introduced previously.

For Foucault, power is both embedded in and effectuated through a crucial combination of knowledge and language, or what he calls discourse. Discourse is a:

“complex mixture of ideas and expressions through which individuals both perceive and in turn try to explain social reality” and therefore “defines the parameters and criteria people use to ascertain and calculate their potential course and action and choose particular courses of actions in certain circumstances”.

(Goverde *et al* 2000: p14)

In this way discourse is primarily a means of both understanding and action, which operate in a circular fashion. In terms of approach, discourse is “a window or filter through which a whole range of *other* concepts and understanding must be mediated in human action.” (emphasis as in original) (*ibid.* 2000: p14).

Foucault moved away from the traditional A-B approach to power. As highlighted above, he does not see power as something which is possessed by an individual or institution over another. Rather, he sees power as something more of a strategy;

“power must be analysed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain.....Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation...individuals are the vehicles of power, not the point of application”

(Foucault 1980: p98)

Within Foucault’s analysis of governmentality¹³, he sees the employment of power relations with the aim to achieve total domination as unsuccessful. He sees power as relational rather than emanating from one source, i.e. government. Here Foucault is

¹³ Foucault describes the term governmentality as the analysis of who can govern and who is governed but also the means by which that shaping of someone else’s activities is achieved (Foucault 1991).

introducing the idea of diffuse power, where power is dispersed throughout all social relations rather than being imposed from above (Mills 2003). The notion of diffused power can be linked with the current system of governance, rather than government, which is one of the main institutional backdrops to this research. According to Foucault, diffused resistance mirrors diffused power. Mills (2003) argues that this can be seen in the anti-globalisation movement, where activist groups are diversifying their tactics and agenda and focusing demonstrations on a wide range of organisations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and MNCs.

As stated earlier, in a Foucauldian approach to power, it is essential to look at embedded knowledge and language. A significant characteristic of Foucault's early work, as demonstrated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), is his review of the historical conditions which allowed knowledge to be configured and organised in a certain way and provided justifications which were "deemed acceptable to support that knowledge" (Darier 1999: p9). This work provides an important basis for any discursive analysis. However, it is in his later works that he demonstrates more pertinent links between the use and production of knowledge and power.

As outlined by Mills (2003), in *Power/Knowledge*, 'Foucault describes knowledge as being a conjunction of power relations and information-seeking, which he terms 'power/knowledge' (Foucault 1980a)'. In highlighting this conjunction, Foucault states that "it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (Foucault 1980b: p52). For Foucault a key aspect, of the link between knowledge and power, is the importance of the process of exclusion. By this, reference is being made to the exclusion of certain knowledge and language which leads to certain discourses rather than others. In his work *Power/Knowledge* (1980), "Foucault explores the way that, in order for something to be established as a fact or as truth, other equally valid statements have to be discredited and denied." (Mills 2003: p67). Based on this approach, the evaluation of sustainable development can be undertaken by investigating both the process of the development of the concept and the current policy decision-making, i.e. which rules and norms have/are being used to frame the debate. A Foucauldian approach is useful in this research as it provides a mechanism by which "the power to assert frames of interpretation and meaning upon problems, and the power to create expectations and organise preferences" (Newell 2000: p35) can be examined. Discursive analysis will be utilised in this way to investigate preference shaping, after Lukes, as outlined earlier in

this paper. The aim of this approach is to overcome the problem of demonstrating 'effect'.

Discourse is also the cornerstone of the Habermasian concept of communicative rationality. Through communicative rationality the different actors involved in decision-making become aware of problems with current approaches and are able to develop, and agree upon alternative actions through communication and collective reasoning (Gouldson and Bebbington 2007, Habermas 1984). Discourse plays a vital role within this concept as it is through discourse that agreement is reached and action taken, rather than as a result of the power of different actors. Habermas argues that interaction between the different actors is driven by communication rationalities rather than by institutional concerns, suggesting as Gouldson and Beddington outline, that "the power of a good argument can transcend the power of the different actors, actors who can engage in discursive struggles can still be influential even if in political economy terms they might be seen to be marginal" (*ibid*: p10). This statement highlights the optimistic nature of Habermas's communicative, which lies in contrast to the work of Foucault. It is this optimistic nature which underlines the main criticism of communicative rationality, stating that although changes in governance structures have, to some degree, allowed for a more open debate, however, prevailing powerful actors and institutions still lead and shape the debate and decide who takes part (see Rydin 2003). This thesis holds with the concerns raised here, subsequently Habermas's discussion of the role of deliberation has been considered. Indeed such an emphasis on deliberation through communication is championed by policy analysts such as Hajer (1995), Dryzek (1997) and Fischer (2003), and the relevant works of such authors is discussed in the subsequent section. However, in line with these considerations the AIF has been developed to provide a synthesis position to allow for both the structural and deliberative elements of discourse. Again, as Gouldson and Beddington (2007) argue, discourse can have a structural element which enables actors to engage in debate which is "preconditioned by the prevailing power structures" (*ibid*: p 11).

3.3.4 *Postempiricism and an Argumentative Turn*

In more recent times the policy analysis has taken an argumentative turn, progressing further the link between discourse and power within the policy environment, as outlined above, moving towards a Habermasian tradition. The main proponents of

such an argumentative turn are the postempiricists such as Fischer (2003), Fischer and Forester (1993), Hajer (1995) Hajer and Wagenaar (2003).

The postempiricist discursive approach employs a fundamental view of language and discourse; seeing them as having a “more underlying role in structuring social action” (Fischer 2003: p41). This approach views language in a wider sense than just its linguistic element, with emphasis being placed on the language of different kinds of discourses and how these shape world views, rather than simply mirroring them (Fischer and Forester 1993). The stance taken by postempiricists builds on and has evolved alongside theoretical traditions outlined in this thesis; those on social constructionism, post-modernism and pluralism, in addition to the work of critical theorists and neo-institutionalism (Fischer 2003). Within the postempiricist approach Fischer argues that “social meanings, in short, cannot simply be abstracted and treated as one of the various variables explaining institutions” (Fischer 2003: p45). This perspective is not questioned within this thesis, however it is argued that although institutions – and in this case actors- are largely created historically through discourse, they can also take the form of direct action within this specific policy context affecting the policy type and process. Therefore it is important that such actions are not ignored in favour of the purely discursive approach.

The analysis of discourse within the realm of the environment/sustainable development has been applied in a number of studies (see Dryzek 1997, Jamison 2001, Hajer 1995) Dryzek’s work is based on the presumption that language has a key role to play in understanding the decision-making surrounding the environment as he argues that “..the way we construct, interpret, discuss, and analyse environmental problems has all kinds of consequences” (Dryzek 1991: p9)

Within this thesis discourse is seen as itself a ‘medium of power’, but this power is intrinsically linked to how discourse is employed, and encouraged, by specific actors (state and non-state) and therefore how these actors subsequently influence the policy decision-making process. This stance moves away from the proposition taken by postempiricists such as Hajer and Fischer that discourse theory moves away from “the ideas of actors influencing or shaping the play of interest in institutions to an understanding of discourse itself as a medium of power”. (Fischer 2003: p44).

Influence and policy-making has been discussed from a number of perspectives, each of which has something to offer in the understanding of the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. These perspectives have often proposed within a context which has a sole or limited focus of the idea of power, as outlined by Hindess (2006) in his discussion of Lukes' "but like other contributions, it focused on one configuration of power to the neglect of several others." (*ibid*: p122). Therefore, this thesis is arguing that a synthesis position is required which draws together elements of the debate as a whole rather than from one 'school of thought'. This next section will outline how these elements, along with the contextual discussion given in Chapter Two have been drawn together within the AIF.

This discussion of the debate surrounding influence and policy-making has highlighted a number of mechanisms by which influence can occur. In addition, the review of the involvement of business activity in public policy has also demonstrated ways in which influence is gained in UK policy-making. To summarise the power debate, the following forms of influence have been identified and outlined in Table 3.3.

Direct	Choice of location/relocation
	Undertaking and commissioning research
	Taking part in consultation
	Making political donations
	Undertaking lobbying activity
	Membership of advisory committees
Tacit (Indirect)	Employing a dual stance
	Membership of QUANGOS
	Support of external organisations
	Undertaking secondments
	Membership and activity of trade associations
	Revolving door relationships
	Affecting policy timescales
	Presence of cross-departmental influence
Tacit	Presence of agenda-setting
	Increase in status
	Presence of perceived power
	Gaining business insight
	Marketing activity
	Non-decision-making
	Affecting the negotiating position of others
	Anticipated reaction of others
	Accepted discourse

Table 3.3: Summarising the power debate

As stated previously the term tacit has been used within this thesis to encompass indirect and tacit influence, however, within Table 3.3, tacit influence has been labelled tacit and indirect as this demonstrates how the different literature has been drawn together to form this summary table. The influences outlined in this table forms the basis of the secondary level of the AIF and will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.2, where the distinction is made between modes of influence and intermediate influence.

3.4 THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK

The aim of, and the reason for developing, the AIF is to provide an evaluation framework which allows for a systematic and robust review of MNCs influence which allows for a synthesis approach to analysis to be taken. The AIF is an original evaluation framework which has been informed by the literature but provides a new way of representing influence and provides a new mechanism for evaluating the relationship between influence and actors, with the focus on MNCs, within the policy-making environment. As discussed in previous chapters, both sustainable development and the UK policy governance structure are complex and dynamic, therefore the AIF needs to reflect this; allowing for all the different actors and modes of influence to be accounted for. In order to capture all these considerations, the AIF has been designed as a nested framework, consisting of three levels; with each level the level of complexity increases. Figure 3.2 outlines the overall structure of the AIF; it provides a pictorial representation of the individual levels which will be discussed and expanded upon in Sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3, fitted together in the overall structure of the AIF. The primary level relates to the broad policy-making process, the secondary level outlines the possible modes of influence and the potential relationship with intermediate influence, and finally the tertiary level allows for a specific decision-making context to be assessed by breaking down the generic relationships introduced in the secondary level.

As noted in Section 3.2 the AIF has been developed as a framework rather than a model; however, it is still important to acknowledge the contribution models have made to the policy analysis literature and how this literature has in turn influenced the development of the AIF.

Numerous models of the policy process have been developed within the field of policy analysis; the majority of these, particularly the earlier models, are focused upon outlining the policy life cycle (see Easton (1953), Jenkins (1978) and Hogwood and Gunn (1984)). An overview of such models, along with a discussion of their critics is given in the following section. Although these are important, and have informed the development of the AIF, the AIF is focused on a specific analytical question; framing the influence which occurs within the policy process. Therefore the role the AIF plays is slightly different to that proposed by these models.

3.4.1 Primary Level: The Broad Policy Decision-Making Context

As discussed above, each level of the AIF increases in complexity; the primary level serves to outline the broad policy decision-making context. In order to fully understand the role of all actors within the policy process it is important to be able to identify all the stages of policy development; therefore the influence can be examined in a systematic manner, covering the whole life cycle of decision-making. The primary level of the AIF is also useful as an analytical tool as it allows for a boundary to be set around the policy-making process and therefore provides some ease of analysis. Such division of the policy process into stages, or elements, as in this case, has been recognised to be useful from an analytical perspective (Hill 2005 and Parsons 1995) as it provides a mechanism for breaking down what are often complex processes.

One of the most prominent systems-based models is that which has been proposed by Easton (1953, 1965); essentially this model represents an input-output model which sees the actual decision-making process as essentially a black box (Hill 2005). Such an emphasis on input-output does not allow for the complexities of the process to be examined, and is exposed to the problem of over-simplification. Other models have extended the work of Easton and proposed more complex systems, such as that offered by Jenkins (1978) and Hogwood and Gunn (1984), in which concepts of feedback and

elements of decision-making are introduced. Even though these 'staged' models are more elaborate than that proposed by Easton, limitations to such approaches have been highlighted (see Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993)), the main issue being that of over-simplification and the creation of an artificial view of the real-world setting. The case of where policy discussions begin and end is raised, in many cases it is difficult to pinpoint the exact starting point of a policy discussion. In addition, it is argued that the different 'stages' can often occur simultaneously, a situation which is not represented in some of the models previously proposed. Although the AIF is designed to frame a specific issue within policy-making; that of influence, such consideration raised regarding a staged approach to outlining the policy process has been considered; to a certain extent the issue of where the policy begins and ends is counteracted by the inclusion of modes of influence such as cross-departmental influence, thus allowing for the assessment of the impact of other policy discussions outside what is formally framed. In addition, the primary level is taking a staged approach, but it is the widest level of the AIF, setting the scene; the more complex decision-making elements are subsequently covered in the secondary and tertiary levels of the AIF.

In developing the specific elements which make up the policy-making context of the AIF the work of Adler and Haas (1992) which investigates the role and influence of epistemic communities, and Newell (2000), have been considered. Again, as the key focus for this research is influence, neither approach has been taken in its entirety. Adler and Haas (1992) split the policy process into policy innovation, diffusion, selection and persistence. Within these elements are sub-sections, which can be seen as avenues for influence. For example, policy evolution is split into; framing of issues; defining state interest and setting standards. Newell (2000) breaks the policy process into three distinct categories; agenda-setting; negotiation-bargaining and implementation. Other writers have adapted similar categorisation models, see Boehmer-Christiansen (1989), Young (1989) and Osherenko and Young (1993).

Within the AIF the policy-making process is divided into four elements; mode of influence; political context, intermediate influence and finally the policy outcome. It should also be noted that all this takes place in a wider political environment, with the political context referring to the individual context of the specific policy under

decision. A cyclical relationship exists between the first three elements, as shown in Figure 3.3. The cyclical relationship between mode of influence, political context and intermediate influence continues until a final policy outcome is reached.

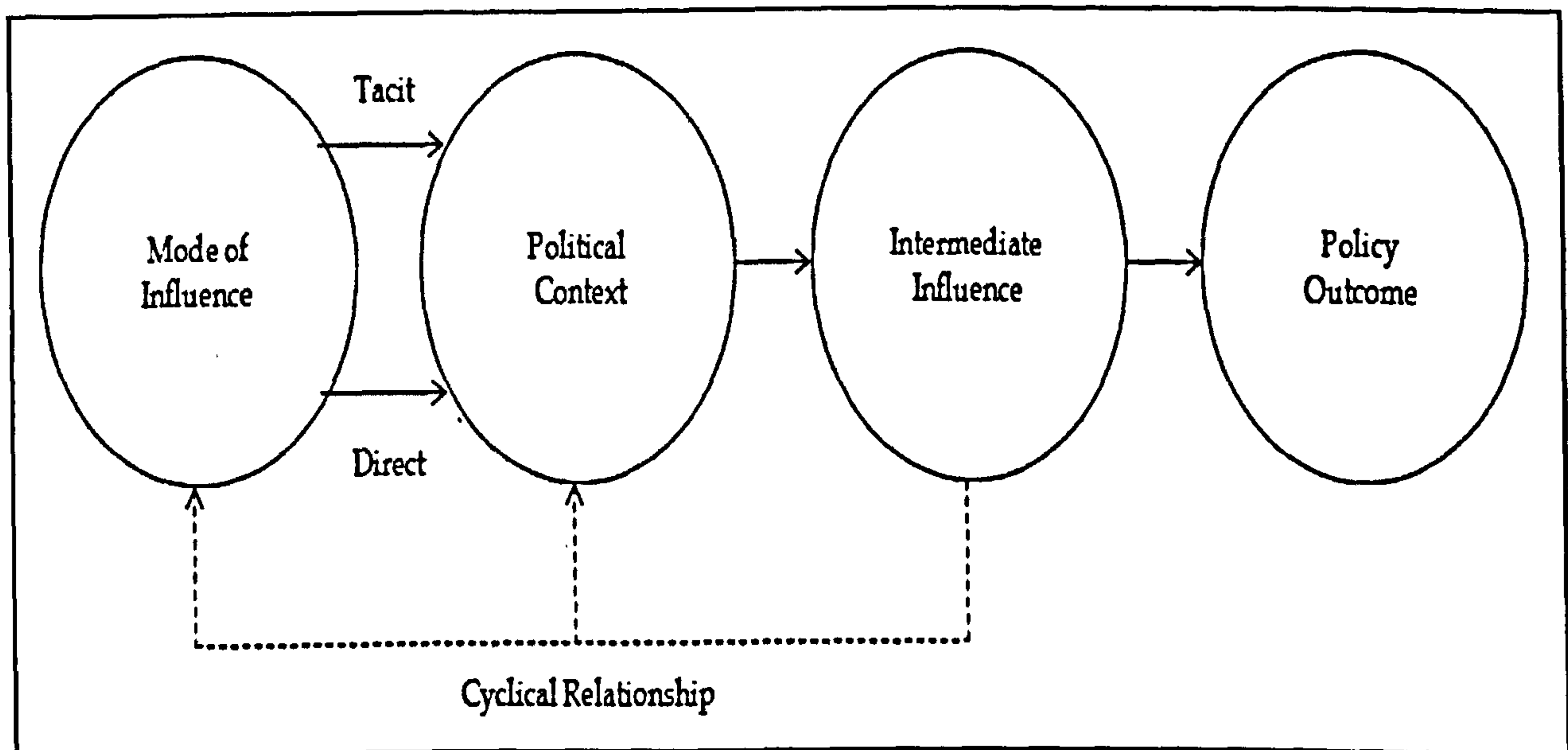


Figure 3.3 Primary level: The broad policy decision-making context

The *mode of influence* is the method which is employed by an actor to influence/interact with the policy decision-making process. The use of a concept such as mode of influence is similar to that of 'channels of influence' as provided by Dryzek *et al* (2002). These modes can be either in the form of direct or tacit action. The inclusion of both types of influence is vital if a comprehensive analysis of influence is to be achieved, particularly in the case of tacit influence which is often not observable. As Newell (2000) argues, in some cases it is difficult to identify influence; however this does not make it any less significant. He highlighted this with interview extracts, "industrial lobbyists themselves emphasise the difficulty of tracing the direct effects of their activity and the importance of influencing that is 'done quietly'" (Newell 2000: p101). The individual modes of influence are discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.2, during the discussion of the second level of the AIF.

The *political context* relates to the immediate context in which the specific policy discussion is occurring. Thus this can relate to any institutional level: international, regional or national and is linked specifically to a policy-making example. Within this thesis the political context is UK sustainable development policy and the development of the new UK NSDS. It is important to note that the policy-making also occurs in a

broader political environment, in this case one which is influenced by European and International policy and one which is firmly rooted within the New Labour regime. Notwithstanding this, it is important to consider the specific political context in question as this affects the modes of influence available to the different actors and indeed the accessibility and involvement of the different actors.

Intermediate influence is the element of the AIF which is the most interesting in terms of theory; as it allows for the impact of influence to be outlined throughout the policy decision-making process, mirroring the continuous nature of policy-making, rather than just at the end point of the production of policy and seeing the process as a simple causal A affects B model. An intermediate influence is the result of the interaction between the mode of influence and the political context. As outlined above the intermediate influence can affect both the political context and the mode of influence which is available to the actors, therefore it has the potential to alter the decision-making context before the final policy outcome is agreed upon. The intermediate influence does not only have an impact within the policy decision making process; it also has the potential to affect the wider context and the actors themselves, for example it may result in actors beginning to be seen as 'experts' within wider society. This relationship will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.2.

Once the agreement has been reached and this policy is ratified this represents the *policy outcome* element of the AIF. Policy outcome may include the publication of strategies, implementation plans, the development of new government or quasi-government groups.

3.4.2 Secondary Level: Generic Mode of Influence and Intermediate Influence Relationships

The secondary level of the AIF expands the ideas of mode and influence; it represents the intermediate stage of the AIF, giving specific details of the possible modes of influence and potentially related intermediate influence. Figure 3.4 outlines the possible relationships which can occur between the mode of influence and intermediate influence, these are representative of the possible intermediate influences which may result from specific modes of influence being used; not all intermediate

influences will occur in every policy decision. This level of the AIF provides an overview of the generic relationships which are subsequently investigated in a specific policy context through the application of the tertiary level of the AIF.

A key element of the AIF and contribution of this thesis is the identification of both direct and tacit influence; therefore, as shown in Figure 3.4, the modes of influence have been split within the AIF along these lines.

Direct: refers to modes of influence which are employed in order to have a specific effect on the policy process. For example, may relate to a non-state actor holding discussions with government officials in order to have an impact on a stated policy.

Tacit: refers to modes of influence which, unlike direct, can either allow actors to influence policy through other organisations or activities, for example trade associations. Alternatively, tacit modes of influence can include influence which is not consciously exerted by actors themselves or on their behalf, for example perceived power. Furthermore, tacit influence may occur as a result of wider activity which can be both purposeful or 'accidental' in a wider context, such as agenda setting. It is the inclusion of these tacit modes of influence which draws in the interpretative/social constructivist stance of using discourse and subscribing to the link between power and knowledge.¹⁴ As noted in the early stages of this thesis the term tacit has been used in its broadest sense in a way which incorporates indirect and tacit influence.

The individual modes of influence will now be outlined before a discussion of the relating intermediate influences is given.

¹⁴ Hay (2002) follows lines to conceptualise power using the terms indirect and direct.

Mode	Intermediate Influence	Code	Intermediate Influence
Direct			
Lobbying	1, 2, 3, 4	1	Accepted Discourse
Political Donations	2, 4	2	Non-decision-making
Consultation	1, 4, 5	3	Timescale
Advisory Committees	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	4	Policy Preference
Task Force	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9	5	Anticipated reactions
Quangos	1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10	6	Increased status
Staff Secondment	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11	7	Mobilisation of bias
Revolving Door	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, on a longer term basis as staff secondment	8	Accepted insider
Tacit		9	Status
Trade Associations	1, 2, 4, 15	10	Cross-issue influence
Agenda Setting	1, 2, 7	11	Business insight
Marketing Strategy	1, 2	12	Negotiating positions of others
Cross department influence	2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 14	13	Leadership
Perceived Power	2, 4, 5, 7	14	Clash ministerial powers
Research	1, 9, 13	15	Dual Stance
Support of external organisations	1, 2, 7, 9, 12		
Business location/relocation	2, 4, 5		

Figure 3.4 Secondary Level: Mode- Influence

Lobbying

Bernhagen and Brauninger define lobbying as “influencing the formation of public policy, its passage through the legislature and its implementation, by means of contacting and pressurizing policymakers...” (Bernhagen and Brauninger 2005: p 44-45). Lobbying can be either carried out by MNCs or on their behalf by a “hired gun” (Keffer and Hill 1997) i.e. through the use of a professional lobbying organisation. Lobbying can be seen to be any activity through which an individual or an organisation is trying to proactively affect government policy. Within the AIF it has been given a smaller remit and refers to the direct discussions of MNCs (or their designated representative) and other non-state actors with Government, to attempt to influence policy-making. Other specific elements such as involvement in consultation and committees have been listed separately. This is to allow for a more systematic picture of where and how influence occurs to be created.

Political donations

Financial donations to political parties was highlighted by the Janus programme (as outlined in Chapter Two) as one of the mechanisms by which corporations can influence sustainable development in the UK. Damania (2002) argues that political donations can influence government decision, as the resources can be used for a number of purposes; which include funding political campaigns and retiring debt from past elections. In the period April to June 2008 the political parties in Great Britain received £10.7 millions (Electoral Commission 2008).

Consultation

Consultation within the AIF refers to the formal process undertaken by Government (and other governance bodies) to gain comment on proposed policies, often referred to as ‘Public Consultation’ (Sinclair 2002). Consultation in this sense includes action such as attendance at consultation-focused meetings and response to briefing documents. Consultation has played a vital role in the field of sustainable development, with governance bodies such as the EU and national governments having formalised consultation periods built into the development of their sustainable development strategies. Within the UK the review of the UK NSDS has been subject to formal consultation guidelines (DEFRA 2004a).

Advisory Committees

Advisory committees are independent bodies which are set up to advise Ministers and departments on specific issues; UK advisory committees include the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE).

Task Forces

A task force is a group which usually has a temporary status and is instigated by Government to address a specific problem. Task forces have played a significant role in the New Labour Government, by 2001 around 300 new task forces had been created (Seldon 2001). The influence business can achieve through task forces is highlighted by the appointment of business leaders to the sustainable consumption and production task force (ENDs 2006).

Quangos

Quangos are quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations which at a national level are described as non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). Although quangos are funded by government they do not belong to a specific department and therefore have a degree of independence. (Coxall *et al* 2003). Corporations, and other non-state actors, can gain influence on policy through lobbying and working closely with organisations such as Quangos. Indeed there have been claims that the increase of such groups has eroded the power of elected officials in the UK (Skelcher 1998) Since the Thatcher Government business representatives have played a significant role in quangos (Coxall *et al* 2003).

Staff secondments

Staff secondments relate to the 'loan' of staff for a specified time scale. SustainAbility and WWF (2001) in their investigation of corporate influence and sustainable development found that MNCs used staff secondments as a mechanism to build reputation with Government departments. Through staff secondments the cultures between government and business become similar; Dreiling (2000) argues that this leads to solidarity and agreement between the two organisations.

Revolving door

The phenomenon of *revolving door* (see Newell 2000, Beder 2006, SustainAbility and WWF 2001) occurs when former business executives, particularly those in senior

positions leave companies to take up offices with government, European Commission or associated groups and *vice versa*. This movement of personnel provides for a continual exchange of ideas and principles between institutions, often in a more open and effective way than when individuals are seconded on a limited timeframe. The existence of the revolving door can cause cultural similarities (Dreiling 2000) as outlined above.

Trade Associations

Trade associations (TAs) can be used by MNCs as a form of collective action (SustainAbility and WWF 2001 Wilson 2003). In the field of sustainable development TAs are seen, in general terms, to be there to prevent or weaken legislation which will impact on the economic or competitive performance for their membership (SustainAbility, dna) TAs are often less progressive on issues surrounding sustainability than the leading business organisations. Such a lack of progressive thinking is often classed as the 'lowest common denominator effect', where the views of the slowest member of the TA are represented and taken as the collective view. MNCs in recent years have been criticised for allowing such an effect to occur, using it as a deliberate tactic to negatively affect policy whilst still being able to take a more positive individual stance within wider society. (SustainAbility dna: p10)

Agenda setting

Agenda-setting is the method by which the boundaries and language which frame the policy decision-making context are set. Newell (2000) argues that by setting the agenda of national policy discussion the scope of negotiation is reduced. Therefore, importance of discourse, as an analytical tool, is vital in the discussion and identification of agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is closely linked to the intermediate influence of non-decision-making, (see Schattschneider 1960 and Cobb and Elder 1972). In contrast to the stance of other authors, within this thesis agenda-setting has been addressed as a mode of influence rather than as an outcome. Newell (2000) discusses agenda-setting as a stage within the policy process, although this thesis agrees that agenda-setting does occur at the early stages of policy-making focusing on the scope and problem to be discussed; here it is argued that discourse is constructed and manipulated throughout the life of the decision-making process and is a vital mechanism by which actors can gain influence.

Marketing strategy

Corporations can 'set the scene' for the discussion of sustainable development outside the policy process through their marketing strategies. Sustainability issues, particularly climate change, have become increasingly important within corporate marketing, covering a broad range of sectors such as motor vehicles and household products. The inclusion of marketing strategy as a mode of influence demonstrates how the AIF draws on influence which occurs outside the 'formal' decision-making process.

Cross-departmental influence

The complexity of sustainable development means that as a policy issue it is susceptible to cross-departmental influence. In this case, other departments within government counteract the policy decisions and discussions. This is particularly pertinent to the more 'powerful' departments such as the Treasury and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). It is no coincidence that these departments have strong links with business groups, a relationship which is recognised by businesses themselves, as highlighted in Newell's work, where an industrial representative stated that their influence goes further because the trade minister is more powerful than the environment minister (Newell 2000). The inclusion of this as a mode of influence in the AIF is useful as it allows for the boundary of study to go beyond formalised policy boundaries, again accommodating the not so observable influence. The idea of cross-issue influence is closely linked to the stance taken here on cross-departmental influence, Newell outlines cross-issue influence, in relation to his work on international negotiations surrounding climate change, to refer "to direct and tacit power of organised industry in areas of policy-making other than the environment, which nonetheless conditions the available negotiating space in relation to climate change" (*ibid*: p37). In relation to the UK policy-making regime cross-departmental influence is likely to play an increasingly important issue operating within New Labour's 'joined-up' governance approach, as outlined in Section 2.6.1.

Perceived power

Lukes (1974) and Dowdings (1991) both deal with the concept of perceived power. Perceived power occurs when the power of a certain actor is such that other actors (non-state or state) act in a way to 'second guess' what their policy stance would be

and choose their own policy position reflecting this. Perceived power can lead to both supportive or challenging stances to be taken by the 'less-powerful' actors. For example, a NGO may decide what they think is going to be the stance taken by business and take a more extreme approach; alternatively they may take a position which is more aligned with their perception in the hope of securing an agreed outcome (Ellis 2007). The link between perceived power and status and legitimacy of the actors is important; the increase in the status of an actor within the policy process may also lead to a change in the perceived power which is associated with them.

Research

Research can be undertaken directly by MNCs or can be commissioned on their behalf (SustainAbility dna). The impact of research may be most evident in the climate change arena, with significant backing, particularly by oil companies for anti-climate change research and groups, see Rowlands (2000) and The Ecologist (2003).

Support of external organisations

External organisations such as think tanks are important sources of policy knowledge; although they are independent of government their aim is to undertake work which will influence policy (Smith 1995). Other external organisations include business groups such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). The power of external groups is argued by Beder, who proposes that the aim of such groups is to "exert collective pressure on policy-makers to ensure that policies increase the power and autonomy of those [involved in the groups] corporations." (Beder 2006 : p4).

Business location/relocation

A key source of business influence is their economic power, and specifically their ability to move/remove their economic input from state boundaries. This mode has been included within the AIF for two reasons. Firstly, it is a mode which is not available to the other non-state actors involved in the policy process, and secondly there has been a long debate regarding environmental legislation and the 'race-to-the bottom' (see Vogel 1995; Wheeler 2001), therefore a specific relation to sustainable development exists.

3.4.3 *Intermediate influence*

The AIF provides an original way for investigating influence within the policy process through the inclusion of intermediate influence. Intermediate influence, as its name suggests, occurs before the final policy decisions are achieved. It occurs as a result of the interaction between mode of influence and the political context. Figure 5.4 outlines the potential relationships which could exist between the mode(s) of influence and the proposed intermediate influence. The inclusion of intermediate influence in the AIF is considered to be innovative and important as it allows the AIF to be used to trace influence which occurs throughout the process and how these complex interactions alter the policy decision-making process and the options considered within it. Therefore the AIF is allowing for the complex nature of policy-making and moves away from linear models, as discussed previously, addressing some of the concerns previously aired by Hill and Hupe (2006). The intermediate influences will now be outlined individually in the following sections, starting with non-decision-making.

Non-decision-making

As discussed in Section 3.3.2 following Bachrach and Baratz, non-decision-making is a “decision which results in the suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker” (*ibid*: p44). The impact of non-decision-making in the policy process is highlighted in Figure 3.1. The concept of non-decision-making also links with the work of Crenson and his idea of politically enforced neglect, which he sees as “politically enforced limitations upon the scope of decision-making” (*ibid*: p178).

Accepted discourse

The inclusion of accepted discourse within the AIF is important in relation to gaining the synthesis position proposed at the outset of this chapter. Including a discursive element in the intermediate influences allows for the influence of discourse to be identified alongside the more direct actions. The concept of accepted discourse links with the ideas of dominant discourse and policy discourse (Fischer 2003), and is a mechanism by which the effect of tacit influence can be framed. Within this context the accepted discourse represents an accepted understanding and articulation of

sustainable development recognised by the majority of actors involved in the policy-making process.

Anticipated reaction

The stance of one actor leads to others changing their policy requirements. A strong link exists between the mode of influence of perceived power and the resulting intermediate influence of anticipated reaction. The inclusion of anticipated reaction follows the work of Friedrich (1937) and Clegg (1989), as discussed in Section 3.3.2.

Dual Stance

The membership of an external group such as a trade association (as discussed in earlier) can potentially allow an actor to take different individual and collective stances. The membership organisation of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is often criticised for taking an ultra-conservation position on proposed policy initiatives, and providing economic-based arguments against environmental policy which are too extreme in their discussion of impacts.

Policy Preference

Policy preference refers to a situation when the activity of one actor changes the policy preference of other actors, including those which are associated with the state. This intermediate influence differs from anticipated reaction as it occurs as a result of a mode of influence directly affecting the policy options which are available to the different policy actors. Policy preference can also be discussed using the term negotiation position, where the negotiation position of actors (state and non-state) is altered due to the employment of a mode of influence being used.

Timescale

The intermediate influence of timescale refers to a situation when the policy decision is either delayed or accelerated. For example, lobbying by MNCs may encourage policy-makers to delay policy decisions, or conversely they may push a piece of policy through and thus reduce the potential for open dialogue with all actors.

Increased Status

Increased status reflects the perception of actors both within the policy process and in wider society. This intermediate influence demonstrates that an investigation of policy

formation must allow for influence outside the immediate formal process, as achieved through the political context element of the primary level of the AIF. Increased status often occurs when actors are seen as 'experts' as a result of their involvement/input into the policy process.

Mobilisation of Bias

Mobilisation of bias (Schattschneider 1960) confines the policy discussions to 'safe issues' which do not challenge the dominant position of the most powerful.

Accepted Insider

Following the concept of 'insider groups', as discussed in previous sections, accepted insider is the intermediate influence through which actors are given legitimacy by policy-makers, and other actors, and are subsequently consulted on a regular basis. The terminology of accepted insider has been used in preference to insider group as it can refer to individual actors as well as actor groups. It should be noted here that as outlined by Connelly and Smith (1999), being an accepted insider does not, on every occasion, equate to having influence, it means that an actor has become part of a policy community. However, this is not always the case and therefore accepted insider has been incorporated into the AIF.

Cross-issue Influence

Cross-issue influence occurs when an actor influences other policy areas, with this action having a subsequent effect on the policy being discussed (Newell 2000). Cross-issue influence is similar to cross-departmental influence; however, there is a subtle difference in that cross-issue influence relates to the situation where actors are involved in other policy-making discussions and are not acting to influence the specific policy which is under scrutiny. In contrast, cross-departmental influence requires a government department to actively take part in policy discussions. Cross-issue influence can be seen as a two-way intermediate influence, with for example, influence which is occurring within sustainable development policy affecting the formulation of other policies and *vice versa*. Again, demonstrating that influence is not always confined to the formal policy-making boundaries.

Business insight

A small number of the intermediate influences which occur in the AIF have an impact outside the policy process, business insight being one of them. This reflects to the situation where MNCs have gained knowledge that they would not already have been privy to by being involved in the policy decision-making process. This for example may give them early indications of policy or legislative moves which will affect their business.

Leadership

Leadership is an intermediate influence which occurs within and outside the policy context under analysis. Leadership refers to the position of an actor within a given context, in this case sustainable development; involvement in policy discussions helps corporations to take the lead on specific issues, for example Marks and Spencer's involvement in sustainable fisheries initiatives.

Clash of ministerial powers

Clash of ministerial powers occurs when an issue cuts across the remit of different ministers; it can be closely linked to cross-departmental influence.

3.4.4 Tertiary level: Specific Policy Context

The tertiary, and final level of the AIF, addresses the inter-relationships which exist between the mode of influence used by MNCs and the intermediate influence which subsequently occur. At this level the AIF reflects policy-specific context, within this thesis this is UK sustainable development policy and the review and production of the national sustainable development strategy. The activity and influence which occur in the decision-making process is represented visually by drawing direct links between modes of influence and resultant intermediate influence. By using such visualisation it helps to break down the influence which is occurring but also to demonstrate that one mode of influence may result in multiple intermediate influence.

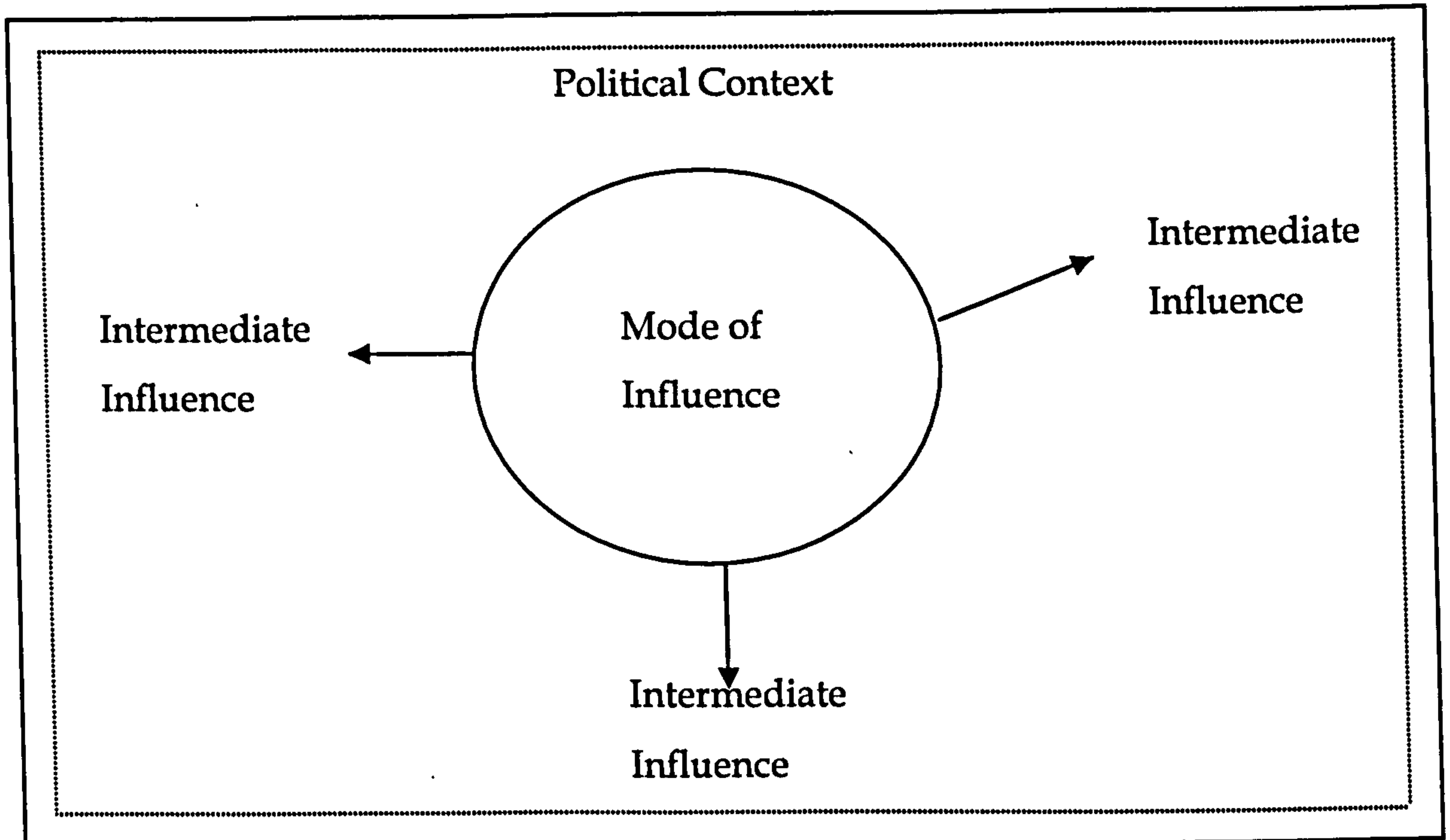


Figure 3.5 AIF Tertiary Level: Specific Policy Context

Figure 3.5 highlights a situation where a mode of influence had resulted in numerous intermediate influences. However, it should be noted that it may be the case that only one intermediate influence occurs.

3.5 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The AIF has provided this thesis with an analytical frame which is nested and interrelated and which allows for understanding at a broad level (primary level) at a specific policy context (tertiary level). It therefore allows a systematic and holistic understanding of the complex nature of sustainable development policy-making which is located in a multi-governance environment.

Chapter Five will use the AIF to organise and understand the influence of MNCs which was at play in UK sustainable development policy-making. The usefulness and authenticity of the AIF will be then reviewed in Chapter Six. At this point this thesis will assess whether the AIF has been able to achieve the aims set out at the beginning of this chapter.

4

Methodology

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The context and the broad research problem has been outlined in Chapters One and Two. This Chapter will now outline how this problem, and the specific research questions will be investigated. The Chapter begins with a discussion of the research position taken within this thesis, focusing upon the question of construction, following which an overview of an argument for a qualitative approach will be given. This generic discussion then feeds into an examination of the specific research design which has been employed to collect and handle the data; in order to achieve triangulation of the data a multimethod approach, as espoused by Robson (2002), has been applied.

4.2 RESEARCH POSITION

An important question for any researcher is how do they see the world? As Wetherell *et al* questions: "*Does the world simply exist or do we create it?*" (2001: p 5). In the following section, and within this thesis as a whole I will argue that within any research context certain things exist and certain things are created, therefore as a researcher both must be taken into account.

This thesis is located within a subject; sustainable development, and context; policy making, which is both complex and contested (Runhaar *et al* 2005); therefore the research approach and design have to be ones which reflect this and allow for investigation into such an environment. Influence has been drawn from a range of the social sciences; policy analysis and political science and multi-disciplinary investigation into sustainability. Power and influence is the fundamental peg upon which my research is hung; to investigate the role MNCs have in the policy process it is essential that their power and influence is addressed. Therefore, theories of power have been instrumental in the development of the theoretical position employed within this research. It is important to note that the 'amount' of power is not being measured in quantifiable terms, rather the way in which power is available, and exerted by MNCs is the focus.

As discussed in previous Chapters, in the investigation of the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy the fundamental contested nature of sustainable development itself is vital to the understanding of the role non-state and state actors play in the policy decision-making process. Furthermore, the decision-making process is located in a complex governance structure which witnesses the interplay of state, quasi-state and non-state actors at a national level with the added influence of regional and international bodies and research which relates to sustainable development. The governance structure in which this research is located fits with the research approach employed by the constructivist school, as argued by Marsh and Furlong:

"Constructivists argue that, if there is a problem of increasing complexity of decision-making associated with the decline of the nation state, this complexity must be understood as an intentional social construct on the part of decision-makers, part of a set of political projects associated with response to perceptions of external and internal constraints."

(Marsh and Furlong 2002: p39)

The fundamental approach taken within this thesis is one which allows for a synthesis position of analysis to be held; elements of deliberative policy analysis and traditional power politics have been combined to allow an assessment of both the structure and agency at play within UK sustainable development policy. Major influence has been drawn from the social constructivist (Foucault 1972, 1980, 1991) and interpretive

traditions (Bevir and Rhodes 2003), and the policy analysis approach of the post-empiricists (see Fischer 2003), thus allowing for the importance of how we construct our world views through the use of discourse to be incorporated within the research philosophy and design. A more in-depth discussion of how this synthesis approach has been developed and deployed was given in Chapter Three in the discussion of the development of the AIF.

Taking a research position which draws upon multiple schools of thought is not unique; in their discussion of globalisation Hay and March (2000) demonstrate how there is often such an interaction between research philosophies:

“There may be ‘real’ processes at work, but the way they affect outcomes is mediated by the discursive construction(s) of these processes. This argument has both realist and interpretist elements. There is an appeal to a real world, but the emphasis is on the discursive construction of that world. This position illustrates how realist and interpretist positions interface.”

(Marsh and Furlong 2002: p35)

The argument proposed here by Marsh and Furlong is adopted within this thesis; although greater emphasis has been given to discourse and how it links the ideas of interpretist and social constructivists, the individual roles of actors within a social setting cannot be ignored. Actors are operating within a system where rules and norms exist, where direct action can occur which affects the overall outcome of a decision-making process. Therefore, the construction through discourse cannot be the sole theoretical lens which is employed in the investigation of the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. This is reflected in Bevir and Rhodes’ discussion of the extremes of postmodernism and post-structuralism, where they state that this perspective has come “dangerously close to embodying an analysis of the subject as autonomous and an analysis of reason as pure and universal. They prompt us to decentre traditions and practices. [.....] we might evoke a subject who is an agent but not an autonomous one, and local reasoning that never becomes universal” (Bevir and Rhodes 2003: p151).

The importance of the construction of world views in the sustainability arena is not a new one, and is discussed in further detail in Chapter Three. However, it is useful at

this point to relate to the work of Rydin (2003) and her research stance taken in the investigation of conflict and consensus in environmental planning. Rydin argues that in order to understand the relationships at play in environmental planning and related decision-making it is vital to assess how the debate and process have been constructed.

“This review of various approaches from within sociology, political science and environmental planning studies has highlighted the benefits of ‘revealing the hidden’ and conclusively demonstrates the need to take into account how issues are constructed, how agendas are built and how broader discourse within society influences policy processes. In particular, it has pointed to the importance of discourses of rationality within legitimization processes.”

(Rydin 2003: p37)

In her discussion of the use of discourse in the policy process Rydin argues that actors will employ discourses which lead to the most ‘successful’ outcome for them and this in turn will create a “reinforcing mechanism at work that encourages reliance on particular strategies” (*ibid*: p52). This demonstrates the importance of integrating the use of discourse into any assessment of influence within the policy decision-making context, an approach which has been taken within my research. Discourse has been vitally important in order to undertake a multi-disciplinary approach, in which the ‘real’ and the ‘constructed’ can both be accounted for. Wetherell *et al* (2001) describes the study of discourse as “discovery and theorization of pattern and order” and this study means that the researcher “enter[s] into debates about the foundations on which knowledge is built, subjectivity is constructed and society is managed” (*ibid*: p5).

No discussion of discourse can ignore the work of Foucault linking discourse with knowledge and power. Foucault’s focus on discourse was one which looked at “the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods.” (Hall, 2004). To Foucault, discourse is “a group of statements which provides a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But since all social practices entail *meanings*, and meanings shape and influence what we do –our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect” (Hall, 1992: p 291 reproduced in Hall 2001 p 72). What is important, in relation to this thesis, in Foucault’s understanding of discourse,

is this link between understanding and doing. Foucault argues that discourse constructs the topic and in doing so it controls how a topic is talked about, and most importantly here, how it “influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others” (*ibid*: p72).

This thesis will investigate the dominant policy discourses (Fischer 2003) which are at play within the policy decision-making process and it will investigate how these discursive formations are linked to MNCs and what is their influence on the policy process. Cousins and Hussain (1984) define discursive formation to occur when a particular discourse is used to “refer to the same object, share the same style and ... support a strategy ... a common institutional administrative or political drift and pattern.” (*ibid* 1994: p84-85).

Finally, Foucault’s link between power and knowledge is also important within this thesis. This link between the use of knowledge and power highlights a crucial mechanism by which non-observable power operates, and more specifically in my research, how knowledge and thus power can be linked to the modes of influence available to MNCs within the policy decision-making process. Foucault’s proposition is that knowledge does not work in a vacuum and that it is used as parts of different strategies in specific situations and institutional regimes. In this case we are investigating the use of deployment of knowledge, through discourse, within the governance setting for UK sustainable development policy. Further discussion of Foucault’s work in relation to power and its use in the AIF developed in this thesis is given in Section 3.3.1.

Discursive formations are seen to play a vital role in maintaining and creating “regimes of truth” (Herman and Chomsky 1998). With regard to my research it will be interesting to note if such formations have been used to create/sustain a policy decision-making process in which MNCs have influence. In the discussion of hegemony Herman and Chomsky discuss the role of discursive formation. “One major function of dominant discourse is precisely to manufacture such consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance” (Herman and Chomsky 1998 quoted in Van Dijk 1996: p302). The dominance being discussed here is that of hegemony which the likes of

Gramsci see as the dominance of the powerful in persuading others to act in “the interest of the powerful out of their own free will.” (Van Dijk 1996: p 302)

As stated earlier, a purely constructivist approach as espoused by Foucault has not been taken within this thesis. To develop a synthesis position to reflect the importance of both structure and agency, the major critique of Foucault’s work, that it does not consider material, economic and structural factors, must be taken into consideration, and has been done so in the development of the AIF. This stance is again reflected in the work of Rydin, who also argues that existing approaches such as that taken by Foucault are too focused towards the structuralists and do not take into account the role of agency. Therefore, the research design of this thesis reflects these considerations in the use of discourse and the AIF as methodological approaches; in order to employ these methods a qualitative approach has been employed.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

“...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”

(Denzin and Lincoln 2005: p 3)

Reflecting the research position taken, a qualitative research design has been employed. As stated earlier it is not the purpose of this research to measure the amount of influence MNCs have within the decision-making process, therefore the use of quantitative methods is largely redundant. Moreover, this research is essentially focusing on social interaction and settings and therefore qualitative methods lend themselves more readily to the study (Flick 1998). Flexibility is vital here as the research context and focus are both complex and often seen differently by the multiple actors involved (Runhaar *et al* 2005), therefore, it is important that knowledge and information is not excluded as a result of methodological design. Qualitative design is recognised for its flexibility (Robson 2002) and therefore should effectively address this concern. This need for flexibility will also be discussed in later sections, relating to the use of the researcher as the analyst for the data. Also, qualitative approaches, as highlighted in the previous quote from Denzin and Lincoln, allow for the research

topic to be considered within the 'nature' setting, therefore a greater understanding of the relationships and processes can be gleaned.

4.4 RESEARCH SCOPE

As discussed previously the focus of this thesis is investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. In order to frame this focus the following research questions have been chosen:

1. How is influence exerted in UK decision-making relating to sustainable development policy?
2. How do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy?
3. What does this influence mean for policy-making and MNCs?

Empirically, this thesis has considered two foci; the broader context of UK sustainable development policy and more specifically the review and development of the new UK National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). Within these policy settings the main unit of investigation is MNCs. Although, MNCs are the focus of the research it is still important to note which other non-state and state actors are involved in the policy process in order to understand the full context of the decision-making process. This is also important in the investigation of tacit modes of influence such as cross-department influence (Chapter Three provides more detail on this issue). The assessment of other actors will go no further than providing context and understanding of MNCs in the decision-making process. As outlined in Chapter Two, the growth and power of MNCs is debated by many sections of society. In addition, MNCs' interest and activity in sustainable development is growing; for these reasons the analytical focus of this thesis is MNCs.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

"The selection of a method or methods is based on what kind of information is sought, from whom and under what circumstances."

(Robson 2002: p 223)

As outlined by Robson the methods used to collect and analyse research data need to be appropriate for the specific research questions posed and the context in which the research is being carried out. To address the questions posed, and to ultimately investigate the role of MNCs in sustainable development policy it is important to observe how actors *engage with, think about and talk within* the policy decision-making process. The research design must allow for the investigation of influence within the context of policy-making which promotes findings which are relevant and of interest to the policy context. The research position taken sets the context for the overall research strategy (qualitative research), the methods to be used and the modes of data collection to be employed. The boundaries between these elements are often blurred and they are very much interlinked, as shown in Figure 4.1. Runhaar *et al* (2005) argue that the research strategy is more general than methods, and also distinguish between methods and data collection, where data collection is a specific way of gathering empirical data.

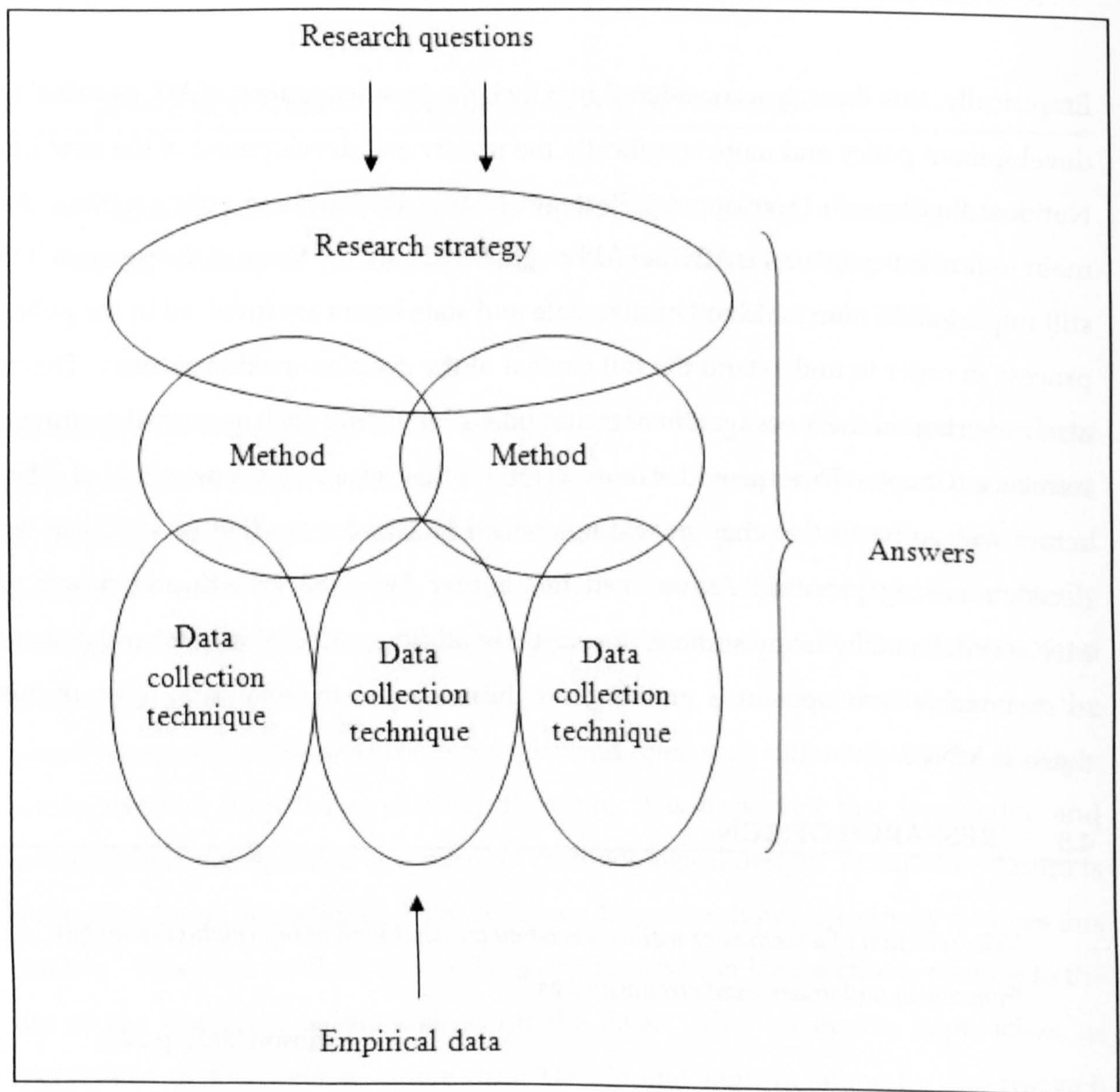


Figure 4.1 Research design (Runhaar et al 2005: p4)

In addition to outlining generic approaches to research Runhaar *et al* suggest five themes within which research questions can be framed when investigating sustainable development policy; this thesis fits with the theme of 'policy process'. The five themes are outlined in Table 4.1; a brief description of each will be given here. Theme one: 'Policy Content' refers to the analysis and looks at questions such as: What are the policy objectives? What are the assumptions which underlie these objectives? Theme two: 'Policy Process' investigates issues surrounding influence within the policy process and looks at how the process has changed over time. Theme three: 'Policy Organisation' is focused on questions such as: How have European Directives been implemented in member states? Theme four: 'Policy Effects' is focused on the outcomes of the policy, questioning issues such as: Have the original objectives been met? Finally, theme five: 'Policy Context' investigates how policy is affected by political, economic and cultural developments. (Runhaar *et al* 2005: p5). Runhaar *et al* highlight five methods of policy analysis which link with these themes, as outlined in Table 4.1. The use of discourse and stakeholder analysis to investigate sustainable development policy fits with the discussion provided by Runhaar *et al* (2005).

	Theme 1 (content)	Theme 2 (process)	Theme 3 (organisation)	Theme 4 (effects)	Theme 5 (context)
Reconstruction of policy theory					
Stakeholder analysis					
Impact assessment					
Cost-benefit analysis					
Discourse analysis					

Table 4.1 Policy themes addressed by five methods of policy analysis (Runhaar *et al* 2005: p6)

This thesis is aligned to the suggested methodological framework as outlined in Table 4.1, as it employs both stakeholder and discourse analysis as methods within the overall research design. However, stakeholder analysis is only being employed in its loosest sense. Identification of the different actors involved in the process has been made with some of the relationships between the actors examined. However, reflecting

the research questions, this has been limited to the relationships between MNCs and other actors. The identification of the actors involved along with an examination of their activities takes into account, loosely, Haas' (1992) approach to epistemic community which can be broken down into the following stages, with the early stages being of the most relevance to this thesis:

- Identification of community members;
- Determination of members' principled and causal belief;
- Tracing of activity and demonstrating influence;
- Identification of alternative credible outcomes that were stopped as a result of influence; and
- Exploring alternative explanations for the actions of decision-makers.

As discussed previously, reflecting the interpretative approach taken, discourse analysis is playing a key role in this thesis. In addition to the methods suggested by Runhaart *et al*, the AIF has been developed and used as an additional methodological tool to allow for the organisation of the data to reflect the research focus of investigating and outlining the modes of influence at play in the policy process. This methodological approach links together the theoretical backgrounds of power and policy analysis. It also allows for an understanding of the specific context but also provides findings which are useful to the policy world. The development and use of the AIF is discussed in Chapter Four and an evaluation of the use of the AIF is given in Chapter Six.

As will be outlined subsequently in this chapter, this thesis has employed a number of data collection methods which link to the use of discourse as a lens through which to analyse the data. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the research approach, framed in the context provided by Runhaar *et al*.

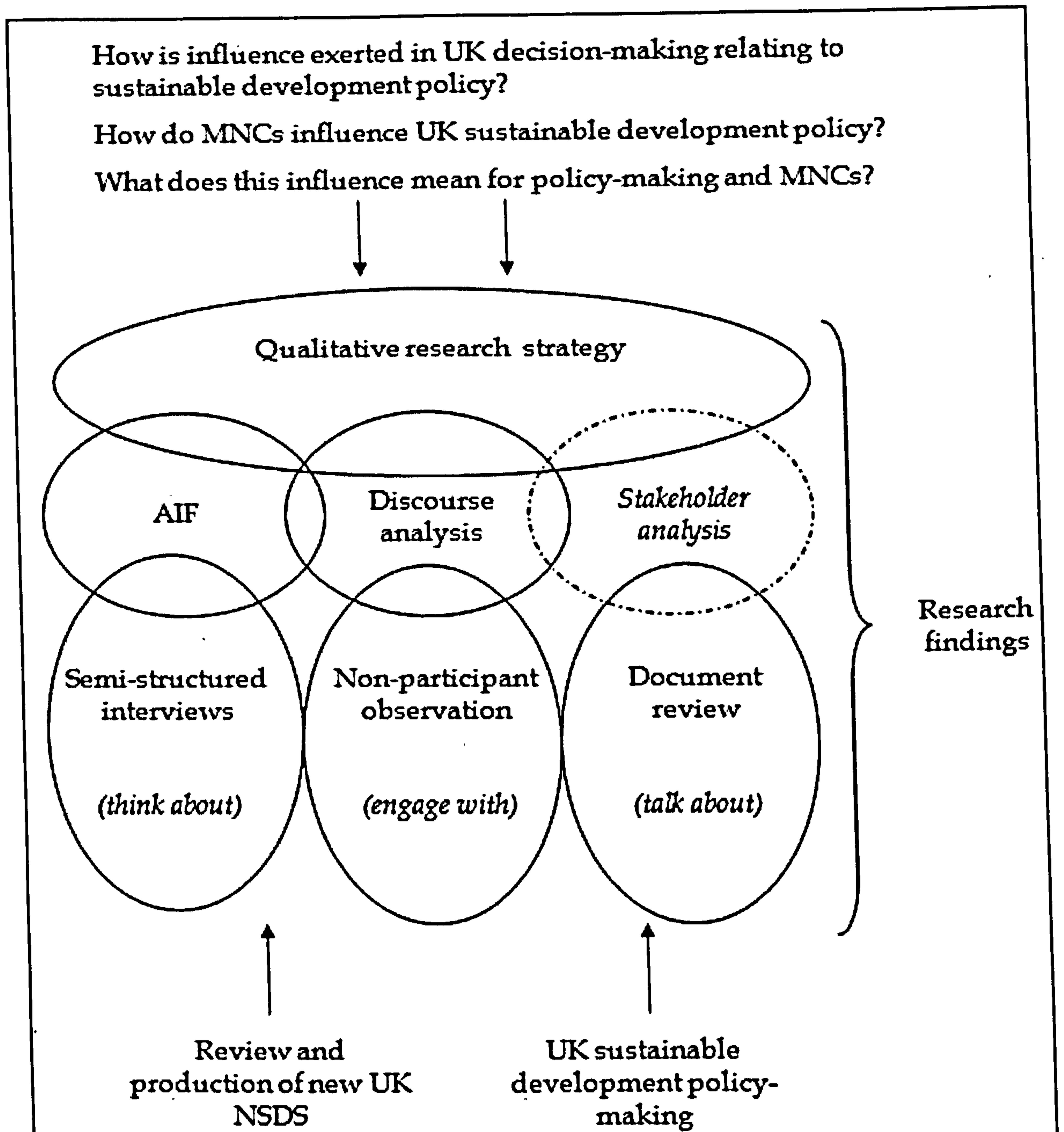


Figure 4.2 Overview of research design (adapted from Runhaart *et al* (2005))

A multimethod approach is in alignment with the discussions of Newell (2000) and Elliot (1992) surrounding the construction of an analysis of the political dynamics at work in environmental politics. This body of work highlights the limitations of using purely theoretical data sources such as interviews and questionnaires, Newell cites Elliot (1992):

“Assessment of influence and success often rely on the perceptions of NGOs which may overstate the case, or of governments which may wish to play

down NGO influence or to claim successful NGOs initiatives for themselves” (ibid: 2000: p10)

In response Newell suggests that the limits of questionnaires and interviews should be made clear and that issues and responses should be explored ‘through conceptual and theoretical lenses in order to obtain a broader picture’ (ibid: p10). The conceptual and theoretical approach applied by Newell, is based on frameworks provided by Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Crenson (1971) and Lukes (1974). His approach integrates direct observation with conceptual analysis to ‘address issues of non-participation, exclusion and agenda setting’. (2000: p10). This approach looks at why and how preferences come to be formed, rather than the positivist stance of taking individual preference as a given (Marsh and Stoker 2002); highlighting the constructivist basis employed by Newell. Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of the ‘web of influence’ and links with the dimensional approach to power. This type of constructivist approach will be further developed using discursive analysis, influenced by the post-modernist and post-empiricist schools, as discussed in Chapter Four, moving it towards a more interpretist position as outlined earlier in this Chapter.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

As illustrated in Figure 4.2 data collection has been completed using a multimethod approach (Robson 2002) namely: non-participant observation (*observe*), semi-structured interviews (*think about*) and document review (*talk within*). The utilisation of different methods has allowed triangulation to take place, more specifically as classified by Denzin (1989), methodological triangulation. Such triangulation of methods has been beneficial, for this thesis, in two ways. Firstly, it allows validation of data by using different sources to gather data relating to the same research proposition and secondly it produces a richer source of knowledge. In this vein Flick (1998) argues that triangulation “systematically extend[s] and complete[s] the possibilities of knowledge production.....[and] increases scope, depth and consistency in methodological proceedings.” (ibid: p230). Therefore, by following such a research design the findings presented in this thesis provide a more consistent and in-depth narrative of the chosen context, the policy-making process, and add to the validity of the overall thesis.

4.6.1 Interviews

Interviews represented an important data source within my research. The focus of these interviews was two-fold: firstly to investigate UK sustainable development policy in general and secondly to examine the specific example of the review and development of the new UK sustainable development strategy. In broad terms the interview aims were to collect data which aided the understanding of the interviewees' own experience and approach to interacting with UK policy and how they see other actors being involved in the policy-making process.

Interviews can be conducted in a number of ways; fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Robson 2002); semi-structured interviews have been chosen for my research. Semi-structured interviews are considered to be the most appropriate in this setting as the interviewees come from different backgrounds and hold contrasting views on the policy process, therefore it is important that the research design allows for all the viewpoints to be collected and considered. Semi-structured interviews are recognised as being efficient data collection vehicles under such consideration, as outlined by Flick,

“Semi-structured interviews, in particular, have attracted interest and are widely used. This interest is linked to the expectation that the interviewed subjects' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire.” (Flick 1998: p76)

Semi-structured interviews were all chosen as they allow for flexibility but all ensure that certain information can be collected from each interviewee, for example, all interviewees in my research were asked for bibliographical information.

Interview Approach

Interviews have been conducted in two ways; face-to-face and over the telephone. The different approaches were used for practical reasons. Although face-to-face interviews are considered to be more preferable in theoretical terms, Robson argues that there is the possibility for a lack of rapport and less opportunity to clarify misunderstanding in the use of telephone interviews. However, these issues were not evident within my research, and the use of telephone interviews offered flexibility to the interviewee and

increased response rate. Notwithstanding these points, where possible, face-to-face interviews were undertaken. It is worth noting here that the quality of the outcome of the interviews is not considered to differ between the two approaches.

Recording the interview data

All interviews were recorded on mini disc or directly on to an MP3 player. The face-to-face interviews were recorded using a conventional microphone and the telephone interviews were recorded using an 'in-the-ear' microphone. All interviewees were aware that the interview was being recorded. All interviews were subsequently transcribed; an example of the interview transcriptions can be found in Appendix II. The interview transcriptions were then used as the basis for data analysis as discussed in later in this section.

Interview Schedule

The purpose of the interviews was to gain an insight into the policy process by sharing personal experience and perceptions of the actors involved in the process. Therefore the interview schedule had to be focused enough to keep the interviewee within the boundaries of this research but also flexible enough to account for the different experiences and perceptions which may accompany the actors. An example of the interview schedule is given in Appendix I. The content and focus of the interview schedule was based on an initial literature review and the development of the original AIF; in addition, where new issues were identified from data collection as the research developed, the interview schedule was altered according. This did not result in any major changes but altered the focus slightly. Initially the interviews focused on informing the interviewer about myself and the research. This helped set the scene and relax the interviewee into the conversation before detailed information was requested. The interviewee was informed that none of the information given would be directly attributable to them as individuals or to their specific organisation. Biographical information was then requested from the interviewee, including organisation, position; also, if they had previously been involved in the policy process in different circumstances, what these were. Following these direct close questions, more open questions were asked regarding their involvement in the policy process relating to sustainable development; these open questions included examples of influence included in the AIF. The interviewees were also asked how they thought they influenced the policy process and how others, particularly MNCs, influenced

sustainable development policy. Interviewees were asked to provide specific examples and also to discuss what other actors they were aware of in the policy process. The interviewees were asked if there was anything more they would like to add that they felt was relevant to the research questions outlined and the discussion which had occurred. Snowballing, discussed more in the next Section, was used to identify interview participants, therefore the interviewees were asked if they could recommend other people whom they thought it would be appropriate to interview. Interviews which took place in the later stages of my research also included a discussion of the findings so far. The aim of this was to see if the findings that had been taken from the data fitted with the experience of the policy process held by the actors.

Interviewee Selection

As discussed previously, in Chapter Two, MNCs are seen as being just one non-state actor making up the complex governance structure of UK policy-making. Therefore, it is important that data is collected which reflects such a multi-actor decision-making process. To achieve this, a range of state and non-state actors were selected for interview. Interviewee selection essentially employed a snowballing approach, where a small number of interviewees were selected from the population of interest, and were then subsequently asked to identify other members of interest (Robson 2002: p 265). Selection of the interviewees was undertaken based on theoretical sampling, therefore the interviewees were selected based on “their relevance to [my] research questions [and my] theoretical positions” (Mason 1996: p93). Theoretical sampling, unlike statistically based approaches, means that selection is made based on the potential insight which can be provided by a interviewee/participant into the development theoretical area of study (Flick 1998). The key point here is that within theoretical sampling the “process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory” (Glaser and Strauss 1967: p45). This links to the idea of ‘theoretical saturation’ (*ibid* 1967) and how to draw boundaries around sampling. Saturation point occurs when the data ceases to provide any new insights relating to the research questions set. Saturation has been employed in setting the boundaries of data collection within my research.

Practically, selection of the interviewees was initially made based on information available in the public domain, for example government websites and lists of task force attendees etc. Interviewees were also asked, following the snowballing approach, if

they were aware of actors who they felt were instrumental, or indeed just purely involved in the decision-making process, and whom it therefore would be useful to interview. In addition, if any actor was identified during the consultation meetings follow-up interviews were scheduled. A list of interviewees can be found in Table 4.2, along with the date of interview and its length.

Interviewee Type	Interviewee Position	Date of interview	Interview Approach and Length (mins)
Central Government	Head of unit	27th July 2004	Telephone 45.03
Regional Government	Regional Policy Advisor	30th July 2004	Telephone 50.15
Regional Government	Regional Policy Advisor	23rd March 2005	Face-to-face 63.23
Regional Government	Business Advisor	1st September 2004	Telephone 62.10
Central Government	Head of Sustainable Development	30th May 2005	Face-to-face 80.48
Central Government	Head of unit	30th May 2005	Face-to-face 59.10
MNC	Director of CR	25th August 2005	Telephone 42.35
MNC	Senior CSR Manager	1st March 2004	Telephone 61.04
MNC	Head of Corporate Relations	4th March 2004	Telephone 55.05
MNC	Director	10th December 2005	Face-to-face 52.10
MNC	Senior Manager	8th December 2005	Telephone 32.24
MNC	Director	23rd November 2005	Telephone 35.22
Business and policy	Senior Manager	7th December 2005	Telephone

consultant			32.40
Business Association	Senior Advisor	28 th June 2004	Face-to-face 43.42
Business Association	Policy Advisor	8 th November 2005	Telephone 36.06
NGO	Policy Advisor	29 th July 2004	Telephone 42.15
Think Tank	Senior Researcher	25 th March 2004	Telephone 71.04
NGO	Policy Researcher	8 th November 2005	Telephone 32.10
NGO	Head of Policy	14 th December 2005	Telephone 50.23
Trade Union	National Secretary for Business, Community and Environment (Task Force)	7 th November 2005	Telephone 61.03

Table 4.2 List of Interviews

In total 20 interviews were completed, resulting in 17 hours and 18 minutes of recording.

Pilot interviews

In order to test the interview approach, the interviewer's technique and some of the assumptions made based on the literature review, pilot interviews were conducted with a representative from a MNC and NGO. These interviews demonstrated that the approach being taken was working and it allowed the interviewees enough freedom to explore the subject in a way which was suitable for them whilst still being focused on the research questions and aims. The pilot interviews provided an opportunity to test the equipment and to allow the researcher to become more competent in using new technology, specifically the telephone microphone. The interviews were also useful as they highlighted that each interview would last around one to one and a half hours

and that this was an appropriate length. This meant that when arranging future interviews, interviewees could be made aware in advance what time commitment was required.

Interview data handling

The AIF has been used to organise the data gained from interviews. The AIF outlined the possible modes of influence and relationship between these modes and the political context. In addition, analysis of the interview data took the form of coding, themes were identified from within the data and along with consideration of the literature. Coding of the data followed an 'editing approach' (Crabtree and Miller 1992), which outlined by Drisko (2000) and Robson (2002) is interpretative and flexible in approach, begins with no, or few a priori codes, with the codes being based on the researcher's interpretation (Robson 2002: p458). This interpretative approach is in-line with the approach taken by Rydin, which is outlined in Section 3.7 where a further discussion of data handling is given. Coding was completed by hand with each theme being colour coded; Appendix III an outline of the data handling process along with examples of coding and notation. The two approaches to handling the data have allowed for the production of two sets of findings, as outlined in Chapter Six, applied and theoretical.

Reflection on interviews

In general the interviews were successful, however, some practical considerations were noted. Two of the face-to-face interviews were undertaken in open, public spaces which meant that subsequent transcription was more difficult due to the background noise on the recording. In future I would try to avoid conducting interviews in such settings. An additional practical consideration when recording interviews was that it was noted that recording was very difficult if telephones on 'hands-free' were used by the interviewee, again this led to increased background noise which made transcription more difficult. Having background in the private sector was extremely helpful for me, particularly in the early stages of the research, in gaining access to business-related interviewees.

4.6.2 *Non-participant Observation*

As outlined in Section 4.4 observation of how MNCs as actors engaged in the policy decision-making process was important in order to gain a complete picture of their role. Observation is important as a methodological tool as it allows for the production of a reality (Flick 1998) rather than relying on the interpretation of others through interviews and documents.

As the focus of this thesis is the role, essentially the influence of MNCs in the policy process, it was important from a methodological perspective that my presence as researcher had the least impact on the discussion as possible, therefore non-participant observation was considered to be the most appropriate approach to choose. Therefore, non-participant observation was undertaken. Adler and Adler (1994) outline the non-participant observer as following "...the flow of events. Behaviour and interaction continue as they would without the presence of a researcher, uninterrupted by intrusion" (*ibid*: p378 as quoted in Flick 1998: p137).

Observation was undertaken in an "unsystematic" way, following Flick; this means that the observation approach was flexible and responsive to the process being observed and no fixed scheme of observation was set at the outset of the research.

Observations were made in a mixture of settings, large group meetings which were largely based on presentation and question and answer sessions, and smaller more interactive workshop type settings. A list of the meetings attended is given in Table 4.3. The format of the meetings/events was set by the organising body and therefore the researcher had no control over the setting. The organisers of the meetings were aware of my presence and research focus prior to my registration and attendance at the events, however not all the participants were aware of my presence. In the larger group settings participants were not made aware of my activity, largely for logistical reasons, whereas in contrast my activity was made clear to the participants of the smaller workshop sessions. My presence as a non-participant observer did not appear to change the behaviour or focus of the participants, this position was checked and verified by one of the meetings' organisers. It is recognised that this is not a 'perfect'

check on the research design. However, it was the only real option available and did provide some level of external verification of the process.

Meeting Location	Date Attended
DTI	13 th May 2004
South East	28 th June 2004
Yorkshire and the Humber	1 st July 2004
London	13 th July 2004
North West	15 th July 2004
East	29 th July 2004

Table 4.3 Consultation meetings attended

Recording the data

Due to practical constraints and the possible impact on attendees, written records of the consultation events were taken, rather than audio recording as was the case for the interviews. From a practical perspective a number of the events were held in large spaces and therefore it was not possible to record the discussions to a satisfactory quality. This approach relied on the researcher taking accurate records, but unlike in interviews the researcher was not directly interacting with the dialogue of the event, therefore it was a more straightforward task. In order to gain consistency the same format for note taking was used at all of the events, this included noting who was speaking and what actor-group they represented. Immediately following each event a summary of the main points resulting from the observation were made, this aided subsequent more detailed analysis of the field notes, which was especially important in the absence of audio recording.

Data handling

As in the case of the interviews, when presenting the findings of my research no data is directly attributed to specific individuals or organisations, notation relating to the actor group is given. The same process of coding the observation data based on the main research themes identified, as outlined in the previous section was followed. Appendix III outlines this process in more detail and provides examples of the data handling.

4.6.3 Document Review

The final method employed within the approach of 'observe, think about and talk within' is that of the review of relevant documents. Such documents, like the overall focus of this research design, have addressed UK sustainable development policy in the broader sense, and more specifically the development of a new UK National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Document Name
DETR (1999) A Better Quality of Life. A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom
DETR (1999) Opportunities for Change UK
DEFRA (2003) Achieving a Better Quality of Life: 2003 Annual Report
SDC (2004) Shows Promise. But Must Try Harder
SDRN Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 16 th Dec. 2004
Taking it on: List of Consultees
Taking it On: Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (2004d)
Taking it on: A Consultation Paper (DEFRA 2004a)
Taking it on: Involving The Business Community, DTI Conference
Taking it on: Involving The Business Community: Speakers Biographies
Taking it on: Involving The Business Community: Delegate List
Taking it on: Yorkshire and The Humber: Delegates List
Taking it on: Yorkshire and The Humber: Briefing Document
Taking it on: Yorkshire and The Humber: Regional Dialogue Paper
Taking it on: Yorkshire and The Humber: Draft Submission
Taking it on: Yorkshire and The Humber: Final Submission
Taking it on: South East: Regional Dialogue Paper: Briefing
Taking it on: South East: Panel Report
Taking it on: South East: Delegate List
Taking it on: Go London: Consultation Feedback
Taking it on: Go London: Consultation Questions
Taking it on: Consultation on International Dimensions of a New UK Sustainable

Development Strategy
Action for Sustainability. The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West
Taking it on: North West Consultation Response
A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England
Taking it on: East of England Briefing Note
Taking it on: The East of England, Final Report
Taking it on: Climate Change Business Breakfast Report (Futerra)
Taking it on: Refining the Prosperity Objective
Taking it on: Full list of respondents (as published on web)
Taking it on: Information from On-line Consultation
Taking it on: Interim Summary of Responses from 'Virtual Panel' Participants
Taking it on: Summary of Responses from 'Virtual Panel' Participants
Taking it on: Summary of Responses from On-line General Access Consultation
Taking it on: Summary of responses
Taking it on: List of Response (as provided by SDU on CD ROM)
Taking it on: Individual and Organisational Responses (as provided by SDU on CD ROM) (302 documents)
DEFRA (2005a) Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Policy
DEFRA (2005b) One Future - Different Paths. The UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development, HMSO

Table 4.4 List of Documents

Undertaking a document review, in addition to the other methods employed, has a number of benefits. It allows for an unobtrusive study which requires no interaction with the actor producing the document, and in addition provides an important source of validation to the data collected during observation and interview (Robson 2002).

Following the interpretative bent of my research, documents provide a useful mechanism for identifying 'social reality', as constructed by the actors involved in the policy-making process, as outlined by Atkinson and Coffey (1997):

“In paying due attention to such material, however, one must be quite clear about what they can and cannot be used for. They are ‘social facts’, in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways.”

(ibid 1997: p47 as quoted in Silverman 2000:p 128)

The document review provided useful context to the development of the interview strategy both in terms of institutional background and in aiding the identification of potential interviewees. The ‘*Taking it on*’ consultation documents, along with previous strategies provided some discussions of the government departments involved in sustainable development in the UK. From this, contact points could be identified and followed up through the use of Government websites. In addition, descriptive data was gleaned from the documents which allowed for further understanding of the actual process in which policy decision-making occurs as well as more substantive information relating to the analysis and discussion presented in Chapters Five and Six. For example, the formal consultation design was outlined in the ‘*Taking it on*’ suite of documents, this information was then clarified and added to, through the interview process in order to provide a complete picture of the decision-making process.

Data handling

When handling the documents it was important to be mindful of the context as well as the content of the individual pieces. For example it was noted whether the documents reviewed were available in the public domain or whether they were ‘private’ documents. Specific discussion of data handling is given in the subsequent Section 4.7 and is outlined in more detail in Appendix III.

Reflections on the use of documents

Access to relevant consultation documents and previous strategies was easy as these are public documents, most of which are available for download from the relevant websites. However, it was only through networking, and to a certain degree luck that I was able to obtain some documents, namely the electronic copy of all the consultation responses sent to the SDU. By luck, I mean I was conducting an interview with a representative of the SDU at their offices at the time that the responses were being analysed. I am not sure if I had not been there at the time whether I would have had access to such insightful data. Access to additional documents was also gained through being present at the consultation events. As I registered to attend these events

I was given all relevant discussion documents, before, during and after the events which included drafts and the final response submitted to government.

4.7 DATA HANDLING

Following the multimethod approach outlined above, three types of data sets were produced; interview transcripts; observational field notes and documents. The data was analysed in a general sense following the 'guide' set out by Miles and Huberman (1994), as outlined below, and more specifically using the AIF and discourse analysis, Appendix III provides more details and examples on this process.

Miles and Huberman's classic set of analytic moves

1. giving codes to the initial set of materials obtained from observation, interviews, documentary analysis etc.;
2. adding comments, reflections, etc. (commonly referred to as 'memos');
3. going through the materials trying to identify similar phrases, patterns, themes, relationships, sequences, differences between sub-groups, etc.;
4. taking these patterns, themes, etc. out to the field to help focus the next wave of data collection;
5. gradually elaborating a small set of generalisations that cover the consistencies you discern in the data;
6. linking these generalisations
7. to a formalised body of knowledge in the form of construct or theories.

(Miles and Huberman 1994: p .9)

Box 4.1 Miles and Huberman's analytical moves

Although Miles and Huberman's guide is firmly grounded in realism it does provide suggestions for handling the data set and in some respects guiding the overall research design process. It is particularly useful as a frame of reference in multimethod studies, as employed here, as it allows for an internal validation process within and between data types. In addition to following this guide, discourse analysis was used as a method of analysing the data with the AIF providing a theoretical lens through which to view the data. The AIF is used as a lens to analysis the data; this is done in two

ways. Firstly assess whether any of the direct influences are present and secondly, whether more tacit modes of influence are at play, it is in this case that discursive investigation becomes particularly important. The development and use of the AIF was discussed in more detail in Chapter Three; however, it is useful at this point to outline that within my research the AIF is used in two, connected but slightly different, ways. Firstly, it provides a systematic way of understanding and outlining the modes of influence at play within the decision-making process, relating to MNCs and secondly, and most relevant to this immediate discussion it provides a way of organising the data.

Discourse analysis is understood and used in many different ways (Wetherell *et al*, 2001 Howarth *et al* 2000) ranging from those originating in the linguistic tradition focusing on the language of different social groups (Robson 2002; Milroy 1980) to the work of the social psychologists (Potter and Wetherell 1987) which undertakes a detailed analysis of discourse within a context which requires a “good understanding of the theoretical framework for the analysis”. (Robson 2002: p365). Within my research the approach to discourse has been one which is flexible, focusing on the role of language in creating knowledge within a social and cognitive context (van Dijk 1996) and has followed the approach employed by Rydin in her investigation of conflict and consensus in environmental planning, which involved “close reading [of the data] to discern trends and patterns” (*ibid*: appendix). In contrast to the use of the AIF to organise the data, the more general themes were developed from the data itself. Seven themes were identified as being relevant to the specific research questions posed; within these, supporting extracts from the narratives were taken with the actor group and context recorded, for example MNC: Meeting, or Government Department: interview. This follows the guide for handling qualitative data set out by Miles and Huberman, outlined above. In respect to developing the data themes, the work of grounded theory has been useful in informing the approach taken. Although grounded theory has not been followed as a strict methodological approach, the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) has been helpful in providing a logical framework in the identification of the themes. Silverman (2000) outlines Glaser and Strauss’s three stages for analysing observation data:

1. An initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data
2. An attempt to 'saturate' these categories with many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their relevance
3. Developing these categories into more general analytic frameworks with relevance outside the setting.

(Silverman 2000: p152)

Box 4.2 Three stages for analysing observation data

An example of the thematic notation and coding, along with a further explanation of the data handling process is given in Appendix III.

The approach employed to data handling has allowed for a systematic review of the modes of influence employed by, and available to MNCs but has provided a broader understanding of the sustainable development decision-making context. With reference to the overall aim of investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy, this approach has allowed for the understanding of the role of MNCs in the development of a new UK NSDS, and also the role they play in constructing the wider debate and context of sustainable development in the UK.

4.7.1 *Potential Problems*

The approach employed to data handling has been very much one which is reliant on the researcher, as a human analyst, rather than the use of computerised software. This approach is in line with the flexible, interpretative stance taken, however, it is not without its potential problems. Robson (2002) provides a useful summary of the potential issues involved;

1. **Data overload:** Limitations on the amount of data that can be dealt with;
2. **First impressions:** Early inputs make a large impression so that subsequent revision is resisted;
3. **Information availability:** Information which is difficult to get hold of gets less attention than that which is easier to obtain;
4. **Positive instances:** There is a tendency to ignore information conflicting with hypotheses already held, and to emphasize information that confirms them;
5. **Internal consistency:** There is a tendency to discount the novel and unusual;
6. **Uneven consistency:** The fact that some sources are more reliable than others tend to be ignored;
7. **Missing information:** Something for which information is incomplete tends to be devalued;
8. **Revision of hypotheses:** There is a tendency either to over- or to under-react to new information;
9. **Fictional base:** The tendency to compare with a base or average when no base data is available;
10. **Confidence in judgement:** Excessive confidence is rested in one's judgement once it is made;
11. **Co-occurrence:** Co-occurrence tends to be interpreted as strong evidence for correlation;
12. **Inconsistency:** Repeated evaluations of the same data tend to differ.

(Robson 2002: p 460, adapted and abridged from Sadler 1981. p 27-30)

Box 4.3 Potential issues in qualitative research

The potential deficiencies were avoided, or minimised, by firstly being aware of the potential problems and therefore constantly reflecting on the methodological approach in order to make an internal check. Secondly, as the multimethod approaches allowed for triangulation of the data and as discussed in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 this allows for a consistent approach and provides a mechanism for crosschecking the findings between data sets. Most importantly, the data was collected and handled in a consistent and systematic way, using the AIF as a framework for ordering the data and the systematic categorisation to develop the broader thematic findings.

The assumptions and findings from the data analysis were introduced into the later interviews as a way of providing some level of validation for the findings. In this way the actors themselves considered whether they agreed with the findings from their own perspective and experience of the decision-making process. This process of validation was a positive one, with two general responses; yes straight-forward agreement with the statements, and more reflective stances in which the actors noted that although they had not previously considered that stance, upon reflection they could see how certain influences were occurring. This was particularly true in the case of the growth of a corporate-centric discourse as the dominant policy discourse, see Chapter Six.

4.8 OVERALL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Both direct and tacit influence has been captured within this thesis; however, it is still felt that not all modes of influence were recorded to their true extent. Although interviewees acknowledged that individual conversations with government officials do take place, it is impossible as a researcher to get a record of these private conversations. This reflects the stance of Henriques:

“Transparency on the part of those lobbied is also important. Official records of government consultations are typically published, painstakingly capturing every document which has formed part of a consultation exercise. Yet there is very rarely a routine obligation on government to declare the personal encounters they have had with company representatives, and it is often during such meetings that the real business is done. Without such transparency it is difficult to discern the pattern of influence to which government has been subject. It is sometimes possible to obtain information about such meetings by making use of freedom of information legislation, but of course this presupposes that the enquirer knows what to request.”

(Henriques 2007: p154 emphasis added)

Notwithstanding this problem, through the acknowledgement of such activities my research has been able to at least outline that this mode of influence is at play within the UK policy decision-making process.

At the onset of this work I had expected it to be quite difficult to recruit representatives of MNCs/business as interviewees; however, this did not prove to be a problem. The main reason for the relative ease of recruitment was due to my background in the private sector. This not only provided me with a ready-made access to a network of relevant actors but it also provided some level of confidence in the individuals that I was not a 'mad greenie' who wanted to throw mud at them. I am not sure securing interviews would have been as 'easy', particularly at the initial stages of the research, if I had not held such a background. In contrast, securing interviewees representing the NGO section was more difficult. Many of those from NGOs did not agree to interview for two main reasons; either lack of resources, particularly time, or they felt they did not have the appropriate knowledge to be included in this research.

As the timing and order of data collection was largely governed by the design of the Government's consultation exercise around the new UK NSDS, the different data collection methods were carried out in parallel. Although this approach was undertaken through necessity rather than choice, I would follow this parallel approach again in the future as it provided constant internal checks of the data and helped avoid the problems outlined earlier in Section 4.7.1, such as the issue of first impressions.

5

Results and Analysis

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Previous chapters have outlined the justification for this study and provided the context in which it is located. A discussion of the development of the AIF, outlining its use as an evaluation framework which provides a synthesis position to analysis has been presented, along with the methodological considerations and approach to be taken. Subsequently, this Chapter will present and provide analysis of the data collected within this thesis. Firstly, the primarily analytical focus of the review and production of the UK National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS); *'Securing the future'* will be outlined using the AIF as proposed in earlier chapters. This is followed by a broader review of sustainable development policy decision-making, outlining data gathered through interviews with various actor groups, which acts to compliment the analysis of the UK NSDS.

This Chapter will begin with an overview of the process of the review and development of the new UK NSDS; *'Securing the future'*, along with a review of the participation of the state and non-state actors in the review process. The AIF is used to overview the policy-making context and to frame the influence at play within this process.

5.2 REVIEW OF THE UK NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The review of the UK National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) represents the political context element of the AIF. By outlining the process it can be seen that political context is an important part of the evaluation of the influence at play in sustainable development policy. The first three elements; mode of influence, political context and intermediate influence, along with the interaction between them will also be investigated. This will be done for the whole review process, however particular emphasis is placed on the 'Taking it on' element, as this represents the main formal stakeholder consultation exercise.

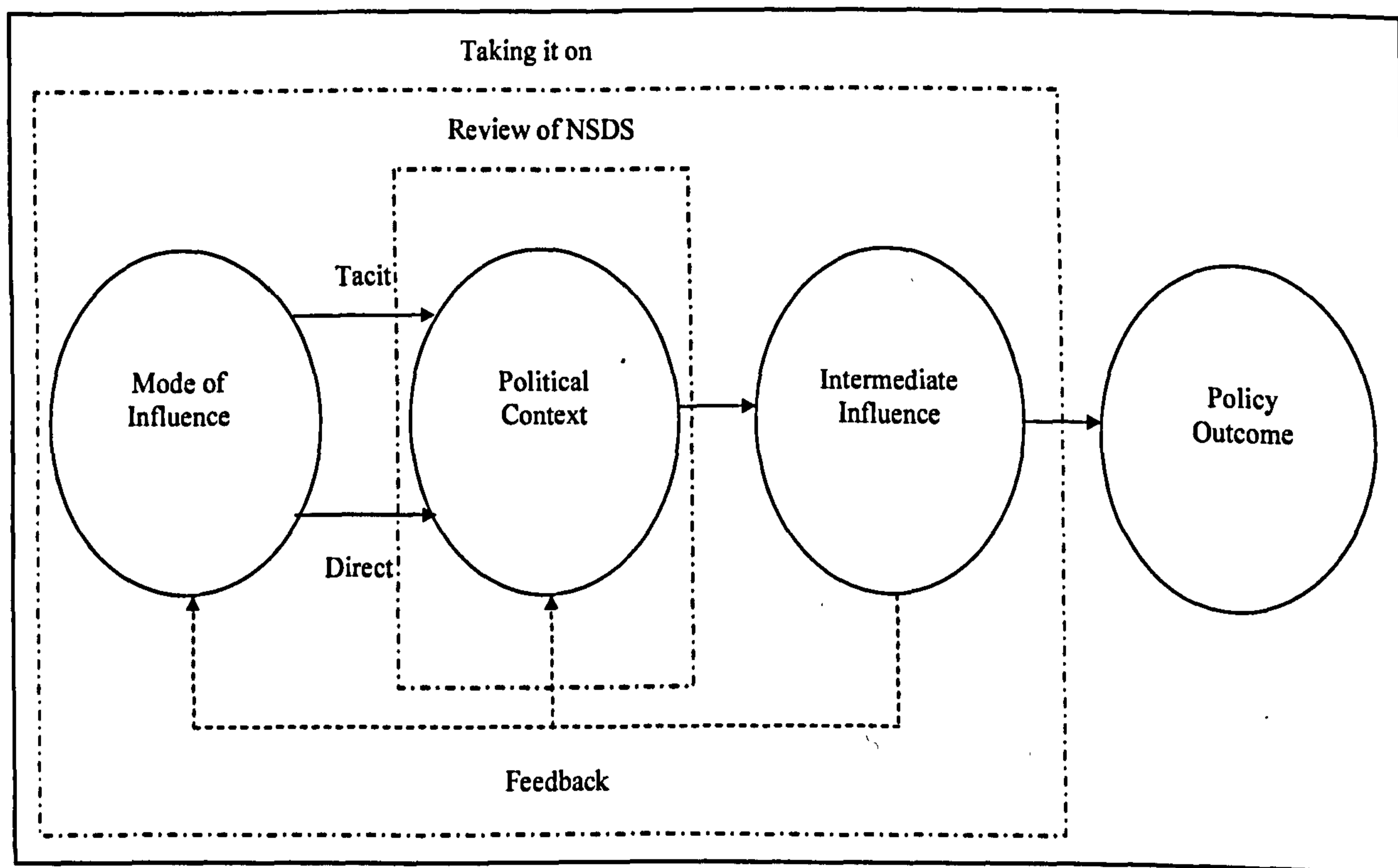


Figure 5.1 AIF primary level in the context of 'Taking it on'

As represented in Figure 5.1 the immediate political context of this element of the data analysis is the review of the UK NSDS. In broader terms the political landscape was one of newly devolved decision-making structure and a governance structure which was heavily focused towards inter/intra-agency and departmental co-operation. Devolution was a particular new challenge for DEFRA in developing a new NSDS. Jones (2006) states that this was one of the most demanding challenges faced in the

development of a new strategy for the UK. More discussion of the background and the wider political landscape and governance under New Labour is given in Chapter Two.

Figure 5.1 also highlights where the '*Taking it on*' consultation exercise fits within the AIF and therefore, demonstrates how the AIF has been used as an evaluation framework to organise the data collected within this thesis. Prior to the more detailed presentation and analysis of this data, the overall process for the review and development of the NSDS will be given.

5.2.1 *The Review Process*

In order to evaluate the influence at play in the development of the UK NSDS it is important to understand the review process. The importance of the process itself has been highlighted by Jones (2006); in her review of the development of the NSDS, she states; "The process for reviewing or creating a SD strategy can – indeed should – be part of the outcome" (*ibid.* p127). Jones also highlights the importance of participation, stating that it was one of the main aims of the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) in the review and production of the new NSDS. Jones outlines that, "Our key aims for the process were to encourage participation and discussion on SD, and to improve delivery. We therefore tried to design the process with these objectives in mind." (*ibid.* p127)

The review process was broken down into a number of different stages and employed various consultation methods, see Figure 5.2. The main consultation exercise; '*Taking it on*' was preceded by an initial 'fact finding' activity: '*Where Next for the UK on Sustainable Development?*', which ran from 6th December 2002 until 16th January 2003. This exercise consisted of an on-line forum, written consultation and a subsequent one-day seminar, with the aim of identifying the main priorities to be focused upon within the review and was run on-behalf of DEFRA by UNED-UK, (UNED-UK 2003). In addition to this fact-finding process, the ministerial and stakeholder sustainable development Task Force commissioned three stakeholder¹⁵ papers addressing the following questions:

¹⁵ The stakeholders are: 'Sara Parkin, Sally Nicolson and Ian Christie, Real World Coalition; Graham Wynne, RSPB and Dieter Helm, New College Oxford University.' (Jones 2006 p126)

- *“What the current strategy has delivered in terms of sustainable development in the UK;*
- *Where has it failed to deliver and why; and*
- *What the challenges for the next strategy in the light of WSSD outcomes are, and how these should be addressed.”*

(Jones 2006: p126)

The use of stakeholders to give specific guidance highlights that influence in the decision-making process begins long before the consultation period, but yet still is in a formalised environment. Using the secondary level of the AIF, the mode of influence and intermediate influence can be assessed. The original AIF does not specifically cover this mode of influence, although it is closely linked with advisory committee and consultation and the tacit mode of influence of research; these modes do not cover the specific selection and invitation nature of this scenario. It is suggested that a new mode of influence be included in the AIF to reflect such activity. Alterations and amendments to the AIF will be discussed later in this chapter.

Subsequent to the completion of the stakeholder reports a workshop was held, with sustainable development officials from the different government departments. These early workshops and reports, along with a review of the implementation of the 1999 Strategy, were used by the DEFRA to develop aims and principles which were to guide the review process. These aims and principles are outlined below:

“The aim of the strategy review will be to achieve, by early 2005, a revitalised strategy which will produce a step change in the delivery of sustainable development in the UK.

The principles guiding the review will be that the review process and the new strategy should:

- *Increase awareness of, and engagement with, sustainable development*
- *Build a sense of common purpose across the UK, but support devolved, regional and local diversity;*
- *Embed sustainable development more effectively within government action and policymaking;*
- *Improve delivery of sustainable development outcomes, and sustain a focus on delivery in the longer term;*
- *Build on what has already been done but challenge ourselves and others to do more;*

- *Be inclusive, involving stakeholders and those responsible for delivery at all levels; and*
- *Provide leadership, through a clear vision and priorities”.*

(Jones 2006: p127)

The main consultation exercise, *‘Taking it on: developing UK sustainable development strategy together’*, was launched in April 2004. The *‘Taking it on’* process consisted broadly of four approaches (DEFRA, 2004c):

1. Circulation and request for comment on one main consultation paper, which included specific questions to be considered by stakeholders. This document was sent out to 1,735 invited participants as well as being openly available on the internet;
2. On-line consultation consisting of a virtual panel for invited participants and a general access space;
3. Organised events and meetings, including one meeting in each devolved administration and English Region (9). In addition to regional meetings, issue- and actor-specific (themed) meetings were also held, made up of 9 events which encompassed 23 workshops, with 6 workshops being organised with local authorities and local strategic partnerships;
4. Informal dialogue and submission of opinion.¹⁶

The main consultation paper, *‘Taking It On: developing UK sustainable development strategy together*. outlines that the consultation process was formed around four main priority areas:

- *“Climate change and energy;*
- *Sustainable consumption, production and use of natural resources;*
- *Environment and social justice, and*
- *Helping communities to help themselves.”*

(DEFRA 2004a: p19)

¹⁶ Figures taken from DEFRA (2005a) *An Evaluation of the 2004 Taking It On” Consultation on the UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy* supplied by DEFRA/SDU

These priority areas demonstrate the importance which has been placed on consumption and production and therefore economic considerations and business activities. The importance of business is also highlighted in the same document in the discussion of particular areas where progress is required. The document also sets out that "to make progress in these areas we [the UK Government], and others need to take action to; help change behaviour; take forward sustainable development internationally and in Europe; get the structures and tools right so that we have the institutional capacity and leadership in the UK from the national to the local level; and increase the business contribution to achieving sustainable development." (*ibid*: p19).

The priority areas outlined above linked into the other elements of the 'Taking it on' process by providing a degree of structure for the related workshops and events. To understand the influence within the consultation process it is important to review the format of the workshops and events.

Each English region was asked, by DEFRA, to hold a 'regional dialogue event'. Although suggestions for the format of the event were supplied, each region had the power to conduct the event as it wished. All of the events, to differing degrees, were multi-stakeholder, however, the format of the events varied. A number of the events were based loosely along the same theme, with key regional institutions/individuals providing keynote addresses; these were followed by break-out sessions for the discussion of specific issues. At one meeting these issues were identified in the earlier session by the audience and did not necessarily mirror those set out by DEFRA in the consultation document. Others followed the consultation document; in one meeting it was a mixture of the two approaches. The North West region held quite a different style of event. Prior to the event delegates were asked to submit questions which could be put to a panel; these were reviewed and a limited number of questions were tabled at the event. The event then consisted of a panel of regional representations, including large business, being posed these specific questions. This question and answer approach was accompanied by an on-line survey. Subsequent to the events each region produced a specific consultation report which was sent back to DEFRA for consideration.

The themed workshops often worked along similar lines to the regional events, with the focus of the themed events including; business engagement; the 'prosperity objective'; behaviour change; international dimensions and community development. These events were run by both government departments and by other groups such as NGOs, think tanks and other government sponsored groups. Again, as with the regional events, reports reflecting the discussions were produced for consultation purposes and submitted to DEFRA. An important consideration, from a multi-actor analysis perspective, is that the majority of the delegates at these regional events, and indeed the issue-specific events were selected and invited directly by the organisers. Although the meetings were open, it seemed few delegates had 'approached' the organisers for places.

In the wider context, as a basic requirement the *'Taking it on'* process had to follow the Government's six criteria for public consultation, as summarised below:

- "allow at least 12 weeks for formal consultation;
- clearly set out the questions asked and the timescale for responses;
- make sure that the consultation is clear, concise and accessible;
- let people know what responses we receive and how they contribute to developing new UK sustainable development strategy;
- monitor how effective the consultation is; and
- check that the consultation follows the principles of better regulation....."

(Cabinet Office 2004: p4)

The responses resulting from all methods of consultation, once received and collated, were passed on to working groups, each of which focused on a specific theme, see Figure 5.2. In addition to government representatives, these groups also included external stakeholders. The groups worked within the remit of identifying the key issues and proposing possible policy responses to them. These issues and responses were then fed into a draft strategy which was then submitted to a high level programme board for consideration. The programme board consisted of senior managers from key government departments, in addition to representatives of the Devolved Administrations and the chair of the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) (Jones 2006). As discussed in this Section of the thesis, and outlined in Figure 5.2, the overall review process consisted of a number of stages and approaches. The

impact of process design will be discussed later in this Chapter. However it is noteworthy at this point to highlight how the design of the process has allowed certain actors to have influence outside the main 'formal' consultation exercise. For example, in the early stages in the development of a new UK NSDS, selected stakeholders were used to develop the fundamental aims and objectives of the process and then in the final stages inter-departmental influence is evident through the use of the high-level programme board. It could be argued that such influence is of key importance as it has occurred at vital stages in the process, when the boundaries are set and the final decisions are made.

The following sections will now go on to provide basic analysis of responses submitted and participation within the NSDS review process. In addition, as outlined in Chapters Three and Four, influence will be assessed in more detail through the application of the AIF. The AIF will be used to analyse the influence at play within review of the NSDS, including the '*Taking it on*' consultation exercise.

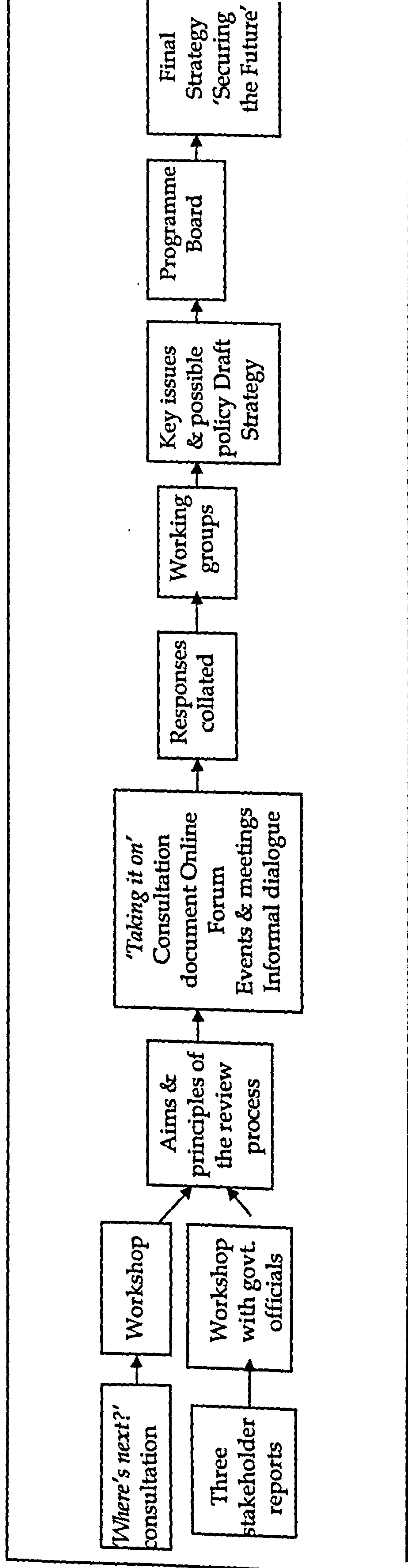


Figure 5.2: The Review Process

5.3 APPLICATION OF THE ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK

As discussed in Section 5.2, the primary level of the AIF provides a lens through which the context of the review and production of the new NSDS can be examined, as it represents the broad policy decision-making process. As stated previously the political context is that of the review of the NSDS (see Figure 5.2), essentially the production of the UK '*Securing the future*' Strategy, with the narrower focus being located with the '*Taking it on*' consultation process.

The data indicates, as discussed in the previous Section, that in addition to actors exerting influence, either directly or through tacit means, the political context itself is creating, and is subject to intermediate influence. Subsequently, the secondary level of the AIF can be used to examine in a systematic way how the process outlined in Figure 5.2 has created an environment within which certain modes of influence are more prevalent, and this has subsequently resulted in intermediate influence being present. Furthermore, the AIF secondary level has been employed within this thesis to look at the non-process-related influence; with the mode of influence and intermediate influence being discussed in turn, within this Chapter. In each specific example, the mode of influences and intermediate influences will be represented using the tertiary level (specific policy context) of the AIF as outlined in Chapter Three. It is useful at this point to re-visit the pictorial representation of the tertiary level as outlined in Figure 5.3. As discussed in Chapter Three it is at this level that a specific policy decision-making process can be examined, through breaking down the influence which occurs throughout the decision-making. Thus thesis uses the tertiary level to break down the production of the UK NSDS, each influence has been represented within the subsequent section using Figure 5.3 as a template.

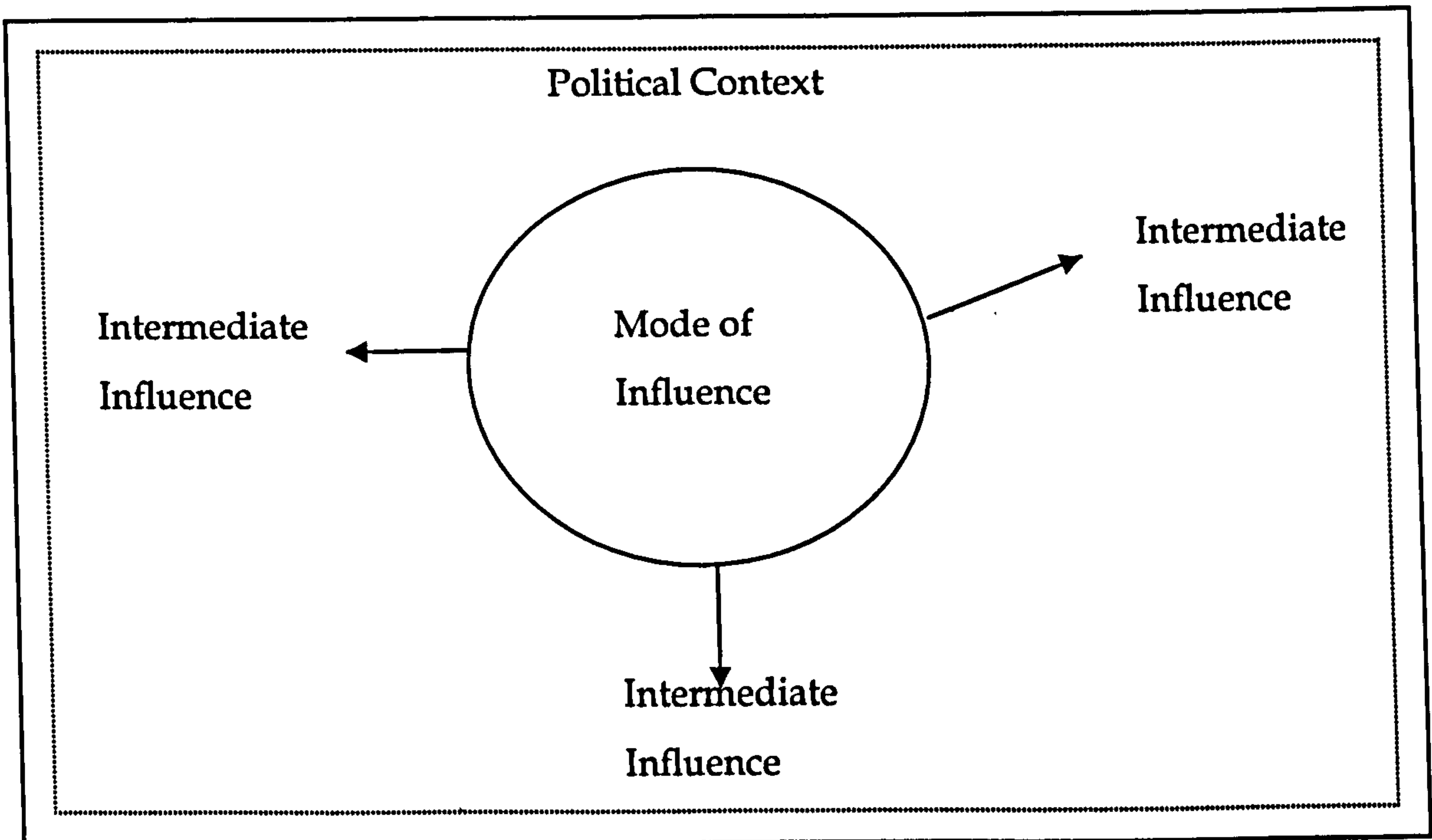


Figure 5.3 AIF Tertiary Level: Specific Policy Context

5.3.1 Direct Modes of Influence

As outlined in Section 3.4.2 the secondary level of the AIF outlines the possible modes of influence which are available within the policy-making environment. In addition the secondary level outlines the possible intermediate influence which relates to each mode of influence. This Section will now frame the review and development of the new UK NSDS within the secondary level of the AIF.

Figure 5.4 has reproduced Figure 3.5 outlining the modes of influence and intermediate influence (highlighted in bold) which have occurred in the development of the NSDS. Each of these, within the context of the data will now be discussed individually. As in the secondary level of the AIF the discussion is split into tacit and direct modes of influence. The direct modes of influence identified within the review of the UK NSDS are; Lobbying, Consultation, Advisory Committees, Task Forces and Expert Stakeholders. Each of these modes of influence will now be discussed in turn.

Mode	Intermediate Influence	Code	Intermediate Influence
Direct			
<u>Lobbying</u>	1, 2, 3, 4	1	<u>Accepted Discourse</u>
Political Donations	2, 4	2	<u>Non-decision-making</u>
<u>Consultation</u>	1, 4, 5	3	<u>Timescale</u>
<u>Advisory Committees</u>	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	4	<u>Policy Preference</u>
<u>Task Force</u>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9	5	<u>Anticipated reactions</u>
<u>Quangos</u>	1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10	6	<u>Increased status</u>
<u>Staff Secondment</u>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11	7	<u>Mobilisation of bias</u>
<u>Revolving Door</u>	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, on a longer term basis as staff secondment	8	<u>Accepted insider</u>
Tacit		9	<u>Status</u>
<u>Trade Associations</u>	1, 2, 4, 15	10	<u>Cross-issue influence</u>
<u>Agenda Setting</u>	1, 2, 7	11	<u>Business insight</u>
Marketing Strategy	1, 2	12	<u>Negotiating positions of others</u>
<u>Cross department influence</u>	2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 14	13	<u>Leadership</u>
<u>Perceived Power</u>	2, 4, 5, 7	14	<u>Clash ministerial powers</u>
<u>Research</u>	1, 9, 13	15	<u>Dual Stance</u>
<u>Support of external organisations</u>	1, 2, 7, 9, 12		
Business location/relocation	2, 4, 5		

Figure 5.4 AIF Secondary Level: Influence in UK Sustainable Development Policy

Lobbying

As lobbying occurs outside the formal consultation process it was difficult to see evidence of it through the document review and observational elements of this thesis. However, interview data shows that lobbying does occur, and did relate to sustainable development shaping the context of the NSDS. However, this was not necessarily the explicit aim of the lobbying activity.

Consultation

As discussed in Section 5.2.1, consultation has been integral to review of the UK NSDS, the main 'formal' consultation element was the *'Taking it on'* process, but it is evident within all of the stages of the process, as highlighted in Figure 5.2.

The *'Taking it on'* process represents the government's formal consultation exercise. It was covered by Cabinet Office consultation guidelines and under its umbrella, formal documentation was produced for comment by stakeholders/consultees. More importantly, it is this stage in the process which was named by the government as the consultation process. Due to the importance placed publicly on this element of the *'Taking it on'* process it is important to investigate participation both in terms of who was invited and who actually participated in this process.

Involvement in 'Taking it on'

As outlined previously the *'Taking it on'* exercise consisted of a number of components; production of consultation documents posing specific questions to consultees; regional and themed events, on-line forums and community events. The design of the process itself has created a more conducive environment for certain modes of influence to occur and the subsequent creation of intermediate influence; these will be discussed in more detail within this chapter. However, prior to this discussion a review of the actors involved in the process will be made.

Initially it is beneficial to evaluate invitation to, and participation in the *'Taking it on'* process. By scrutinising the invited consultees in addition to those who have been actively involved in the process it is possible to examine tacit influence. This is a fundamental constituent of the AIF and vital if a comprehensive framework for the assessment of influence is to be developed; to this end, a list of invited DEFRA

consultees (DEFRA 2004b) has been analysed. It is important to note at this stage that this analysis only represents those actors who were invited to participate, not those who actually did. Analysis of those actors participating in the process is given later in this section.

The list of invitees was developed by using existing databases held by DEFRA and Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) and in conjunction with other government departments (Interview: Central Government: 30th May 2005). Within what seems a straightforward decision process, in which a common-sense approach has been adopted, a number of intermediate influences have become apparent. The impact of influence outside boundaries of the specific decision-making context is important in this situation. For example, an actor who has exerted influence through being involved in consultation or working groups in the past with government department will have, in some cases, gained *insider status* and even if this intermediate influence has not obviously occurred, the actor will subsequently be present on the appropriate databases, and will therefore, in this situation be specifically asked to respond to the 'Taking it on' consultation documentation. It is interesting to note that DEFRA/SDU did not complete an evaluation of those invited to be involved in the consultation, focusing their official evaluation on the final list of consultees. It might have been enlightening, for them, from a policy-making perspective to have at least compared the two.

Cross-department influence also came into play at this early selection stage of the process; not only did other departments have influence in who was invited to respond, the intermediate influence of *timescale* was also evident. This is demonstrated in the extract below:

"...there was an inter-departmental delay in sending out the official invitation to participate...."

(DEFRA 2004c: p9)

This type of delay has been important within the review, as feedback on to the consultation process has stated that timescale was one issue taken into consideration in the decision on whether or not to respond. Due to such delays, for some actors, the allocated response time in reality, was shorter than the 12 weeks suggested in the

Cabinet Office code for consultation; outlined earlier in this chapter. Figure 5.5 gives a pictorial representation, using the tertiary level of the AIF, of the interactions at play within and outside (represented by the dashed lines) the formalised boundaries of the consultation process.

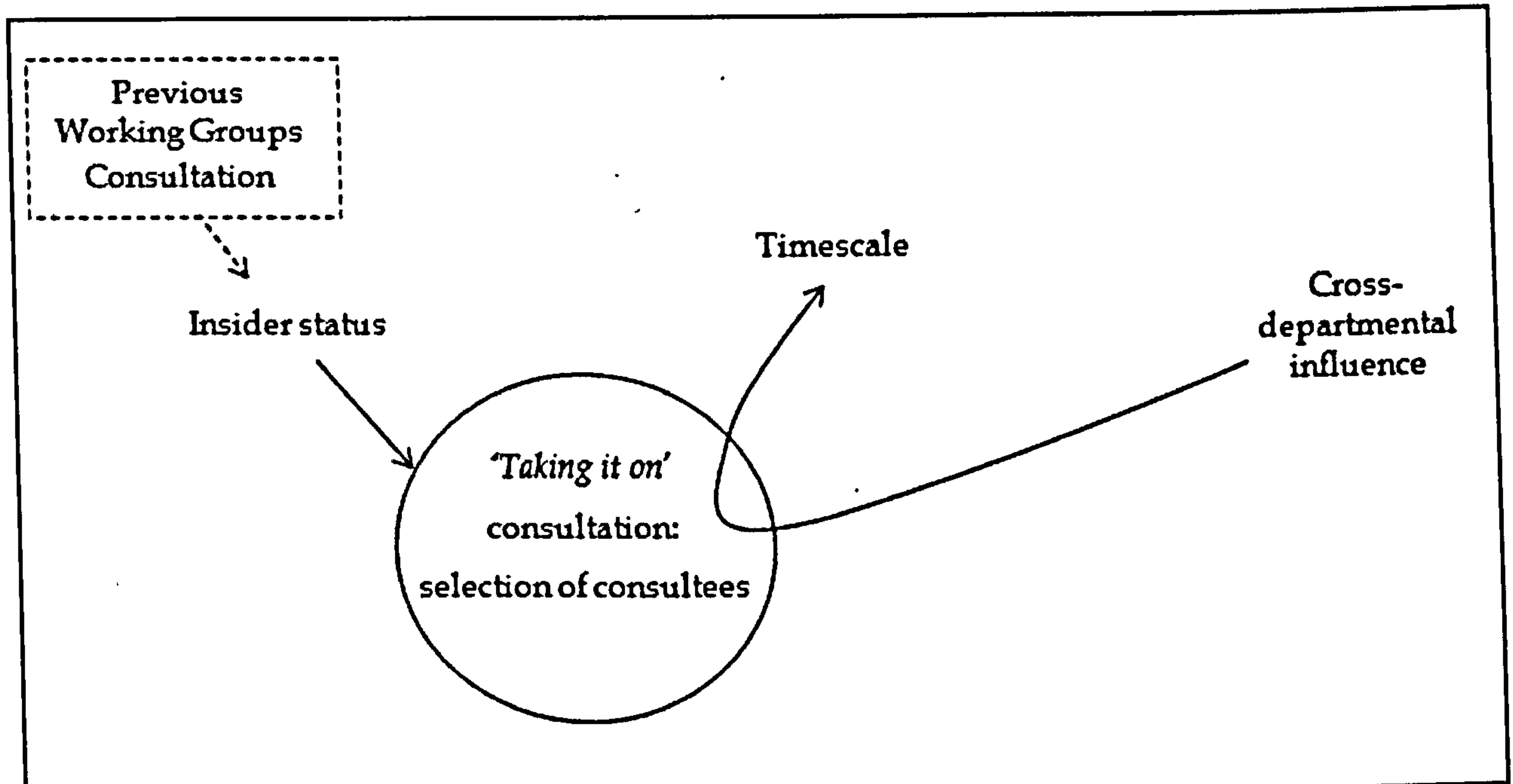


Figure 5.5 AIF Tertiary Level: Influence relating to the selection of consultees

In addition to investigating the process by which invitees were chosen it is important to evaluate the breakdown, by actor type, of these invitees: invitations to take part in the 'Taking it on' process along with a copy of the consultation document were sent to 1152 consultees, of these 218 (19%) were business and 108 (9%) were business-related organisations. Therefore, just over a quarter of those invited to take part in this consultation were related to business. Such a significant proportion of the invitees being linked to business and business-related actors demonstrates the emphasis placed by government on business being involved in the consultation.

Response rates

The invitees have been evaluated in relation to business. It is important also to look at which actors have actually responded within the process. An analysis of the response rate and of business-related responses has been completed. This analysis has been based on publicly available data (DEFRA 2004(b), 2004(d)), an evaluation report of the consultation exercise (DEFRA 2004(c), and a CD-ROM containing responses submitted to DEFRA¹⁷.

¹⁷ This CD-ROM was supplied directly from DEFRA and is not publicly accessible.

Number of responses received by	Academic and research	Business	Devolved Administrations + their public bodies	Government or Agency, public body	Individual	Local Authority	Local Strategic Partnership	NGOs	Professional Assocs	Trade Union	Other	TOTAL	No. Feedback Forms Rec'd	No. of New Resp
E-mail	18	21	5	22	26	58	15	108	12	1	2	288	83	117
Paper	6	2	4	7	17	19	4	21	4	0	3	87	2+11*	55
Online GA	9	23	3	10	146	34	4	48	8	0	3	288	84	229
Online VP1	22	42	4	16	0	1	0	45	20	1	0	151	32	0
Online VP2	0	9	1	5	0	0	0	13	3	0	0	31	0	0
Total no. online Responses	31	74	8	31	146	35	4	106	31	1	3	470	116	229
% online	56%	76%	47%	51%	77%	31%	17%	45%	66%	50%	4%	55.6%	55%	57%
Total no. response	55	97	17	60	189	112	23	235	47	2	8	845	201 + 11 = 212	401
% total response	0.5%	11%	2%	7%	22%	13%	3%	28%	5.5%	>1%	1%	100%	25% of 845	47% of 845

Table 5.1 Written Consultation Respondent Statistics (DEFRA 2004 (c):p38)

A breakdown of all written responses (on-line, virtual panel and response to consultation document) received by DEFRA is given in Table 5.1¹⁸. Table 5.1 provides a simple break-down of consultee involvement, showing NGOs and individuals as the actors with the highest response rate, at 28% and 22 % respectively. With business having a total response rate of 11%, the response rate of professional associations should also be added to this figure in order to give a true representation of business responses. This produces an overall response rate of 17%, which is still lower than that of NGOs and individuals. Superficially, this would suggest that NGOs have had more influence within the 'Taking it on' consultation process. However, involvement does not necessarily equate to representation. Therefore, these figures and analysis need to be handled in conjunction with the analysis data resulting from observation, document review and interviews. This point will be discussed later in this chapter, where a direct relationship between involvement and influence will be challenged. It should also be noted that responses from individuals may include responses from individuals who are active in, and are representing a business stance. However, no clear relationship between individual responses and business organisations could be made within this thesis. To understand further the business involvement in this process it is useful to break down the written response into business type; as shown in Table 5.2 below.

Business response: On-line consultation

A high proportion of responses from business, at 76%, were made on-line. Similarly, professional associations have a high on-line response rate at 66%. Therefore it is useful to break the on-line response down into type of business representation, with particular reference to MNCs.

¹⁸ The total number of invited consultees presented in this table is slightly different to that outlined previously. The table is based directly on an evaluation paper prepared by DEFRA and the figure of 1152 (given in text) is taken from the published list of invitees.

MNC	Professional Association	Others
Marks and Spencer	ABI	Andersen Construction Ltd
Shell International Ltd	ACCA	DHERA
Parson Brinckerhoff	British Cement Association	COMOS-UK
Lafarge Cement UK	British Stainless Steel	EnAct Consulting
BT	Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply	Euro Environmental Containers
Slough Estates International	Chemical Industries Association	Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants
Severn Trent Water	Confederation of Paper Industries	Scottish Water
Procter and Gamble	Construction Product Association	
UPM-Kymmene-UK	Country Land and Business Association	
	EEF	
	Food and Drink Federation	
	House Builders Federation	
	Institute of Chartered Accountants	
	Institute of Directors	
	IEE	
	Institution of Structural Engineers	
	Manufacturers Organisation (The)	
	Quarry Products Association	
9	18	7
<i>Total</i>	<i>Responses</i>	443

Table 5.2 Business actors involved in the Taking It On process

Business response: written responses

As with the on-line responses above, the written submissions have also been broken down into; MNCs, professional associations and others, see Table 5.3 below. Table 5.3 is based on a copy of responses supplied by DEFRA.

MNC	Professional Association	Other
British Sugar	Country and Land Business Association	CAG Consultants
Hendersen Global Investors	Institute of Chemical Engineers	CITB construction + skills
RWE Power	UKBCSE	Co-operative Financial Services
Slough Estates International	CBI	Nirex Radioactive Waste Management
Thames Water	Environmental Law Foundation	4LG + Sustainability Practitioner Network
Balfour Beatty	National Energy Foundation	Sustainability Practitioner Network
Marks and Spencer	Environmental Services Association	EAGA partnership
Ove Arup and Partners Ltd	House Builders Federation	Future Perspective Cooperative ltd
Severn Trent Water	Institute of Structural Engineers	Scottish Water
Rolls Royce plc	Chemical Industries Association	
Glaxo Smith Kline plc	Confederation of Paper Industries	
Aviva plc	Institute of Directors	
BT	Institute of Environmental Management and Auditing	
Biffa	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England	

	and Wales	
	Food and Drink Federation	
	ACCA	
14	16	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>Responses</i>	344

Table 5.3 Written Consultation Responses: Breakdown of business-related organisations

Based on this data the responses submitted by business can be seen as limited, with only 4% coming directly from MNCs and with 12% in total coming from organisations with a business interest. It is noteworthy that a significant number (5%) of the total business responses have been submitted by professional associations, demonstrating a tacit mode of influence as a mode of influence, as outlined in the secondary level of the AIF.

When looking at the on-line and written responses outlined above the total response rate of MNCs is 3%, with 4% coming from professional associations and 2% from other business-related organisations. In total only 9% of the on-line and written responses came from organisations with a specific business focus. Again, the analysis of total on-line and written responses shows that a significant proportion of the business-related response is coming through trade/professional associations. This is an important mode of influence outlined in the AIF and one which is regularly discussed within literature as mechanism for business to influence government policy (see McRae 2005). It should be noted that this data set does not include responses which have been submitted as part of group-specific responses; for example, regional response or themed workshop. Although these figures should be handled with care, an indication of the formal engagement within the review of the UK NSDS can be seen. The importance of engagement by business in the formal consultation process, and to some degree perceived importance of business engagement in sustainable development in general, was highlighted at the initiation of the process in the consultation documentation and design, with a specific section being included in the main consultation report, and a specific business engagement workshop jointly organised by DEFRA and DTi to launch the 'Taking it on' consultation process.

Written Consultation: The Importance of Business

The importance placed on the involvement of business is clearly stated in the 'Taking it on' document (DEFRA 2004a). Firstly, the involvement of business is given a dedicated section in the report; no other actor-specific group has been singled out in such a way. The extract below is taken from this section and demonstrates the importance placed on the role of business activity in the goal of sustainable development within wider society.

"Government has an important role to play through active economic, social and environmental policies that support or stimulate action. But ultimately it is the action taken by businesses themselves that will deliver a supply of products and services that are clean, resource-efficient, and fair to employees and communities."

(Consultation Documentation: DEFRA 2004a: p34)

The importance placed on the role of business in delivering sustainable development and contribution to the NSDS is further highlighted in the same consultation document, through the questions posed for response, as outlined below:

"What more needs to be done to improve the business contribution to delivering sustainable development?"

"What actions should we take to support, enable or require a higher level of business contribution?"

(Consultation Documentation: DEFRA 2004a: p34)

Again, the role and importance of business in developing and delivering policy around sustainable development was present in the debate within the regional meetings and themed workshops. The following quotes are taken from business-focused meeting which, as outlined above, launched the *Taking it on*' exercise;

"Business is critical in implementation and delivery"

(Themed Meeting: DTi: 13th May 2004)

"Business is clearly the most important to get on board"

(Themed Meeting: DTi, 13th May 2004)

“Responsibility falls on corporations that deliver sustainable values operating in a sustainable world”

(Themed Meeting: DTi: 13th May 2004)

More significantly business, specifically MNCs, has been noted as ‘knowing best’ and understanding sustainable development more than any other, by both state and non-state actors, in the decision-making arena. The following quotations, have been taken, again from the consultation meetings within the ‘*Taking it on*’ process. It is notable that the first quote is from a non-business actor. The emphasis which has been placed on business within the policy-making process provides evidence to reject the stance, as outlined earlier in this thesis, taken by Orthodox Pluralists that as an interest group there is nothing special about business (Wilson 2003).

“Links with business, responsible business, are vital, because business understands more’

(Regional Event: South East: 28th June 2004)

“Business does delivery well, can explain to government how to do this”

(Themed Meeting: DTi: 13th May 2004)

Some disagreement with this stance that business knows best, was present during the consultation meetings (as shown in the quotation below); however, this was limited and appeared represent the minority view.

“ it’s not just business we need to recognise, there is a role for the public sector’

(Regional Event: South East :28th June 2004)

The perceived understanding held by business and the importance placed on business organisations is also evident in the consultation evaluation documents, with the suggestion that in future exercises businesses could be used to help complete the

financial assessment of the regulatory impact assessment¹⁹, as highlighted in the quotation below.

“The Department [DEFRA] needs to consider how best to engage individual businesses in consultations. For example, businesses could help to identify the costs and benefits of sustainable development to assist the regulatory impact assessment.”

(DEFRA 2004d: p20)

In this case the suggestion is going beyond merely engaging business in the review process, but having them actively involved in the regulatory review which accompanies the process.

During interviews undertaken following completion of the consultation process, interviews with government officials highlighted that there was general disappointment with the level of formal engagement with business and that they felt it could have been higher, as highlighted below:

“We were disappointed with the final level of business engagement in the process. This is always something that we are aware of at the beginning of any consultation exercise [in relation to sustainable development].”

(Interview: Government Official: 30th May 2005)

Although the importance of business had been explicitly made throughout the process and DEFRA made it a clear aim that the engagement of business should be a vital part of the consultation process, formal engagement is limited. However, the quotation above highlights that the tacit influence of business is not recognised by the state actors, with only direct involvement in the consultation exercise being seen as influencing the policy outcome.

¹⁹ An RIA is a policy tool which assesses the impact, in terms of costs, benefits and risks of any proposed regulation. A full RIA reflects the results of consultation - it is important that all those who will be affected by a proposal are given the opportunity to comment - and presents a range of options from regulation to non-regulatory alternatives such as codes of practice. It is submitted to Ministers with recommendations for action, future monitoring and evaluation.) (HSE DNA)

MNC involvement in regional and themed events

Regional events, themed workshops and community events were key methods used by DEFRA to support the written and on-line consultation elements of the 'Taking it on' process. Again it is a useful starting point to look at the MNCs and more broadly business involvement in these events. A comprehensive data set is not available for this information, therefore the analysis is not exhaustive but it does provide a level of indication of representation at the different types of events.

Table 5.4 below outlines the attendance of the different actors at the 13 themed events. It can be seen that attendance of all the groups identified in the consultation evaluation are fairly even, at 10% - 13%. Other organisations have an attendance of 43%, however there is no indication of the make-up of these 'other' organisations.

Actor type ²⁰	Percentage attendance (%)
Individuals	10%
Local Authorities/LSPs	10%
Central and regional government	n/a
Voluntary or community sector	12%
Business/economic organisations	12%
Academic/research	13%
Other organisations	43%

Table 5.4 Business attendance at 'Taking it on' themed events (DEFRA 2004c: p13)

Actor type	East Midlands	South East	East of England
LAs/LSPs	31	34	30
Central and regional government	19	17	n/a
Voluntary or community sector	12	12	10
Business/economic	6	14	10

²⁰ Categories as outlined in DEFRA (2004c)

organisations			
Academic and research	n/a	3	3
Other	32	20	47

Table 5.5 Attendance at 'Taking it on' regional events (based on DEFRA 2004c: p12)

In general terms business representation at themed events was in line with other actors, whereas at regional events attendance is lower. Interview data, as highlighted below, suggests that business attendance is likely to be higher if the events do not take a full day and if the event is focused on a certain theme/issue, rather than covering the broader spectrum of the NSDS.

"There is generally not a good business turnout for a whole day event, this is why we had a business breakfast."

(Interview: Regional Government: 30th July 2004)

Again it is important to reiterate that a direct relationship between involvement and influence is questioned within this thesis, an argument which will be expanded later in this Chapter, particularly in the discussion of the modes of influence, agenda-setting and perceived power and the intermediate influences of accepted discourse and anticipated reaction. It is within this context that the tertiary and secondary levels of the AIF are used which allows for a holistic evaluation of influence which does not rely on an observable casual relationship.

When focusing on consultation it is of vital importance not only to look at who made suggestions, and how opinions were communicated into the policy decision-making process, but also to investigate how these opinions are dealt with by the policy-makers. Within the context of the review of the UK NSDS a number of elements are at play. Figure 5.2 highlighted that the final stages of the review process included collation of responses, theme-specific working groups and final review by a high-level programme board. This following section will evaluate how these mechanisms operated and their impact in regard to influence within the decision-making arena.

Collation of responses

As discussed, the analysis of the involvement data set as completed in the previous sections is of use within this thesis, the numerical break-down does not directly relate to influence. It is enlightening to note that this stance has been taken by the UK Government within this decision-making context, as highlighted in the extract below, which is taken from the official consultation evaluation document.

“Whilst it is clearly incumbent on the Department [DEFRA] to consider all responses [written responses] fully, it would be unusual not to accord somewhat greater importance to responses from organisations with particular expertise, influence or representativeness. DEFRA has indeed done this, at least informally, but it has also taken notice of any innovative suggestions from any source.”

(DEFRA, 2004c: p.26)

This extract demonstrated how the influence of actors who are outside the boundaries of the formal consultation exercise can have influence on the policy decision-making. In such a situation, using the secondary level of the AIF as a guide and the tertiary level within a specific context, a number of the modes of influences and intermediate influence can be highlighted. The effect of lobbying or an actor's position on an advisory committee, either an NGO or business, creates a position of accepted insider /insider status; this can subsequently be translated into agenda-setting, through perceived power. Perceived power, in this context, may result in the decision-makers seeing a specific actor as holding certain expertise or knowledge, again this can be seen in the extract above.

In contrast to the handling of the written responses, the online general access consultation was non-attributable and responses were dealt with by a user number rather than a name. The aim of this approach was to *“enable online participants to say what they wanted incognito, possibly outside their organisational view, and was anticipated to encourage full participation and ensure equality of responses (i.e. with no weighting of response).”* (DEFRA 2004c: p17). In this situation some of the influences outlined in the discussion regarding written response did not occur. However, the approach taken in dealing with the online response was considered by some actors to give disproportionate importance to the written consultation, which was attributable, and thus created a less than transparent process. The lack of transparency in this area

means it is more difficult to ascertain the modes of influence and resulting intermediate influence. Notwithstanding this difficulty, the documentation reviewed suggests that although reoccurring themes are taken from the online consultation, more weight is given to those written responses from recognised organisations or individuals. The consultation process has been described by Government as *'not being a referendum'* (DEFRA 2004c), with importance and representativeness of specific response needing to be taken into account. This point is further reiterated in the concluding section of the evaluation report and, what is of further interest in this excerpt below is that weighting seems to have been completed on an informal basis and not as part of the formal analysis of the responses.

"The responses received to the written consultation and reports from all the consultation events were analysed by DEFRA. An issue for DEFRA was whether or not to weight replies based on knowledge and influence. Whilst it is clearly incumbent on the Department to consider all responses fully, it would be unusual not to accord somewhat greater importance to responses from organisations with particular expertise, influence or representativeness. DEFRA has indeed done this, at least informally, but it has taken notice of any innovative suggestions from any source."

Emphasis added (DEFRA 2004c p 26)

Advisory Committees

In addition to the handling of responses the use of groups, and individuals, in an advisory role has been present in the *'Taking it on'* process. Although, as stated in the second level of the AIF as a mode of influence, the use of groups explicitly referred to as advisory committees has not been employed in this review process. However, individuals and organisations have been selected to act in group settings to advise government on policy decisions within the review. Figure 5.2 shows that a key part of both the initial and the latter stages of the process has included selected workshops and working groups. Such methods of engagement have played a key role in providing access to a direct mode of influence for actors within this decision-making environment.

Advisory committees have also been proven to act as a tacit mode of influence. As outlined previously in Section 5.3.1.1, selection of consultees and of the working

groups has been based on government's, specifically DEFRA's, work with organisations and individuals outside this specific decision-making context. In this instance the intermediate influences of accepted insider and increased status are becoming relevant as a result of the inclusion in advisory committees. This mode-intermediate influence process, as highlighted through the use of the tertiary level of the AIF (see Figure 5.8), is working in a similar way to that of narrower examples of working groups feeding into the 'Taking It On' process as outlined in Figure 5.2.

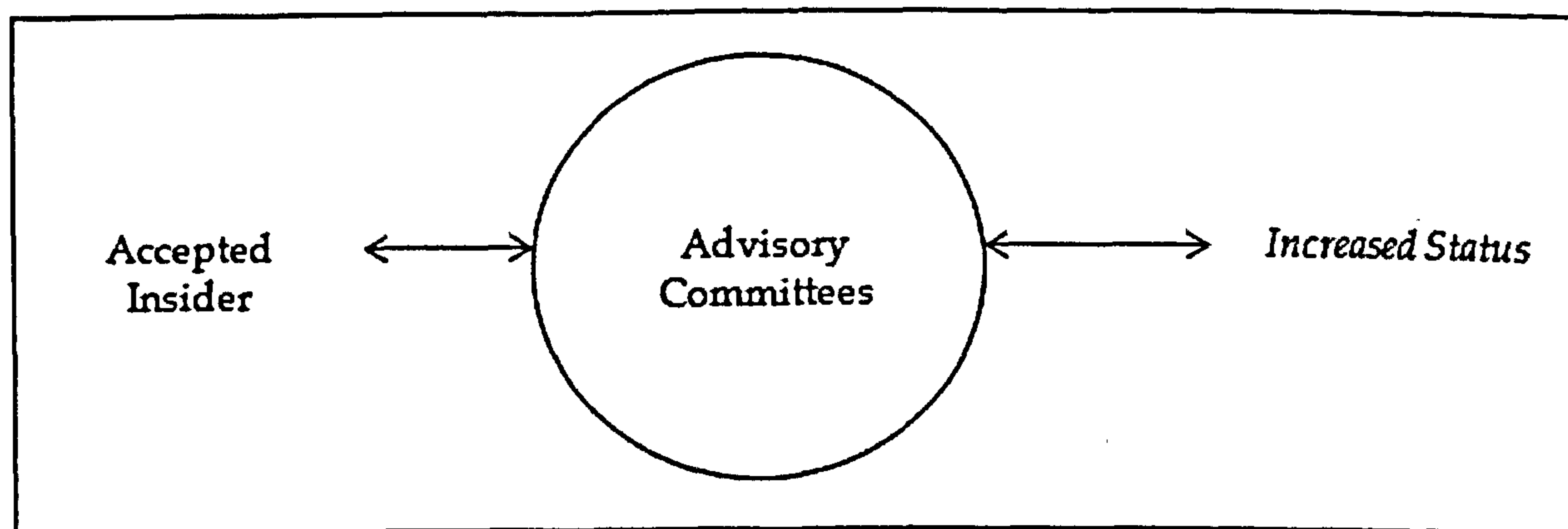


Figure 5.6 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to advisory committees

As shown in Figure 5.6 above, a two-way process is occurring between the mode of influence: advisory committee and the intermediate influence of increased status and accepted discourse, as demonstrated by the two-way arrows.. This two-way mechanism, as well as the accepted discourse affecting the policy discussion, also feeds back into the advisory committee and frames their future debate.

Task Forces

On a superficial level the role of task forces in the production of the new UK NSDS appears to be limited. However, the task forces have played a key role both in the development of the strategy and a role in meeting the outcomes of the 'Securing the future' strategy. Firstly, focusing upon the UK Sustainable Development Task Force (SDTF) who were influential from the early stages of the development of the new UK NSDS, by providing a review of the existing strategy, and through commissioning stakeholder papers (as discussed earlier). The SDTF has the privileged position of access to direct communication channels with central Government, and in the latter stages of the process the SDTF suggested future changes and implementation actions.

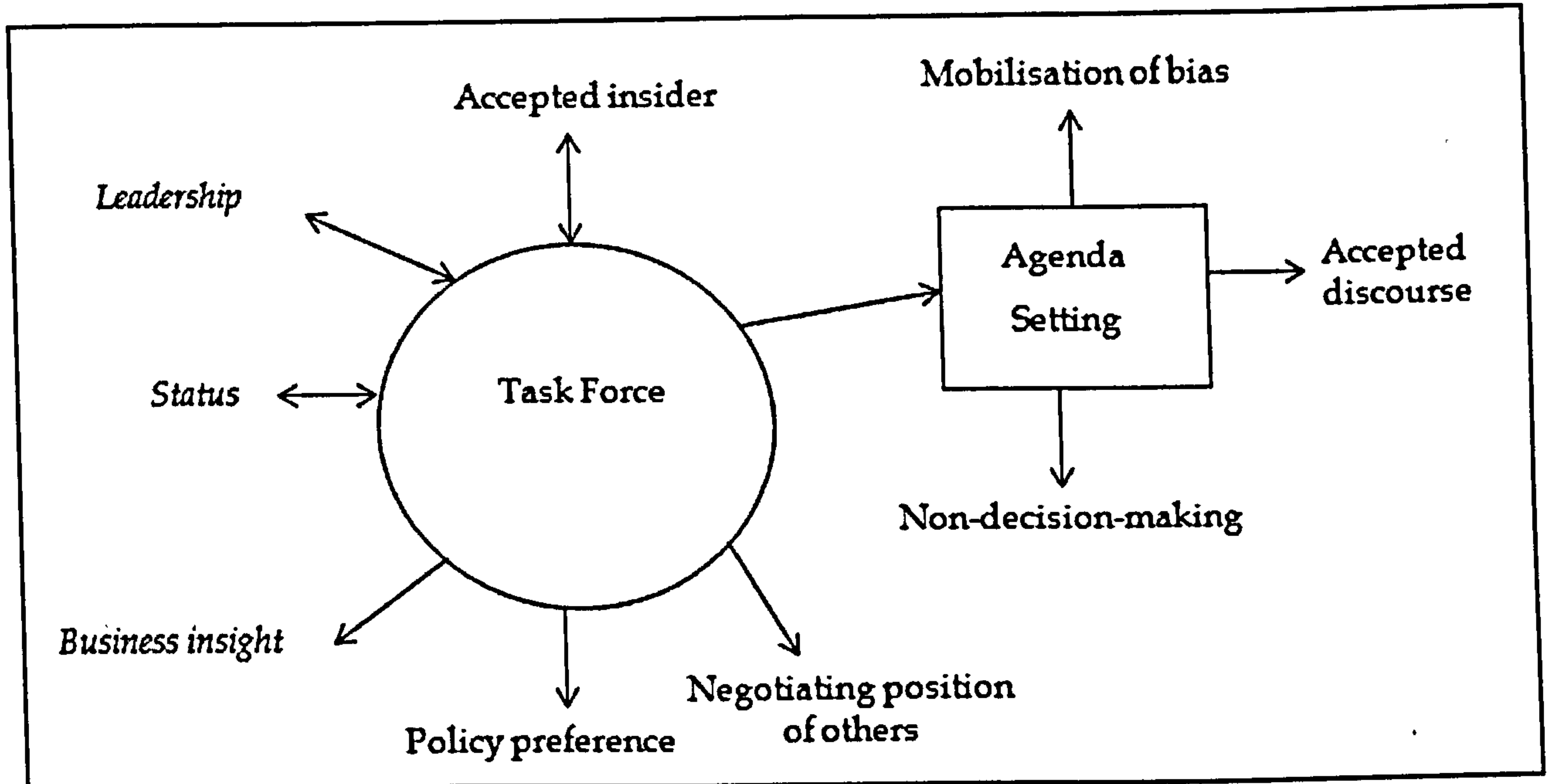


Figure 5.7 Tertiary Level: Influence relating to task force

Figure 5.7 highlights the wide range of influence which is afforded to task forces; it is interesting to note in this example that one mode of influence, in this case task forces, can lead to another, agenda-setting.

Task forces again came into play following the publication of the 'Securing the future' strategy. The Government introduced a new task force with the objective of sustainable procurement; the Task Force for Sustainable Procurement (SPTF) was given the remit to draw 'up an action plan to bring about a step-change in sustainable public procurement so that the UK is among the leaders in the EU by 2009' (UK Government 2006). It is interesting and valuable to review the make-up of the SPTF, which is chaired by a private sector representative; Sir Neville Simms and includes a number of business representatives; 41% of the SPTF member from business or business-related organisation, and of this 46% are MNCs. MNC representation comes from BT, Hewlett Packard, Shanska, Tarmac/Anglo-American, Vodafone and Compass Group. It is pertinent that the main task force resulting from the 'Securing the future' Strategy includes such high business representation and is led by a leading private sector figure. The membership of the SPTF is important as it has an implementation remit and directly advises government on policy options. The continuous nature of the intermediate influence of insider status can be demonstrated here, as the members of the task force have influence on a number of different policy initiatives.

In addition to the creation of the SPTF a Business Task Force on Sustainable Consumption and Production (BTFSCP) has also been developed as a result of the 'Securing the future' Strategy. The aims of the BTFSCP are as follows:

- *“Provide policy guidance to Government, so that Government in turn can shape the context in which there is a move to more sustainable consumption and production;*
- *Foster debate and learning on the most effective ways that business can move in the direction of more sustainable consumption and production;*
- *Identify tools and skills to enable business to implement sustainable consumption and production initiatives.”*

(BTFSCP 2006 :p1)

The first two of these aims outlined above, highlights the potentially influential role of the BTFSCP, and as with the SPTF this influence can be continuous and not confined to the production of the NSDS. The creation and emphasis placed on task forces within the realm of sustainable development demonstrates the importance placed on experts by the New Labour regime. The broader use of experts has also been investigated in this thesis.

Expert Stakeholders

As discussed in section 5.2.1, DEFRA commissioned selected stakeholders to produce reports to provide a review of the existing strategy and to identify the challenges of the forthcoming NSDS review. As outlined in Figure 5.8 the decision to commission the three stakeholder papers led to a number of intermediate influences to be present in the decision-making process. As the papers were commissioned at the onset of the review and fed into the development of the principles and objectives of the review process, agenda-setting and non-decision-making are key intermediate influences at play. The outcome of such intermediate influence is that the 'scene is set' for subsequent strategy discussions; controlling how this is discussed (agenda-setting) and what is excluded from the discussions altogether (non-decision-making) Additionally, the use of stakeholder papers earlier in the strategy development process allows for policy preference to be shaped and mobilisation of bias to occur.

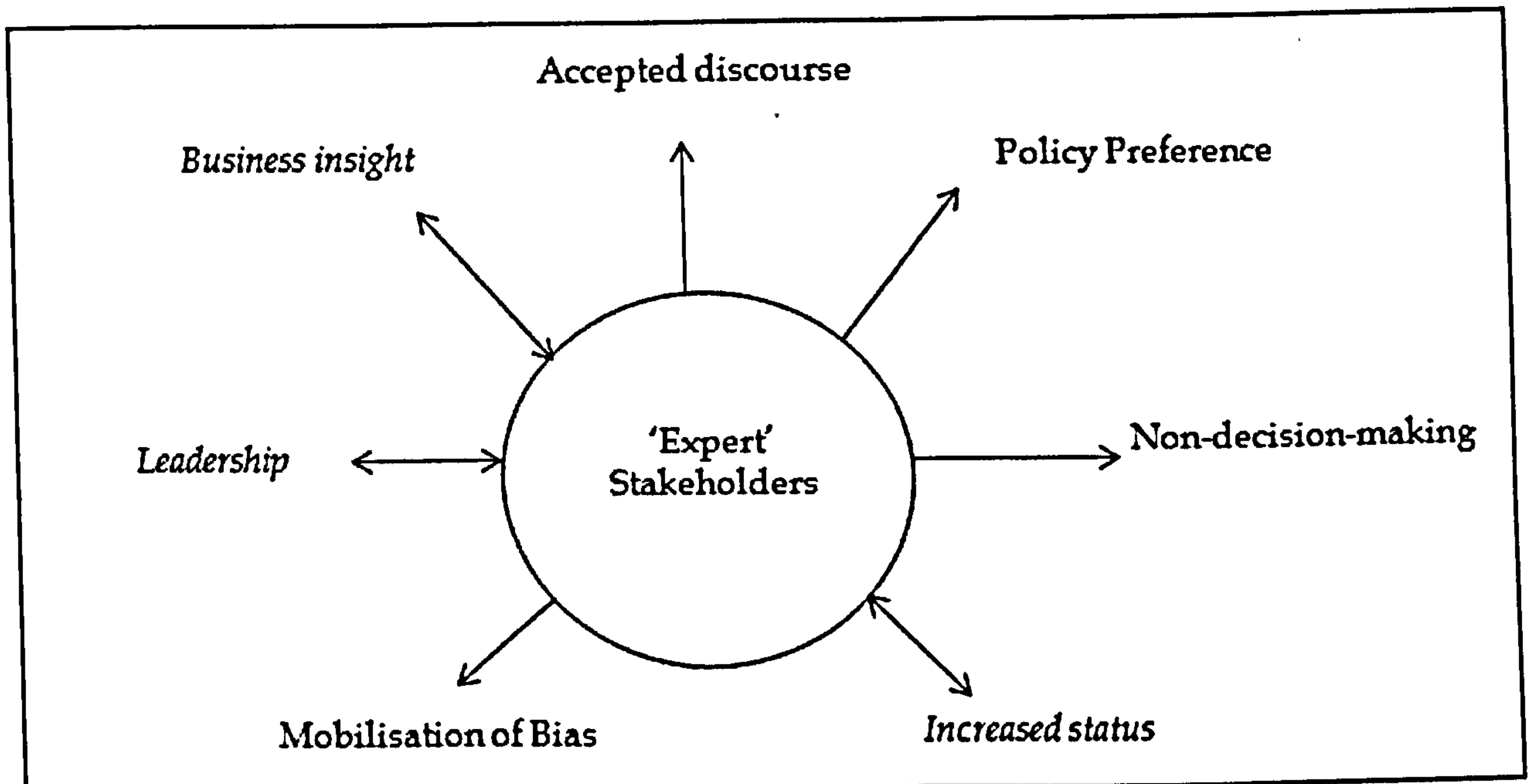


Figure 5.8 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to the use of 'Expert' Stakeholders

In addition, to creating intermediate influence within this specific decision-making arena, the use of 'expert' stakeholders in this way also creates the intermediate influences of status, leadership and business insight which have impacts outside the boundaries of the review of the UK NSDS, as highlighted in italics in Figure 5.8 above. Two-way arrows are used in Figure 5.8 to demonstrate that by being and using 'expert' stakeholders leads to the intermediate influences of business insight, leadership and increased status and subsequently this perpetuates the perception that actors hold 'expert' status. In addition, as discussed in Chapter Three intermediate influences are shown in italics when their impact reaches beyond the specific policy decision-making process.

In terms of the influence of MNCs, what is interesting in relation to the stakeholder reports is that the three stakeholders involved were not directly business-related. However, the individuals involved do have some links with the business community. Dieter Helm, stated by Jones (2006) to be from New College, Oxford University, is also associated with business-facing organisations, including holding the position of Chairman of Oxera Energy Group which provides a forum for senior energy industry managers to meet and discuss the direction of UK energy policy and the implications of the latest energy policy developments (Oxera 2006). Linking to the notion of mode and intermediate influence being linked with status and insider status, as highlighted

in the secondary level of the AIF, Dieter Helm is also a member of the Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Group and Chairman of DEFRA's academic panel (Dieter Helm 2006). Therefore, selecting one example from Figure 5.6, business insight is an important intermediate influence in this case which results from being involved in the strategy decision-making process, as this will have subsequent benefits from a business perspective.

This section has discussed, employing the secondary and tertiary levels of the AIF, the direct influence which has occurred within the production of the new UK NSDS, '*Securing the future*'. The following section will now go on, in a similar way, to outline the tacit influence linked to MNCs which has also occurred in this process.

5.3.2 *Tacit Modes of Influence*

The ability to assess tacit influence is a fundamental characteristic of the AIF, allowing for a fuller assessment of influence at play in the policy decision-making process. Within the '*Taking it on*' process the following tacit modes of influence have been identified: Trade Associations, Agenda Setting, Cross Departmental Influence and Perceived Power, each of these modes of influence will now be discussed individually.

Trade Associations

As stated previously in this chapter and in Chapter 2, trade associations have been highlighted widely in literature as a mechanism for business to influence government policy. As discussed in Section 5.3.1 trade associations made up a significant proportion of the invited and participating consultees in the '*Taking it on*' process. With 5.5% of all responses originating from trade associations; 53% of all on-line and 41% written business-related responses were submitted by trade associations, (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

A key trade association within the UK, the Confederation of British Industries (CBI), with "a direct company membership employing over 4 million and a trade association membership representing over 6 million of the workforce – is the premier organisation speaking for business in the UK" (Written Response: CBI: p1: dna). Representation of business through the CBI has been present in a number of forms within the NSDS review. The CBI were present at the DTi business event and they have submitted

formal responses within the 'Taking It On' written consultation exercise. The formal response has been evaluated with extracts being used in subsequent sections of this Chapter, namely within the discussion of influence through agenda-setting. Extracts from this response will also be used in the wider context of emerging themes within this thesis. What is interesting to note here is that the CBI have taken a conservative approach within their response, this reinforces the argument set out by McRae (2005) and does not reflect the pro-active stance of some of their membership organisations. The question of double standards and the trust placed in trade associations by business will be discussed in further detail later in this thesis. In a general sense the CBI response can be seen to be promoting 'old' arguments and representing the laggards in the sustainable development debate rather than the pace-setters. With emphasis being placed on not increasing the burden placed on business and allowing for flexibility in the system, as highlighted in the following extracts;

"The risk, however, is of multiple initiatives which create complexity and additional burdens for business"

(Written Response: CBI: p3)

"An overly prescriptive approach to sustainable development will reduce choice and innovation, thereby making any solution less sustainable in the long term."

(Written Response: CBI: p5).

As previously outlined, business involvement in the review of the UK NSDS has been emphasised from the outset of the review process, with engagement in reality being seen as limited. This thesis has found that one reason for this lack of formal engagement is the lack of focus, and high level nature of the strategy. This is also reflected in the response submitted by the CBI.

"...converting the philosophy of sustainable development into tangible actions is also key to securing the engagement of business. Climate change/energy, waste, transport and land use planning are among the priority areas of interest to business. The scope to maximise the commercial opportunities and minimise the burdens from sustainability policies in these areas should be clearly identified."

(Written Response: CBI Response: p 1)

Within the review of the UK NSDS, trade associations been evident as a mode of influence in the form of sector specific organisations. Like the CBI, the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy (UKBCSE) submitted a formal written response to DEFRA as part of the *'Taking It On'* process. Unlike the CBI's broad-based response, the UKBCSE's response had a specific focus on climate change; reflecting the Council's main focus which is "[focused] clearly on those aspects of sustainable development that interact with the delivery of the UK's Climate Change Programme" (Written Response: UKBCSE: p1: July 2004). Within this extract it can be seen that as well as demonstrating tacit influence in the case of business, the UKBCSE also demonstrates the importance of the tacit influence of cross-departmental influence. The UKBCSE's response demonstrates the power of the DTI, discussing its historical block on integrating sustainable development into terms of reference of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM), which was in direct contradiction to their sister organisation the Office of Water Services' (OFWAT) terms of reference. It should be noted that this stance has since changed, but still serves to demonstrate the power/influence the DTI have, which is important in the context of this thesis in relation to the mode of influence of cross-departmental influence.

"However the DTI has historically resisted its application in the energy sector in relation to the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. It has been suggested that the sustainability of today's energy market might have been greater had the concept of sustainable development been built into the terms of reference of OFGEM from the outset."

(Written Response: UKBCSE: p3: July 2004)

The UKBCSE response goes on further to demonstrate the influence of DTI within the realm of sustainable development, and thus further highlighting the role of cross-departmental influence, within its discussion on regulation and electricity trading.

"The DTI's Sustainable Development Strategy also has no standing in relation to non-Ministerial Government Departments for which they are responsible, such as OFGEM."

(Written Response: UKBCSE: p5: July 2004)

“DTI officials have privately admitted that their sustainable development strategy had no standing at all in relation to the evolution of the DTI’s leadership role in the development and implementation of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements (NETA). These in turn had a deleterious effect on the delivery of the Government’s goals for sustainable energy, and increased the cost of Renewables Obligation to consumers.”

(Written Response: UKBCSE: p5: July 2004)

The second extract also highlights the ways in which trade associations themselves can influence government policy. The opening sentence shows that informal conversations between government officials and the UKBCSE take place. This type of influence can lead to the intermediate influences (see figure 5.9) of non-decision-making, policy preference, mobilisation of bias, negotiating position of others and cross-issue influence. The intermediate influence of *cross-issue influence* is also evident through the UKBCSE response as it demonstrates how government decisions and discussions on other topics, in this case energy, affect government policy and action more broadly on sustainable development. Due to the inter-disciplinary nature of sustainable development, *cross-issue influence* as an intermediate influence plays a vital role, and should not be under-estimated.

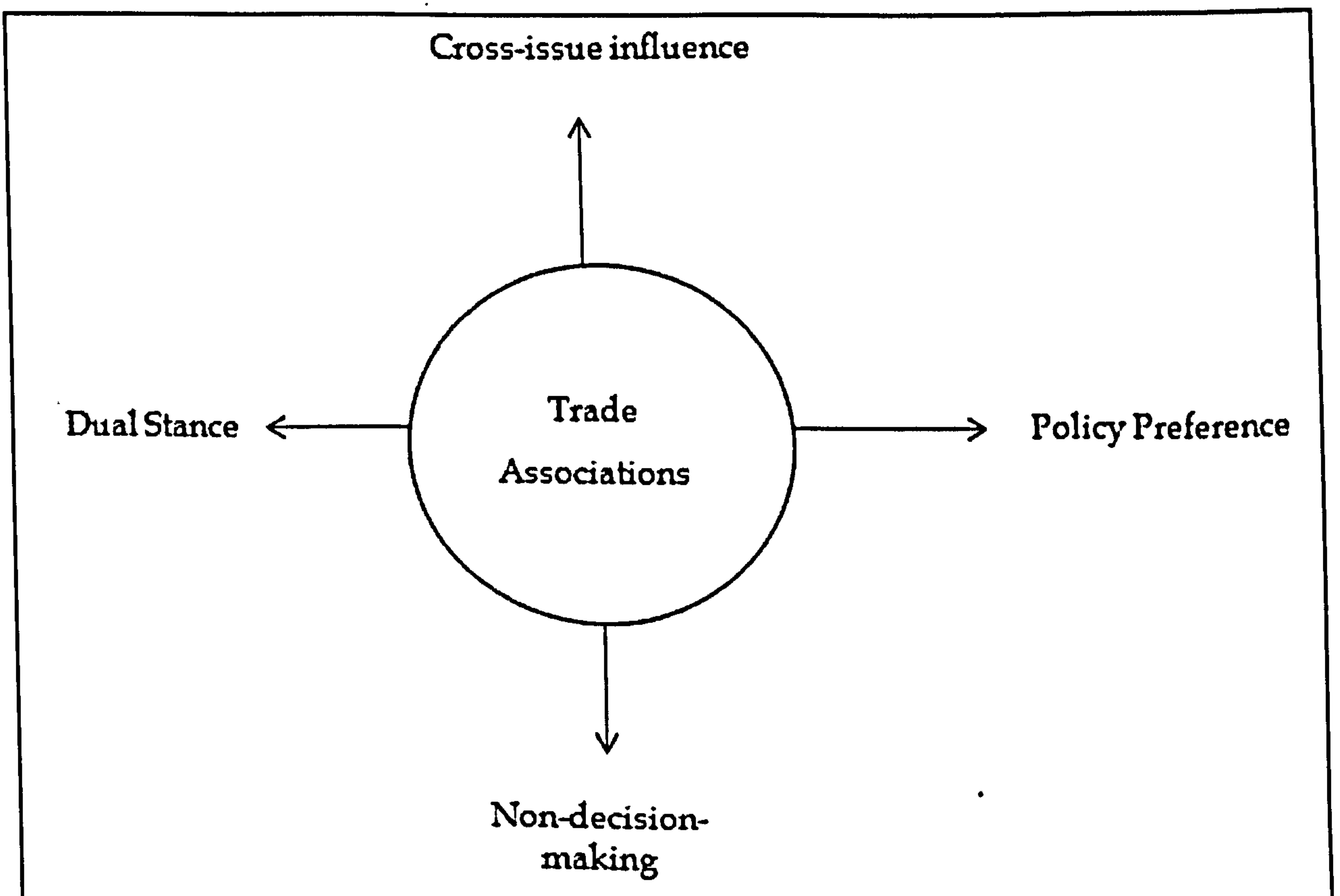


Figure 5.9 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to trade associations

Although trade associations can be seen to be playing a part in the review process, the emphasis placed on this role by some MNCs has diminished in recent years. As the interview excerpt below outlines, some larger businesses no longer want to hide behind trade associations or indeed take a dual-stance approach.

"[The] final point I would make is that this is done very publicly and in all our policies we will no longer hide behind any trade body position any more; we will always have our own position even if that is just to say we endorse the position of the trade body. But the old days of getting them to do the dirty work for us and us hiding anomalously behind them is gone. So we have actually got out there and taken positions on very well established issues that have been around for 20,30,40 years, like alcohol licences in supermarkets: where do they stand, what have they done, maybe they do more of that for us – on newer issues in sustainability, we are at the cutting edge of some of these things in retail. So that's partly it – partly also we wanted to see and be acknowledged as leaders on these issues. Hiding behind a trade body you can't. If we were in a position where sustainability was a threat to us rather than an opportunity I might hide behind a trade body but we are in a position where we want to build our reputation on the basis of wants on the back of it, so its in our interest to get out there and have our own position."

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

When questioned whether the interviewee felt this was the now the common position adopted by MNCs the following response was given:

"I think there is a mixed position. I think the days of us all standing square behind a retail consortium or a trade body are going now. There are some companies that are happy to remain hidden behind I think you will find the bigger players find it a little harder"

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

The data within this thesis can only suggest that this view is still largely within the minority; however, it will be interesting to see whether this marks the beginning of a wider trend. From a policy-maker's perspective the impact and thus influence of the main trade body, the CBI, has been brought into question, within interview, as demonstrated below.

“The CBI have cried wolf too many times now, for example in discussions around the Large Combustion Plant Directive they stated the economic impact on business would be crippling and it turned out this wasn’t the case.”

(Interview: Central Government:30th May 2005)

The above quotes suggest that the concerns raised by organisations such as the CBI relating to environmental/sustainability issues may not be taken as seriously as they once were.

Agenda-setting

One of the most prominent modes of influence evident within development of a new UK NSDS has been that of agenda-setting. Agenda-setting has resulted from both process-orientated modes of influence and action-orientated modes of influence.

Agenda-setting was first evident during the initial stages of the review, in the ‘*Where next?*’ exercise and the commissioning of the stakeholder reports, see figure 5.2. In the context of the ‘*Where next?*’ situation agenda-setting is present in two ways. Firstly, the organisers of the exercise, UNED-UK, used actors’ responses which had been collected during a separate exercise, completed outside the remit of the review of the UK NSDS and included them in the formal report that they submitted to government, as highlighted in the extract below.

“Further to this, input is included where relevant from wider informal stakeholder dialogues facilitated by UNED-UK Committee in the two-year run up to the WSSD and following it. 500 organisations and 3,000 individuals were involved in the latter.”

(UNED-UK 2003: p5)

In such a situation, as outlined in this extract, an actor may have expressed an opinion or taken a stance in the wider context (one which was focused on the WSSD and thus the international arena) and subsequently, based on a decision taken by UNED-UK, this has been included in the ‘*Where next?*’ exercise. Such actions illustrate the mechanism by which ideas are passed between decision-making contexts and how subsequently policy agendas based on such ideas are developed.

Agenda-setting was also evident in this early stage of the review process through the 'Where next?' response workshop, to which specific actors were invited to attend. What is noteworthy about this situation is that although the themes discussed at the seminar are available for review it is not possible to attribute these to specific actors as the seminar was subject to Chatham House Rules.²¹ This is uncharacteristic within the sustainability area where so much emphasis is placed on transparency and accountability. It does demonstrate the way agendas can be set and the boundaries of policy decision-making can be constructed before a formal, open dialogue begins.

The prominence of agenda-setting so early in the process expounds how vital it is to understand tacit influence within the decision-making process. The first case of the UNED-UK's action to include stakeholder dialogue from outside the specific decision-making agenda goes further than the tacit influence outlined by Lukes (1974) where he argues that tacit power is present when actors are unaware of how their actions are interpreted and of the consequences of that action. In this case there has been no action, by the individual actors, in relation to the specific decision-making process; an institution has taken a decision to use stakeholder comments outside their original aim. This situation demonstrates that it is important, within analysis, to fully understand what is considered to be the policy decision-making boundaries, demonstrating the usefulness of the systematic approach provided by the AIF.

A central feature of the government's approach to the review of the NSDS has been the involvement of stakeholders throughout the process, including the steps outside the formal consultation period, as discussed previously and outlined in Figure 5.2. This approach has allowed for agenda-setting to occur as process-orientated mode of influence throughout the decision-making process, not solely at the beginning as argued by some authors, see Newell (2000). The different involvement of actors in this context will now be reviewed. As outlined in Figure 5.2, and discussed in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.1.1 'stakeholder' papers were commissioned at the initial stages of the review. The very nature and aim of this request results in influence is being exerted. In addition, what is interesting here is the tacit influence which subsequently occurs

²¹ Chatham House Rules mean that the information can be used subsequently to the seminar subject to two conditions; neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers nor that of any other participant at the meeting may be revealed and; it may not be divulged that the information was revealed at the meeting.

within the later 'formal' consultation exercise; *'Taking it on'*. As discussed earlier the design of the process at these initial stages has been used to argue upon the aims and objectives of the process and therefore fundamentally set the agenda of the discussions and subsequently brought into play the intermediate influences of non-decision-making and policy preference.

Agenda-setting has also occurred as an important mode of influence through the use of working groups as a mechanism of involvement in the production of the new UK NSDS. Following collation of the *'Taking it on'* consultation responses the dominant themes were identified. These then were fed into theme-specific working groups with the remit of identifying a range of possible policy actions to reflect key issues identified. The working groups were made up of "external stakeholders as well as government representatives" (Jones 2006: p127). Representatives from MNCs were included as external stakeholders in this working group. (Interview: Government Official: 30th May 2006). Again, it can be seen here how the structure of the process has created an environment for specific modes of influence to be utilised by policy actors.

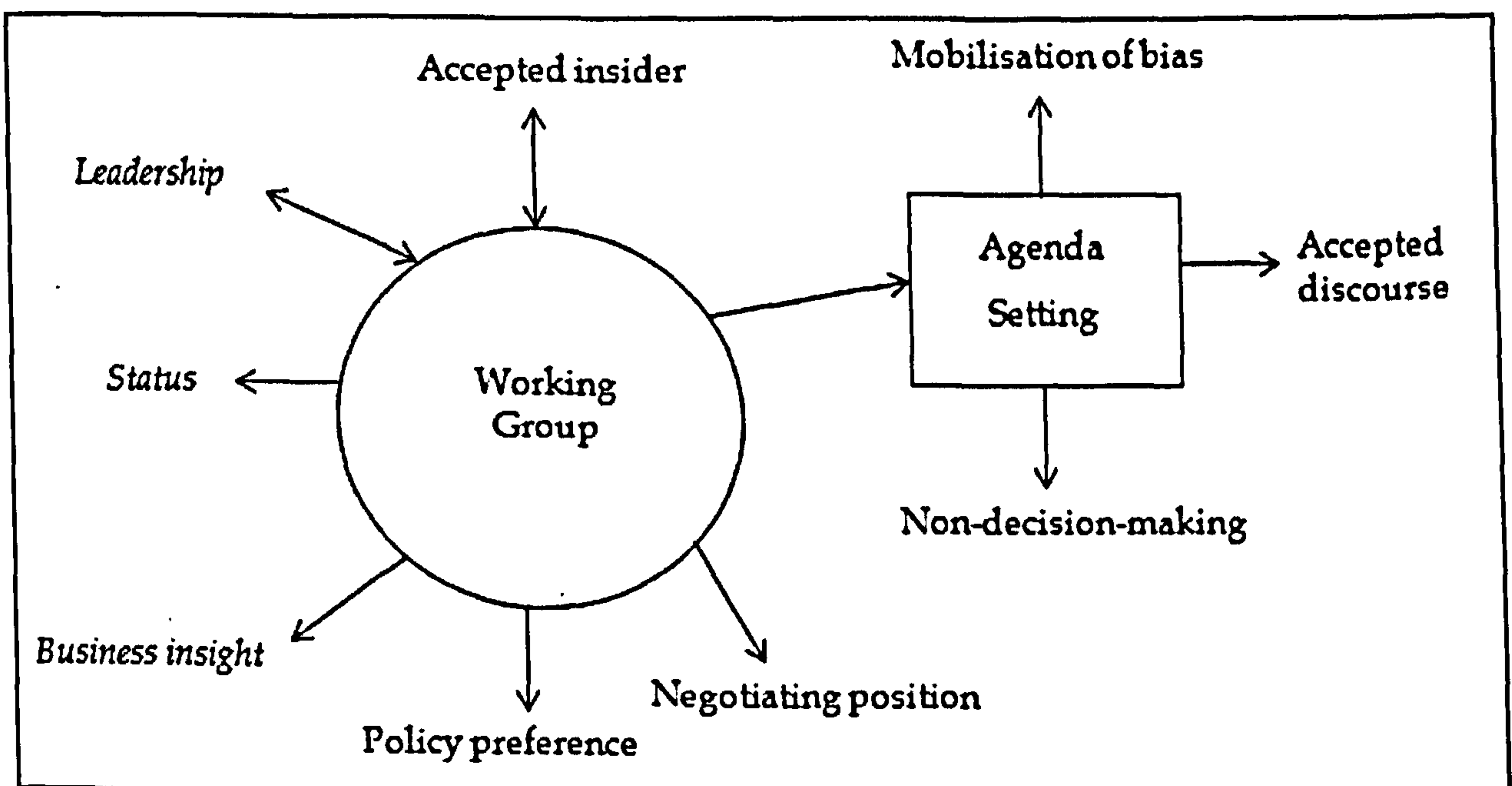


Figure 5.10 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to the use of working groups

Figure 5.10 shows that for both state and non-state actors, being part of a working group allows for the tacit influence of agenda setting and the subsequent intermediate influence of mobilisation of bias, accepted discourse and non-decision-making. In addition to agenda-setting, the intermediate influences of policy preference,

negotiating position of others, accepted insider and the two-way issues of leadership, status and business insight are also evident. As these working groups were involved in the process at the latter stages, the actors involved at this stage will have more of an indication of the final policy document; therefore the two-way influence of business insight becomes more important. Figure 5.10 demonstrates the complexity of the influence relationships; indicating that it is vital that the relationship is investigated as a whole, as through the use of the AIF, if the true influence at play in the decision-making process is to be effectively identified and analysed.

In a similar vein to working groups the use of a high-level programme board during the final stages of the review process (Figure 5.2) also allows for, and promotes agenda-setting as a tacit mode of influence. In this case the main actors involved in the high-level programme were state actors rather than non-state actors; however the interrelationship between mode of influence and intermediate influence still occurs, as highlighted in Figure 5.11 below. MNC do have influence into and through the high-level programme board through cross-departmental influence, as shown in Figure 5.11. This mode of influence will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

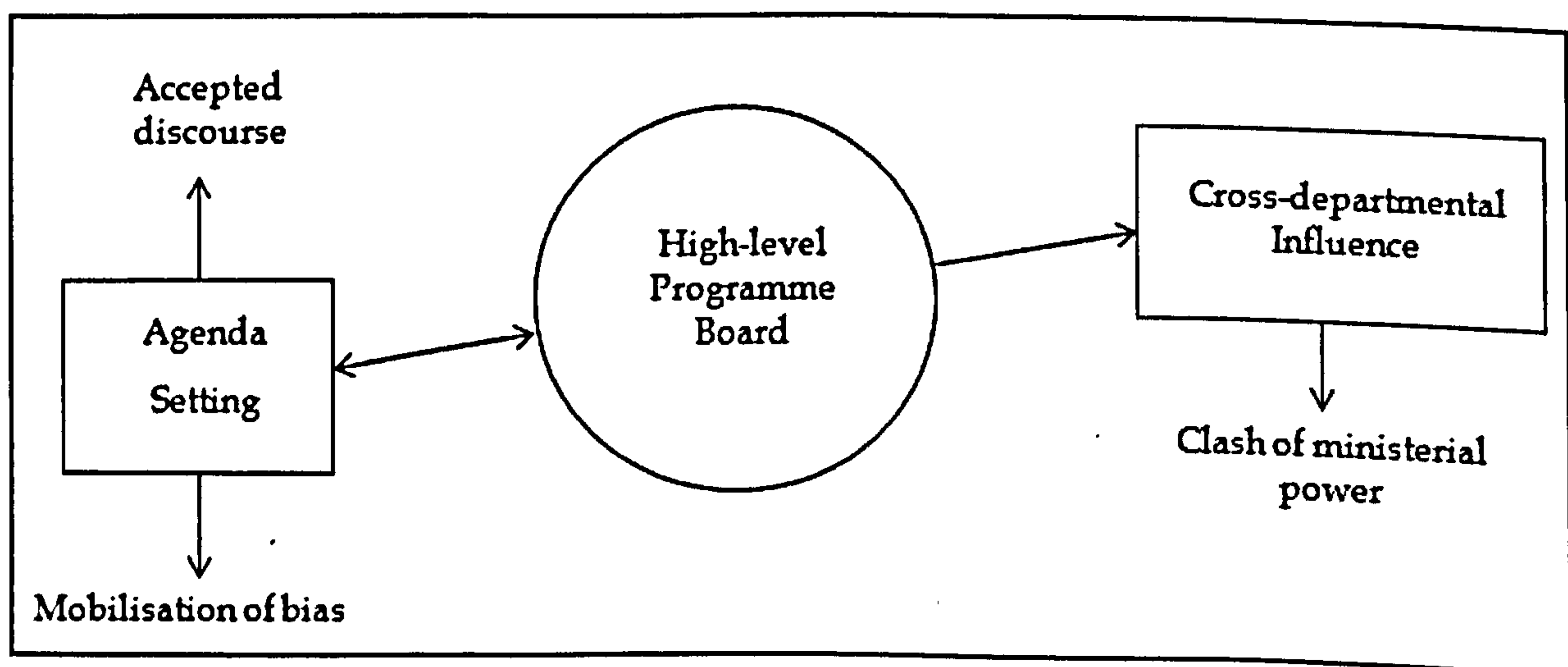


Figure 5.11 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to the use of high-level programme boards

Agenda-setting is developing to be seen as a vital mode of influence; it has also become evident that there is a strong connection between this mode of influence and MNCs in the production of a new UK NSDS. This finding is further confirmed through the use

of consultants to run and manage elements of the review process. The use of consultants to collate and manage the regional consultation exercises (for example as observed as the Yorkshire and the Humber meeting, 1st July 2004) was particularly notable, through this process-orientated mode of influence agenda-setting is important, additionally the actors also gain insider status and external status, as shown in Figure 5.12. Here the relationship between this status and the accepted discourses becomes very important. Within an increase in status, actors can gain a market advantage, as they are seen as having more experience in this area and as having an insight into the way regional and national government works. Outside the policy context, with such a market advantage the consultants take with them the dominant discourse (one which is corporate-centric, see Chapter 6) from their policy experience, again further solidifying the agenda of sustainable development.

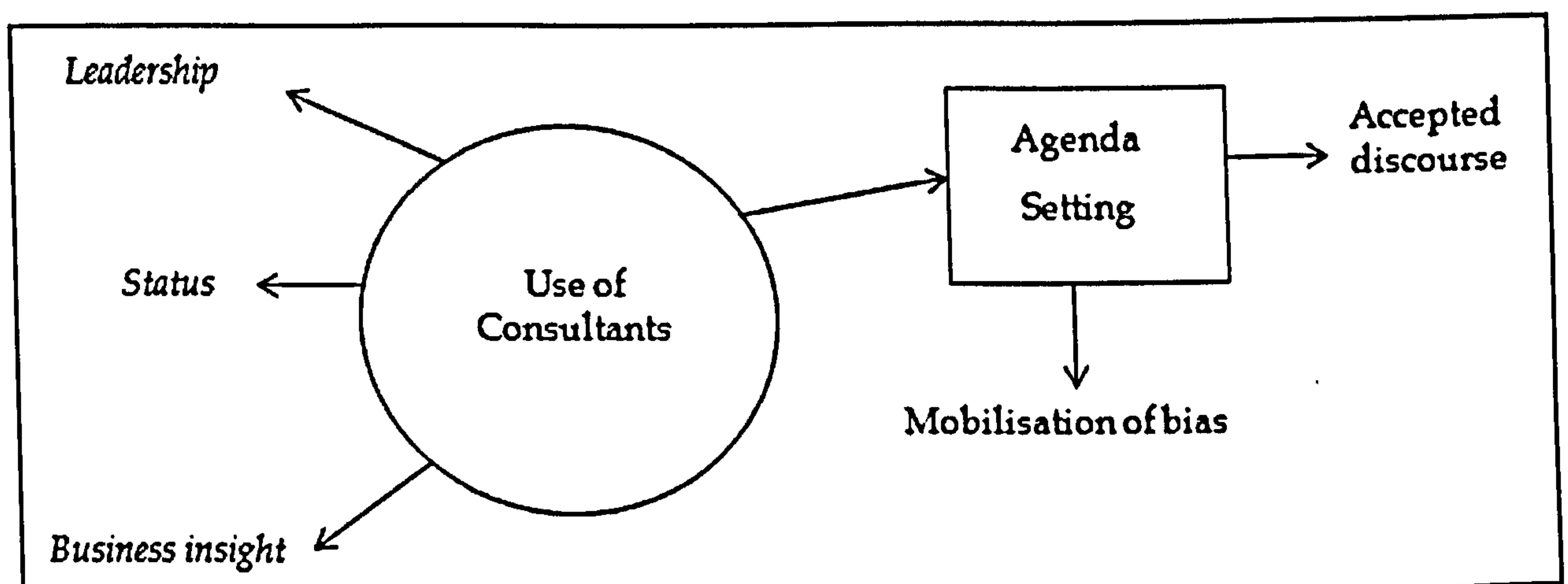


Figure 5.12 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to the use of external consultants

The issue of agenda-setting and related intermediate influence of mobilisation of bias has also been identified through the use of facilitators in workshop sessions. For example, a facilitator from a larger corporate organisation on a number of occasions brought the discussion back to issues faced and addressed by his own corporation. (Regional Meeting: Yorkshire and The Humber: 1st July 2004). Furthermore, the same facilitator began the workshop session with a monologue relating to the role of business in this agenda and their lack of representation at that regional event. This further confirms the findings stated earlier in this thesis (see Section 5.3.1.1) of the huge

emphasis placed on the role of business compared with a perceived lack of involvement from business.

Business, particularly MNCs, have been active as part of 'panels' used in the 'Taking It On' regional events, as observed at the North West Regional Meeting, 15th July 2004. In this context agenda-setting is evident as a mode of influence with mobilisation of bias, accepted discourse and non-decision-making being key resultant intermediate influences. The use of a selected panel in itself creates similar intermediate influences, and in addition allows individuals and organisations to become accepted insiders resulting in two-way intermediate influences of status and leadership. The use of keynote addresses also leads to such influences and it can be seen from the choice of panel members and speakers that large business representatives were often in this position, alongside regional and government representatives. For example this was the case at the DTI (13th May 2004), Yorkshire and The Humber (1st July 2004) and the North East (15th July 2004) meetings.

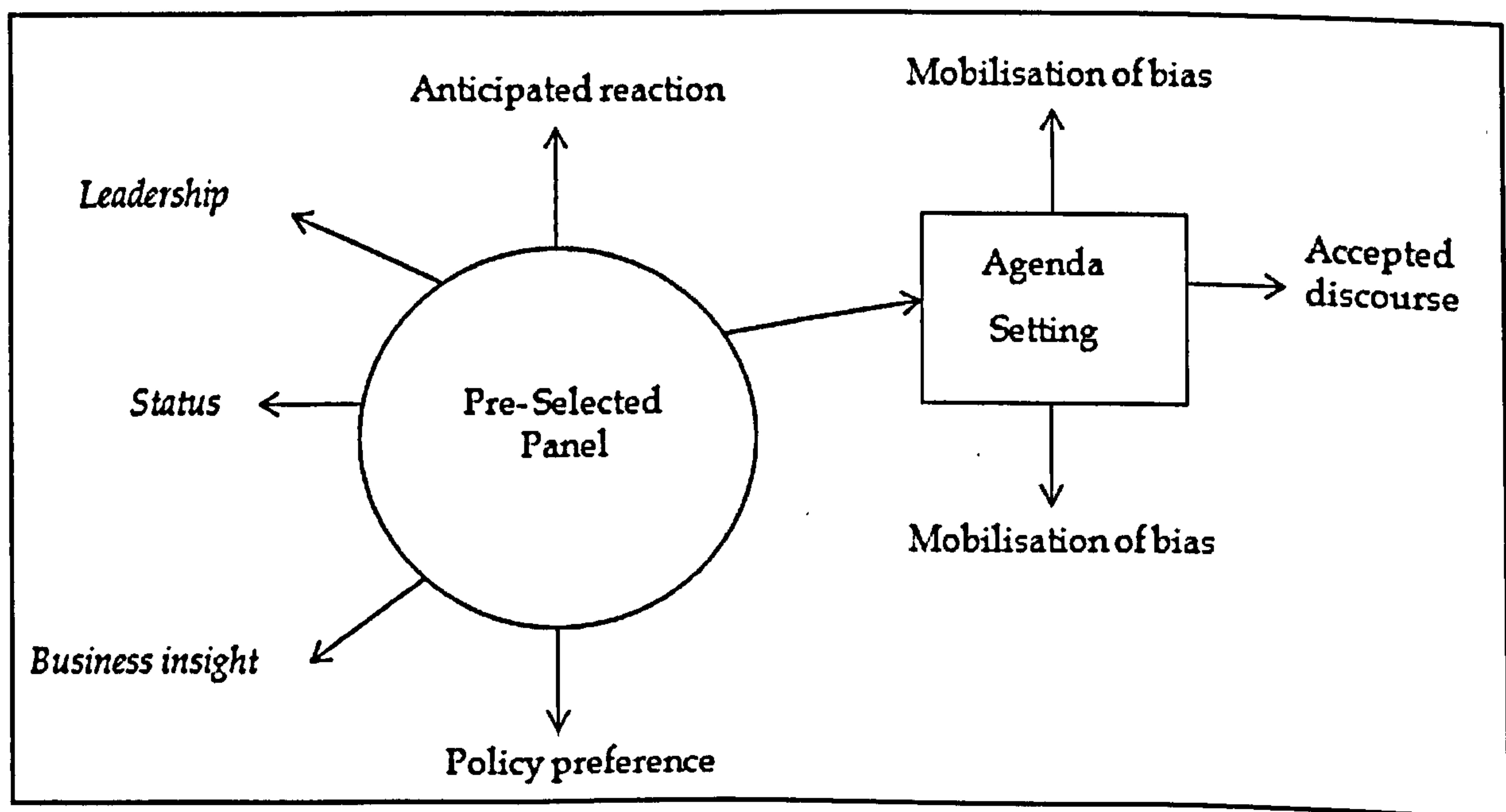


Figure 5.13 Tertiary Level: AIF: Influence relating to the use of pre-selected panels

In the longer term, by becoming an accepted insider, the panel members have more influence both in the latter stages of the review process and in wider decision-making context. This in turn, along with a raised external status, affects the subsequent modes of influence selected by these actors. One of the panel members at the DTI/DEFRA

business engagement workshop was selected as a result of being previously used on similar panels and also in working groups looking at sustainable development related issues; this is highlighted in the interview extract below.

"We [business organisation] have worked with government in the past in similar ways and have been very active in working groups looking at solutions to the fisheries issue."

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

As this discussion has shown, agenda-setting has occurred as a result of a number of process-related modes of influence, demonstrating the importance of the consideration of influence during the design of such review processes. In a similar way, the tacit mode of cross-departmental influence has also occurred as a result of the design of the process. The link described here between modes of influence highlights the need for a synthesis to be taken, linking the dimension of power debates outlined in Section 3.3.2 (Bachrach and Baratz 1970) with the importance of discourse, as discussed in Section 3.3.3 (see Foucault (1980a), Hajer (1995) and Fischer 2003).

Cross-departmental influence

As highlighted in Section 5.3.1.1 in the discussion of consultation as a direct mode of influence, cross-departmental influence was evident during the early stages of the 'Taking it on' consultation process, not only did other departments have influence in who was invited to respond, the inclusion of other departments led to the intermediate influence of timescale.

As discussed in the previous section, cross-departmental influence is also present as a result of the use of high-level programme boards used to review the collated responses. The use of the high-level programme board in the final stages is creating cross-departmental influence which subsequently allows for the intermediate influence of clash of ministerial power, see Figure 5.11. This point is demonstrated in the interview extract below.

"The original document [before it went to the high-level programme board] was different; it was longer and included more action points. The alterations were

made [through the high-level programme board] to keep the big departments happy, particularly in the run up to a general election."

(Interview: Government Official: 30th May 2005)

As outlined in Figure 5.11, it is through the use of vehicles such as programme boards that tacit influence particularly comes into play. For example, it is well recognised that the DTi takes a pro-business stance within policy discussions which are being undertaken outside its own department. Here the link between cross-departmental influence and discourse becomes important; in this case it is a corporate-centric discourse which is playing an important role in the production of a new UK NSDS. This is of particular relevance to this thesis and will be developed and discussed later in Chapter 6.

Perceived power

Perceived power has played an important role in the development of the new UK NSDS, a number of the issues already discussed earlier in this Chapter. Section 5.3.1.1. has outlined the emphasis and importance which has been placed on business by both Government and other non-state actors, with evidence from both regional events and consultation documentation discussed. The following quotations further expand this discussion.

"Involving business is the answer to the question"

(Regional Event: Yorkshire and the Humber: 1st July 2004)

"Business engagement is essential; we need to observe business"

(Regional Event: South East: 28th June 2004)

Furthermore, the earlier discussion regarding the collation and handling of responses and the weighting in favour of 'experts' and those actors with most relevant experience has also demonstrated the situation where perceived power is a mode of influence which is evident in the decision-making process, as highlighted in the secondary level of the AIF. Finally, the indication in the Government's evaluation document that in future it would be beneficial to include business in the RIA of the policy process (see section 5.3.1.1) also demonstrates that perceived power was at play within the decision-making surrounding the production of the new UK NDSD.

Figure 5.14 outlines, using the tertiary level of the AIF, the impact the presence of perceived power as a mode of influence has had through its related intermediate influence. Perceived power in this context of this thesis has led to the intermediate influences of anticipated reaction, policy preference, accepted insider and negotiating position of others along with the two-way influence of increased status to come into play. In the case of accepted insider and increased status, these intermediate influences affect other modes of influence within the decision-making process. For example, these intermediate influences feed into the selection of working group and panel membership. This situation demonstrates why it is important to include intermediate influence in the AIF, promoting the stance that influence within the decision-making process does not follow a linear cause-and-effect model. The presence of perceived power also acts to further highlight the importance of tacit influence in analysing the policy process; an important finding within this thesis is that MNCs have had considerable influence within the production of the UK NSDS without taking any direct action and in many cases not being involved in any way.

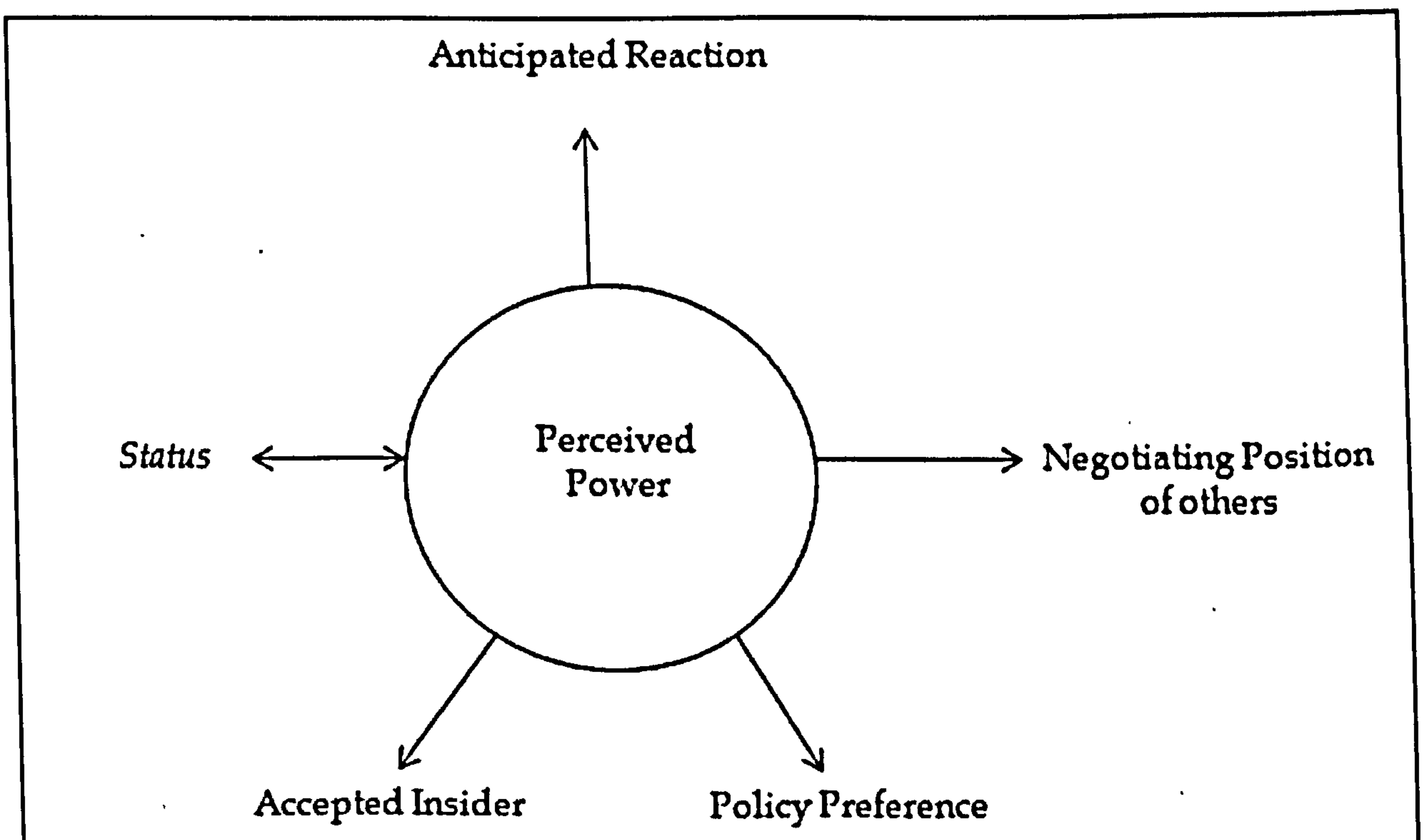


Figure 5.14 Tertiary Level AIF: Influence relating to perceived power

Tacit influence as in this case, perceived power and the resulting intermediate influence of negotiating position of others and anticipated reaction, as outlined in

Figure 5.14, has occurred when state and non-actors within the decision-making arena have 'second-guessed' what they think MNCs would want as a policy option. Such a finding is particularly important in the development of the new UK NDSD, as the official view on the process was that business did not have a substantial enough role within the process. However, in using the AIF to examine their influence it can be seen that this is not actually the case. Even though the power debate provided by Lukes has been developed upon within this thesis, the role that modes of influence such as perceived power has played in the production of the new UK NSDS gives weight to Lukes' (1974) stance that power is a capacity and not the exercise of that capacity.

5.4 THE NEW UK STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF INFLUENCE

The previous sections have used the AIF to frame and organise the data relating to the review and production of the new UK NSDS. This thesis has identified that both direct and tacit modes of influence were present in the production of the '*Securing the future*' Strategy, as summarised in Table 5.6. In addition to the modes of influence identified, all of the intermediate influences outlined in the AIF have been present within this thesis.

Direct Modes of Influence	Tacit Modes of Influence
Lobbying	Trade Association
Consultation	Agenda-setting
Advisory Committee	Cross-departmental Influence
Task Force	Perceived Power
Expert Stakeholder	

Table 5.6 Production of the UK Strategy: Summary of Influence

Tacit influences have played a significant role in the production of the new Strategy. These can be largely split into those which relate to institutions, for example trade associations and task forces and those which are related to the second/third dimensions of power for example agenda-setting and perceived influence. The later influences are particularly interesting and represent a major finding in this thesis; MNCs have not played a major role in the formal consultation process surrounding the

production of the '*Securing the future*' Strategy. However, through these tacit modes of influence, their influence has been significant.

The use of the AIF in analysing the production of the UK Strategy has reinforced the importance of recognising both tacit and direct influence and that the stance that the influence within the policy process does not follow a linear cause-and-effect relationship, therefore the use of the secondary and tertiary levels of the AIF to identify the relationship between mode and intermediate influence has been key. The evidence of this relationship is in-line with Newell's (2000) argument (as outlined in Section 3.2) that the policy process is not simply a process, it consists of a web of influence. The tertiary level AIF diagrams have been used to represent the localised context of the production of the new UK NSDS. Although these diagrams have been used to demonstrate the link between individual modes of influence and intermediate influences, however, these should not be viewed in isolation from each other.

5.5 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY - A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

This section will now move the discussion away from the specific context of the production of the new UK NSDS and will focus upon the role of MNCs within the broader context of sustainable development policy in general. In addition to gathering data on the development of the '*Securing the future*', as outlined in Chapter 4, interviews and document review were used to gain an insight into the role of MNCs within this wider policy context.

5.5.1 Non-state actors- Why get involved?

As demonstrated in the previous sections the AIF frames the policy decision-making process, and helps answer the aim of this thesis to investigate the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. However, in addition to the individual modes of influence at play within UK policy, it is important to understand why, and when non-state actors, particularly MNCs, get involved in policy decision-making. The following extract outlines how one MNC believes that by working with government they can influence how their responsibilities will be handled, or indeed changed.

“we will intervene on key issues where we think working with government will make a difference to how we discharge our responsibilities”

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

Within the same interview the MNC states that it works within the policy decision-making process in order to influence the regulation that results from such decision-making. This MNC has decided to take the proactive, and relatively unusual stance, that regulation can be helpful, in some cases, to its business interests, the organisation wants to be part of its formation.

“It is in our interest, very publicly and honestly, to shape those regulatory systems and policy positions because we would benefit from it. Whereas in the past, and a guess there is still a little bit of a dinosaur tendency, to think regulation is bad, but we would say that regulation can be helpful in certain cases and in other cases it’s not needed.”

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

It is also interesting to note from the extract above that this particular MNC wants to be involved in the policy process in an open, transparent way. However, the more traditional, backroom conversations were also acknowledged within this interview, as highlighted in the extract below.

“I think it works at so many levelsso much of it especially the negative side; the blocking tactic discreetly by the phone and nod and a wink over drinks and a reception and that’s often the way these things happen. That’s why we have said by and large what we publicly stand for, and there can be no confusion what we say in private – can never track every conversation down we have with government, but nevertheless its about that formal position.”

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

In similar discussions with a UK think tank, the reason for their organisation being involved in policy discussions was given as the desire to disseminate intellectual debate around sustainable development, particularly relating to trade and corporations, this is highlighted in the extract below.

“Interviewee:but really what we are trying to do is seed the idea of needing to challenge some of the more basic assumptions of how markets work

Interviewer: So it's around research and putting intellectual debate out into the arena.

Interviewee: Yes”

(Interview: Think Tank: 25th March 2004)

When asked which other non-state actors have been involved in policy discussions and consultation, the response was as follows:

“Other think tanks; DEMOS, IPPR etc., you get particular NGOs who have a lot to say on corporate accountability – Friends of the Earth, Amnesty. Whatever, you get the DTI turning around and doing similar consultations, probably do it more often with industry, so they are obviously heavily involved, that would be the prominent actor involved out of that set of actors. They occasionally get academics; if they have a particular reputation or expertise in a given area they will be dragged in.”

(Interview: Think Tank: 25th March 2004)

Direct involvement by MNCs in the discussions around sustainable development policy-making in contrast to all the extracts above, is seen to be limited by central government representatives (Interviews(2): Central Government: 30th May 2005). This stance reflects the findings from within the analysis of the production of the new UK NSDS as detailed in sections 5.3 and 5.4. However, neither interviewees had previously considered tacit influence, and when this was discussed during interviews, interviewees felt that tacit influence, on the part of business, probably did have more of a role in sustainable development policy than direct influence. The stance that MNC engagement with and role in influencing UK sustainable development policy is limited, can also be seen in the extract below from an interview with a representative from an MNC.

"I think they don't, I see SD policy as primarily a government, public sector activity, you know, setting the wider framework, and business gets seriously interested when it goes down to something that will specifically affect them. When they engage with Government it is directly wherever possible and they will go and see the relevant minister and relevant civil servants."

(Interview: MNC: 14th December 2005)

The extract above highlights that when businesses do get involved, many prefer to do this directly with civil servants and ministers as opposed to being involved in more open meetings. This stance is in line with the earlier finding, that direct MNC involvement in the formal process of the production of the new UK NSDS was limited.

Again contrasting this, the view of non-state actors, other than business, is that MNCs are in continuous dialogue with Government, and therefore, within sustainable development policy MNC influence is also continuous. This stance is highlighted in the extract below.

"Continuous dialogue at the level of an individual company when there is an idea in place that will affect specific sectors, then the large players within those sectors will be consulted very regularly and would be consulted on those issues. When [there is a] particular interest in UK economy or particular consolidation in a sector and particular companies have a lot of power in that sector, it would be remarkable if [they were] not regularly consulted, in fact I know they are."

(Interview: Think Tank: 25th March 2004)

The perception of MNC influence and involvement in UK sustainable development policy, based on this data, is split between two broad views. Other non-state actors believe that MNCs have great, continuous, direct influence on Government policy, whereas state and business-actors see MNC influence in this arena as being limited. This split between two polar views reflects the discussion of the literature given in Chapter 2, and is unsurprisingly, attributed to the different actors. The discussion of the split in views of the influence of MNCs also highlights that other non-state actors perceived MNCs to have significant power, thus linking with the tacit modes of influence and intermediate influences outlined in the AIF and found to be present in the production of the new UK NSDS as discussed previously in this Chapter. The

discussion in this Section also is in line with the argument that MNCs do not feel they need to get involved in open policy discussions as they can have influence outside the policy consultation process and that broad initiatives such as the NSDS does not impact on them, and that they do not need to get involved in policy until specific issues are being discussed.

5.5.2 *Sustainable Development Policy, A Broader Perspective: Using the AIF*

In addition to providing insight into why MNCs participate in policy decision-making the data from interviews relating to sustainable development in a broader context has been used to inform and alter the AIF; any necessary alterations to the AIF will be discussed in the Chapter 6. As in the earlier sections of this Chapter, in the handling of the analysis of the production of the New UK NSDS, the AIF will be used to frame and organise the data relating to the broader perspective of UK sustainable development policy. The following section will be structured using the individual modes of influence, the first to be discussed will be that of lobbying.

Lobbying

Lobbying by MNCs within the UK sustainable development policy arena can occur in a number of guises including private conversations with government officials and through the production of briefing papers, as highlighted in the interview extract below.

“Ad hoc conversations, speakers, briefing papers, and secondments, but secondments are limited”

(Interview: Central Government: 30th May March 2005)

The extract above also identifies the influence through the provision of speakers and staff secondees, however, this will be discussed in further detail later in this Chapter. The engagement between MNCs and Government through ad hoc conversations has already been indicated in the interview data discussed earlier in this section, therefore further discussion will be focused upon the production of reports and position papers as a mechanism to enact the mode of influence of lobbying.

Reports and position papers, as a mechanism to communicate a policy stance to Government were used by a number of the MNCs interviewed, as highlighted in the following interview extracts. The first extract outlines that in 2004 this particular MNC submitted three documents which related to sustainable development, it is also interesting to note that the submission of these documents was followed up by individual conversations with Government. This demonstrates that non-state actors usually employ more than one mode of influence and therefore the systematic evaluation framework provided by the AIF is extremely useful. The use of position papers to make a public statement and to take a leadership role confirms the finding outlined previously that some 'leader' MNCs are now willing to take a more proactive stance and no longer want to hide behind private conversations and the lobbying activity of trade associations, thus potentially diminishing the mode of influence of trade associations and the intermediate influence of dual stance.

"we submitted three significant documents to government in the last 12/18 months on sustainability regulation; two on chemicals and one on sustainable development strategy. Where again, very publicly, in writing from the business to government, we stated what we had done, or what can be done constructively to improve things and how we would like things to look. So we have gone very publicly on record; this is what we stand for and this is what we want, and then we have followed that up obviously with detailed one-to-one conversations with government."

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

The second extract relating to this aspect highlights that issue selection on which reports or briefing papers to submit to government is relatively common practice within MNCS.

".....we are starting to produce position papers on issues that impact us specifically. We have produced lots; phone masts and health; that sort of thing. We are just producing a position paper on digital divide. There are other areas that we feel important, but we are not big on policies; we are more on principles and positions I suppose, so we will. We don't tend to do it, produce a paper 'this

is our view on the WEEE²² regulations' for example. We might produce something more generic on reuse and recycling."

(Interview: MNC: 1st March 2004)

The extract above is taken from an interview with an MNC which had made a strategic decision to sort out their own operations before they began to take more public stances on issues around sustainable development. However, as the extract suggests the company now feel they are in a position to begin to start producing position papers in this area. This decision links to the concept of status, primarily external to the policy process; the company now feel they are 'walking the talk' so feel they are in a position to make more public comment on policy and issues in this area. However, subsequently the status of this company within the policy arena does increase. It is interesting to note that the head of corporate responsibility in this MNC is now a member of a number of government groups, this reflects the findings around working groups outlined in the earlier sections of this Chapter.

Consultation

As in the analysis of the production of the new UK NSDS, consultation was identified as an important and well-used mode of influence in the broader sustainable development policy evaluation. The majority of the non-state actors interviewed stated that they do take part in government consultation exercises, as demonstrated by the interview extracts below.

"We routinely respond to consultations"

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

"Through consultations we often have meetings with people in DTi and DEFRA"

(Interview: Think Tank: 24th March 2004)

"We often respond when invited to comment during government consultation"

(Interview: MNC: 8th December 2005)

²² The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive came into force in January 2007, it aims to reduce production of WEEE and encourage reuse, recycle and recovery. (EA 2008)

Being part of consultation exercises seems to be a regular activity; however, this mode of influence appears to supplement other modes and is not considered the most important. In addition, a lot of the actors chose which consultation to respond to depending on the relevance to their organisation.

Cross-departmental influence

As discussed in Section 2.6.1 UK decision-making is located within a complex governance system, therefore it is interesting to note which institution dialogue and communication occurs, and in doing so this allows for the potential for cross-departmental influence to be investigated. The interview extract below highlights how this particular MNC engages with both DEFRA and DTi.

'[communication would] probably be with DEFRA but also Dti. I have also been helping government with some trading/training schemes with certain projects for sustainability.....with groups of 20 people at a time, and have done it 2-3 times. They are trying to broaden government's experience in these issues – looking at the challenges to the modern market place as it were. We learn from it and they learn from it.'

(Interview: MNC: 25th August 2005)

This extract above also demonstrates the influence gained by this MNC through undertaking the training of government staff. Subsequently, influence occurs in this situation through agenda-setting and accepted discourse; with the government's day-to-day understanding of sustainable development being directly influenced by the content and approach of the training schemes and consequently the borders in which policy is developed and discourses are affected.

Perceived power

As discussed throughout this thesis, tacit influence is a vital element of the AIF; this is demonstrated in discussions regarding business presence at policy meetings and how this presence affects the negotiating position of other actors, both state and non-state. When asked about the presence of business, one think tank representative stated that the ability to have open discussion and 'honest' discussion was subsequently limited, as highlighted in the extract below.

“The ability to have a frank and open discussion – Chatham House or no Chatham House, is vastly influenced by who else is in the room, so if for instance they held consultations with us [Think tank] at the same time as business representatives it would completely change the dynamics.”

(Interview: Think Tank: 24th March 2004)

The presence of perceived power, as a mode of influence, was reinforced in the interviews conducted within this thesis, as highlighted in the extract below.

“With the Blair/Brown DTi they [private sector] are pushing at an open door aren't they? The private sector is seen as the natural people to bring about solutions.....the attitude that a lot of the public sector are dead beats, let's bring in the private sector to rescue them and show them how to manage properly.”

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

This extract reinforces the findings of the evaluation of the production of the new UK NSDS, that there is a perception on the part of Government (and indeed other actors) that business has all the solutions and therefore should be used to both design and deliver policy. The acknowledgement of such perceived influence is in line with the findings from the analysis of the production of the new UK NSDS, and confirms the appropriateness of the AIF in the evaluation of such tacit influence.

Professional and Trade Organisations

Professional and trade organisations are an important mode of influence included in the AIF, already discussed in relation to the review of the UK NSDS (see section 5.3.2), and is afforded significant attention in the literature, as outlined in Chapter 2 (see for example McRae (2005)). The role of such organisations appears to depend on the type of organisation they are. Some have the primary aim of affecting policy in areas which affect their membership whilst others are seen as 'best practice' organisations. This stance is highlighted in the extract below.

“Government find it easier to deal with groups such as GESSE because they know they represent a number of organisations and it cuts down the amount of consultation they need to do. I don't think groups like WBCSD have an

enormous amount of influence. It provides a voice but I don't think it has huge influence, certainly not with individual governments. You know if there are things being discussed at a UN level, they might be one of a number of stakeholders that would get consulted. The same with [the development of] GRI they were just one voice within GRI, they have some influence but I think maybe WBCSD is a bad example because it is not primarily a lobbying organisation I think it is more of a best practice sharing organisation."

(Interview: MNC: 4th March 2004)

It is interesting to observe how professional/trade organisations are seen by actors, and their primary function does affect the way influence is made. However, simply making a clear distinctiveness between 'lobbying' and 'best practice' organisations in order to assess influence has limited value. Not only does this statement contradict the aim set out by the WBCSD to affect policy as outlined in Section 2.7.1; it fails to recognise tacit influence. Again, in this context more indirect influence becomes important. For example, the WBCSD do play a significant role in sharing and developing best practice within the business world around sustainable development; to do this a number of networking groups and reports are developed. Such activity sets the agenda and has played an important role in setting the agenda and the language by which businesses approach and communicate sustainable development. This highlights why, from a policy analysis perspective, it is important to have a framework which outlines tacit influence, and one which accommodates the role of discourse within power relations.

Agenda-setting

The question of agenda-setting as a mode of influence has been touched upon in the discussion above regarding the role of trade associations. Agenda-setting was also evident in the interview data in relation to emphasis and importance placed on business. The emphasis placed on business is highlighted earlier in this chapter in discussions relating to the review of the UK NSDS; such emphasis was also evident during interviews. The extract below not only demonstrates the importance of business but also demonstrates the role played by language and how this affects the policy arena.

“The language is very much: there is a market solution, that I think becomes the prominent one. As a trade union do we get in the trenches and protect the public services ethos ...or do we go with the flow but try to ensure that where market solutions are obviously the only ones the government are interested in we make sure the market operates on the level playing field?”

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

In utilising the AIF to frame and organise the data relating to UK sustainable development policy it has been possible to identify in general terms which modes of influence have occurred. Subsequently this has clarified and reinforced the earlier findings which resulted from the evaluation of the production of the new UK NSDS. In addition, to identify the individual modes of influence the interview data has also allowed for more generalised policy findings to be drawn, addressing the third research question of this thesis; What does this influence mean for policy-making in the UK? The following section will outline the issues which have emerged from the interview data.

5.6 SUMMARY

The UK sustainable development policy decision-making process, along with a detailed review of the production of the new UK NSDS: *‘Securing the future’*, has been evaluated using the AIF as a mechanism for framing and organising the data collected in this thesis. Using the AIF in such a way has highlighted a number of findings which move towards fulfilling the aim of this thesis to assess the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. The data has demonstrated that, as suggested in the discussion of the development of the AIF, both tacit and direct modes of influence are at play in the decision-making process. In addition, these modes of influence do not operate within a linear cause and effect process, generating intermediate influence which alters the actions and policy opinions of other actors within the decision-making process prior to a formal policy outcome being reached.

The discussion in this Chapter has demonstrated that the decision to adopt a synthesis approach to policy analysis through the use of the AIF is the correct one,

with both direct actions, the third dimension of power and discourse all playing a role in influencing the policy process. The use of the AIF in this context has shown that the majority of modes of influence, and all of the intermediate influence included in the design of the AIF, are present within UK policy-making surrounding sustainable development. Further to this the next chapter will provide more evaluation of the appropriateness of the AIF. In addition to outlining the mode and intermediate influence at play in policy-making, it has begun the discussion of the wider policy implications associated with these influences. This discussion will now be expanded upon in Chapter Six.

6

Discussion

6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This Chapter provides a discussion of the analysis completed in Chapter Five, considering the implications of these findings in terms of sustainable development strategy development and the broader policy decision-making context. This Chapter will address the three research questions which have guided this thesis within the aim of investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy. Initially, an outline of the influence of MNCs which has been identified during this thesis will be given. This will be followed by an evaluation of the Actor Influence Framework (AIF); assessing the suitability of the framework in this research and how it can be used in the wider policy context. An assessment of the theoretical stance, the synthesis position, taken through the AIF will also be given. Then addressing the third research question outlined in this thesis; what does the influence identified mean for policy-making in the UK?, a discussion of the applied findings of this thesis will be given. These are split into those which are MNC-facing and those which are policy-facing. Finally, to conclude this Chapter the research assumptions taken within this thesis will be re-addressed.

6.2 AN OUTLINE OF INFLUENCE

The previous Chapter, through the use of the AIF, has outlined and discussed the influence of MNCs which has been in play in the development of the UK NSDS and

UK sustainable development policy in general, using the analysis presented. This Chapter will now begin by addressing two of the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis. By re-visiting the summary of influence, as outlined in Table 3.3, the research questions; how is influence exerted in UK decision-making surrounding sustainable development policy? and how do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy? will be addressed.

Table 6.1 draws together the modes of influence and intermediate influence which have been outlined in Chapter Five, with the influences of MNCs which have been identified within this thesis ranked in significance. Within Table 6.1 influences have been re-ordered (based on Table 3.3) and highlighted based on the significance of each influence within UK sustainable development, as identified in this thesis. The degree of significance decreases from top to bottom of the table, with the grouping of the influence represented with capital, bold font (most significant) and decreasing to grey-shaded lower-cases font (not identified). Tacit influences have played the most important role in the development of the UK '*Securing the future*' Strategy and the thesis also indicates that this is also the case in the broader context of UK sustainable development policy, however, further investigation using other policy examples would be beneficial, as discussed in Sections 7.2 and 7.3. Furthermore, as outlined in Table 6.1 tacit influence associated with discursive considerations, for example, agenda-setting and accepted discourse, have been particularly important. This demonstrates that MNCs do not need to exert influence within the formal decision-making process to indeed play an important role in sustainable development policy. This finding is in-line with Lukes' argument that power is a capacity and not the exercise of that capacity (*ibid* 2007), it also highlights the importance of employing a synthesis position to analysis which incorporates discursive investigation. In contrast, this thesis did not find the choice of location/relocation and the making of political donations to be important consideration in the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development process, this potentially could be a result of the methodological design, maybe if more investigation in the broader policy environment was undertaken these issue may become more evident. Therefore, at this point it is considered that these elements should remain in the AIF.


Tacit	DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF AN ACCEPTED DISCOURSE	Most Significant  Least Significant
Tacit	PRESENCE OF AGENDA-SETTING	
Tacit	PRESENCE OF PERCEIVED POWER	
Tacit	NON-DECISION-MAKING	
Tacit	Affecting the negotiating position of others	
Tacit	Increase in status	
Tacit	Anticipated reactions of others	
Tacit	Gaining and using business insight	
Tacit (indirect)	Presence of cross-departmental influence	
Tacit (indirect)	Membership of QUANGOS	
Direct	Taking part in consultation	
Direct	Undertaking and commissioning research	
Direct	Undertaking lobbying activity	
Direct	Membership of advisory committees	
Tacit	Marketing activity	
Tacit (indirect)	Affecting policy timescales	
Tacit (indirect)	Membership and activity of trade associations	
Tacit (indirect)	Support of external organisations	
Tacit (indirect)	Employing a dual stance	
Tacit (indirect)	Undertaking secondments	
Tacit (indirect)	Revolving door relationships	
Direct	making political donations	
Direct	choice of location/relocation	

Table 6.1 Summary of Influence: UK Sustainable Development Policy

6.3 EVALUATION OF ACTOR INFLUENCE FRAMEWORK

At the outset of this research it was proposed that a synthesis position to the analysis of the influence of MNCs within policy-making was required; the aim of developing the AIF, as an evaluation framework, was to achieve such an approach in an integrated and systematic way. The use of the AIF in this way intended to address the research

questions outlined at the beginning of this thesis and to fulfil the research objectives which have guided this thesis. To reiterate the research objectives were:

1. To evaluate what type of influence MNCs have within UK sustainable development decision-making.
2. To investigate a specific example of development of sustainable development policy within the UK.
3. To undertake a systematic review of the influence of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy.

The following sections will address the success of using the AIF in fulfilling research objectives one and three and answering the first two research questions, as outlined in Section 6.2, and finally its appropriateness as an integrated evaluation tool within the policy arena. There will also be a discussion of how it has been utilised within this research and the AIF potential uses in a wider context.

6.3.1 Actor Influence Framework - A Successful Framework?

Firstly, it is important to discuss how the AIF has been applied within this thesis; fundamentally it was employed to organise and frame the empirical data relating to both the broad policy context of sustainable development policy and more specifically the development of the UK NSDS: *'Securing the future'*. By utilising the AIF in this way it has been possible to address the research questions; how is influence exerted in UK decision-making relating to sustainable development policy? and; how do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy? Chapter Five: Results and Analysis demonstrates that by applying the AIF these questions have been successfully answered providing a systematic review of the modes of influence and through the use of intermediate influence, their subsequent impact, providing a systematic evaluation of the relationships which existed in the data. In using the AIF in this way it was possible to breakdown the different influences at play in the policy decision-making process; it was used to identify whether these influences were direct or tacit, how the influences interacted with the policy process, and whether this interaction created intermediate influences. From this perspective the AIF was used to assess if the availability and use of the mode of influences had changed as the policy decision-making process developed.

The development and inclusion of intermediate influence in the AIF is one of the significant theoretical contributions made by this thesis through the development of this framework. As shown in the discussion in Chapter Five, the systematic nested approach provided by the AIF allowed the research questions to be addressed and the research objectives of evaluating and systemically reviewing the influence of MNCs. Therefore, in this context the AIF can be seen as being successful, and achieving its aim within this thesis. The key elements which should be highlighted here are that both tacit and direct influence are at play within UK sustainable development policy and with specific reference to MNCs they utilise both; in the case of the development of the UK NSDS: '*Securing the future*' tacit modes of influence are the most dominant. The most crucial of these are discussed in more detail later in this Chapter.

It is also interesting to note that by employing the AIF within this thesis it allowed for an accurate identification of the boundaries of the policy process. The synthesis nature of the AIF has allowed for influence coming from outside the formalised policy decision-making process to be identified, as outlined in Chapter Five. Specific examples included the situation where an external body, which was employed on behalf of government to coordinate the pre-consultation stage, used information from a previous consultation exercise, which related to the same subject but in a different context. Additionally, within the final stages of the development of the '*Securing the future*' strategy, inter-departmental influence was at play, which again resulted in influence from outside the formalised policy process affecting the development of the new strategy. The ability to identify the boundaries of the policy process is a noteworthy benefit for the AIF as many policy studies are restricted to what is seen to be the formalised structure of a specific decision, whereas in reality influence extends beyond the specific boundaries.

The application of the AIF in investigating the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy has demonstrated that the synthesis position proposed through the AIF is an appropriate and effective method of analysing influence within the policy arena. The AIF has organised the data in such a way that allows direct as well as tacit influence to be identified. Significantly, to both the theory and practice of policy studies, the AIF has allowed for the importance and role of discourse to be acknowledged whilst still recognising the specific impact of direct action within the

policy under investigation. As discussed in Chapter Five, this thesis and the use of the AIF has demonstrated that there is a direct link between the different 'types' of influence, those which are action-based and those which are discursive, therefore further reinforcing the argument for a synthesis approach to be taken.

The nested nature of the AIF responded to the issues of complexity which accompany a multi-level governance environment, as raised by Hill and Hupe (2006); outlined in Chapter Three. Along these lines the AIF has been able to identify the high level context of the policy process, in this instance the making of sustainable development policy whilst still providing space to analyse the detailed interrelationships which occur during decision-making; using the generic relationships outlined in secondary in the specific policy context provided by tertiary level.

Alterations to the AIF

The development of the AIF was based on the literature review, primarily outlined in Chapter Three but also on the work outlined in Chapter Two. It was then subsequently applied within this thesis to frame and organise the data as outlined in Chapter Four. This section will now reflect on this application and suggest some revision. Although the originally proposed AIF was successful in evaluating the majority of the influences at play in the policy process, empirical investigation has highlighted that some alterations to the AIF were required if it was to take into account all the influence; this section will provide a discussion of these adjustments. To clearly differentiate between the original Framework and alterations made, the initial Framework will be referred to as AIF₁ and the revised Framework will be assigned the notation AIF₂. In the AIF₂ all changes are highlighted in bold and shaded. Alterations to create AIF₂ have been made to the secondary level, the primary and tertiary levels remain unchanged. Although no changes have been made to the tertiary level it has been noted, through its application in Chapter Five, that modes of influence can link together to create intermediate influence and that a simple direct relationship between one mode of influence and intermediate influence is always present.

The '*Taking it on*' consultation exercise, has revealed the importance of looking at the individual processes which exist within a wider consultation process. As outlined in Chapter Five the '*Taking it on*' consultation has included a number of different processes, including the design of the overall programme, for example: what response

mechanisms are available? who is invited, and by whom?, which organisations and individuals are used as facilitators and how, and who handles the responses?. In essence, based on the development of a new UK NSDS, consultation as a mode of influence can be viewed in two ways; as a direct method by which state and non-state actors can become involved in the policy decision-making process and secondly as a mode of influence which needs to be viewed in terms of the structural design of the process. In order to reflect this, the AIF₁ requires some alteration to include these 'structural' considerations, as shown in Figure 6.1. Figure 6.1 illustrates the alternations made to produce AIF₂, where a new section (highlighted in bold and shading) has been introduced within the mode of influence to allow for the 'structural' decisions to be accounted for. Consistent with AIF₁ the intermediate influences, resulting from both direct and tacit modes of influence, have been identified and listed under the section heading 'intermediate influence'. No new intermediate influences, which were not present in AIF₁, have been identified in relation to the 'structural' issues. These findings and subsequent changes to the AIF are in-line with the work of Hajer (2005) on the dramaturgy of policy deliberation, where he "analyses how the design of the setting affects what is said, what can be said, and what can be said with influence" (*ibid*: p624). This research supports Hajer's argument that the way in which participation is designed is just as important as what is being said; stating that "to understand the bias in participatory practice, we should not merely focus on the type of arguments that are raised but include the conditions (physical, technical, theatrical) as well" (*ibid*: p265). In this context Hajer is referring to theatrical as the 'setting' and 'staging' of the participation; for example, how does the design of the actual participation exchange construct the actors involved, and are they 'cast' as protestor or collaborator?

Within the case of a formal policy review process, 'structural' influences resulting from the choice of consultation approach are key. Therefore the AIF₂ has been developed, which is not only in-line with Hajer's work but also supports that of Lynch (1991). As stated by Lynch (1991), the context in which a discussion occurs affects the quality of the discussion itself, in this regard he outlines a discussion as an act as well as talk, where "every act takes place in a particular 'contexture' that influences the quality of that act" (Lynch 1991: p 628).

Mode	Intermediate Influence
Direct	
Lobbying	1, 2, 3, 4
Political Donations	2, 4
Consultation	1, 4, 5
Advisory Committees	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Task Force	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9
Quangos	1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10
Staff Secondment	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11
Revolving Door	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, on a longer term basis as staff secondment
Tacit	
Trade Associations	1, 2, 4, 15
Agenda Setting	1, 2, 7
Marketing Strategy	1, 2
Cross department influence	2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 14
Perceived Power	2, 4, 5, 7
Research	1, 9, 13
Support of external organisations	1, 2, 7, 9, 12
Business location/relocation	2, 4, 5
Process	
Design of process	2, 3, 4, 5, 12
Consultee selection	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
Management of data	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12
Consultation infrastructure	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
External Management	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13

Code	Intermediate Influence
1	Accepted Discourse
2	Non-decision-making
3	Timescale
4	Policy Preference
5	Anticipated reactions
6	Increased status
7	Mobilisation of bias
8	Accepted insider
9	Status
10	Cross-issue influence
11	Business insight
12	Negotiating positions of others
13	Leadership
14	Clash ministerial powers
15	Dual Stance

Figure 6.1 Revised Secondary Level : AIF2

In summary, as a result of the empirical findings, some alterations to the original AIF were required resulting in the addition of the process section within the secondary level of the AIF. Figure 6.2 outlines how the changes to the secondary level fits within the overall structure to from the AIF₂. A summary of the evaluation of the application of the AIF within this thesis is also given in Figure 6.2. However, AIF was successfully used to address the proposed research questions; it allowed a synthesis position to be taken, and therefore demonstrated the need for such a position to be taken if the analysis of policy is to take into full account all the influences at play. In essence it is considered that the AIF has been a success in evaluating the role of business in the UK sustainable development policy. In addition, the revised AIF₂ can be used for other purposes beyond this specific research.

6.3.2 Actor Influence Framework – Wider applications

The AIF has successfully been applied within this thesis. In a similar way the AIF₂ could also be appropriate in the analysis of other sustainable development policy. Indeed as the AIF is not subject-specific to any policy type, with the tertiary level allowing for specific policy context analysis, it is relevant to a wide range of subjects within policy analysis more broadly.

The AIF can also be used in an empirical setting by policy-makers and MNCs themselves. For policy-makers it provides a mechanism to understand the implications of the design of the policy process, particularly with reference to the methods used in formalised consultation exercises. The AIF is also a useful tool in this setting as it provides policy-makers with a systematic approach to reflecting on the policy decision-making process. Notably this can be carried out throughout the life-cycle of a policy; it does not have to be confined to *ex-post* analysis. From the perspectives of MNCs a further extension of the use of the AIF in a 'real-world' setting would be its application by MNCs to organise and design their policy-influence strategies. The tacit element of the AIF is vital in aiding their understanding of how far their influence extends and in which circumstances they need to employ direct modes of influence and in which situation no action is required.

6.3.3 AIF Evaluation Summary

So, to summarise, although some alternatives have been required, and subsequently applied to the AIF, its design and application can be regarded as being successful. The aim outlined through the design of the AIF has been met, and in doing so the relevant research questions and objectives have been fulfilled within this thesis. The development and use of the AIF has;

1. allowed for the identification of both tacit and direct modes of influence of MNCs within UK decision-making,
2. showed that through the use of a nested, systematic design the complex subject and governance nature of sustainable development policy can be broken down and evaluated,

3. demonstrated that employing a synthesis approach to analysis of influence in policy-making is the correct one,
4. enabled the assessment of influence to accommodate that which results from outside the formalised policy discussions and therefore allows for an accurate identification of the policy boundaries, and
5. provided an evaluation framework which is generic in its first two levels but specific at its tertiary level so it can be employed outside this thesis in other policy contexts.

Chapter Five and the early sections of this chapter have focused upon the identification of influence within the policy decision-making process, through the use of the AIF, following which an evaluation of the design and use of the AIF has been given. These findings can now be developed upon to answer the third research question guiding this thesis, that of what does this influence mean for policy-making and MNCs?

6.4 APPLIED CONSIDERATIONS - WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN IN THE 'REAL-WORLD'?

In addition to the conceptual findings and contributions made through the development and application of the AIF within this thesis, a number of results have emerged which are interesting and significant in an applied sense. The applied results have been split into those which are directly linked with MNCs and those which are more focused on sustainable development policy in the broader sense. From the perspective of MNCs the main findings are that they have gained a 'monopoly of legitimacy' within the policy arena; the dominant policy discourse of sustainable development is one which is corporate-centric; state and non-state actors place huge importance on the inclusion of MNCs in the decision-making surrounding sustainable development and, similarly MNCs are seen as key actors in the implementation of sustainable development policy. All this has led to a policy context which is dominated by a business agenda.

From a policy perspective this thesis has found that the UK national sustainable development strategy is, on the whole, not considered a significant policy document by MNCs. Significantly, it has also been found that there is a degree of actor

marginalisation occurring within the policy process, leading to a move to less transparent decision-making.

6.4.1 MNCs: Applied Findings

The aim of this thesis was to assess the role played by MNCs in UK sustainable development policy; in-line with this aim a number of applied findings have emerged. One of the main findings is that business currently influences sustainable development decision-making through both tacit and direct modes of influence. However, significantly, in the specific context of the development of the new UK NSDS the majority of influence present in relation to business, as a non-state actor, is that of tacit influence. In this regard, as outlined in Chapter Five, agenda-setting played a significant role as tacit mode of influence; with the dominant policy agenda being one which is business-orientated. Such a business-orientated agenda was present in both the wider policy discussions and the development of the UK NSDS, although it was the adoption of this agenda by other non-state actors during the production of a new UK NSDS which is particularly noteworthy. This thesis has found that the dominance of this business-orientated agenda has been achieved in four ways; the adoption of the stance of business 'knows-best'; an overarching acceptance of the importance of business within the policy decision-making process; the perceived role of MNCs in implementation and finally that corporate-centric language is the dominant policy discourse.

Business 'know-best': A Monopoly of Legitimacy

One of the main empirical findings of this thesis is the identification that, through tacit influence, the environment of the policy decision-making process is one where MNCs are considered to 'know-best' has been created. The term 'know-best' within this thesis refers to a group which has an understanding or knowledge beyond that of others within a given context. The idea that business 'know-best' was evident during a number of the 'Taking it on' consultation meetings, as described in Chapter Five, where participants made statements suggesting that MNCs have an advanced understanding of sustainable development and have made moves towards achieving 'it' beyond the

progress made by other non-state actors. This position was highlighted in the interview extracts as outlined in Chapter Five.

The stance taken in the regional meetings has led to an accepted claim that MNCs do 'know-best'. As previously noted in Chapter Five this has been achieved through tacit modes of influence such as agenda-setting (Bachrach and Baratz (1970)), policy preference (Lukes 1974), non-decision-making (Bachrach and Baratz (1970)) and the mobilisation of bias (Schattschneider 1960)). Such findings are in-line with the concepts which have emerged from the dimensions of power debate, as discussed in Chapter Three, and which have been considered with regard to the development of the AIF. The interpretative methodology employed in this thesis, which hinged around discursive analysis, has allowed for such findings to be noted, highlighting the need to take a synthesis position which accounts for the importance of discourse as linked with the argumentative turn proposed by Fischer (2003).

In addition to tacit influence, direct modes of influence have also come into play in the development of the standpoint that business 'knows-best'. As outlined in Chapter Five, a number of business representatives were involved in the early stages of the production of the new UK NSDS; advising government on what issues should be focused upon within the review. Such activity served not only to set the policy agenda but also helped to create a policy environment within which businesses are seen to be the most knowledgeable. This is not only an interesting empirical finding, but also the combination effect of tacit and direct modes of influence demonstrates that from a theoretical perspective it is vital that both modes of influence are investigated and therefore the synthesis approach adapted in this study is the correct one.

As a consequence of the business 'know-best' stance a 'monopoly of legitimacy' has been created. This thesis has coined this term to relate to this situation where the majority of actors within the decision-making process see one actor group, in this case business, as being the most legitimate. In this situation the 'monopoly of legitimacy' has been created by, and on behalf of business, which has in turn led to business having a high degree of influence, the majority of which is tacit, in the development of the UK NSDS. The proposition that such a 'monopoly of legitimacy' has been created was supported by the interviews completed in the later stages of the data collection,

when initial findings were outlined to the interviewees. The extract below highlights that the legitimacy given to MNCs in the sustainable development policy debate reflects the situation in the broader political environment of a New Labour administration.

“With the Blair/Brown DTi pushing at an open door the private sector is seen as the natural people to bring about solutions.....there is the attitude that a lot of the public sector is made up of dead beats so lets bring in the private sector to rescue them and show them how to manage properly....”

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

The concept of a ‘monopoly of legitimacy’ can be seen as an extension of the ideas of policy experts and epistemic communities, introduced earlier in this work. Epistemic communities are defined by Haas (1992) as a “network of knowledge-based experts” who have been employed in the policy arena as a result of the growing technical uncertainties and the complexities of global problems. Sustainable development policy fits within the analytical framework of a global problem which is high in uncertainty and complexity. However, as outlined in earlier chapters businesses are not seen in this research as an epistemic community. The concept of ‘monopoly of legitimacy’ is in line with Grant’s (1989) proposition of insider groups; however, the influence gained within policy decision-making is more far reaching. The empirical element of this thesis has reaffirmed the earlier position taken that business cannot be seen within Haas’ boundaries of an epistemic community. It also fits with the stance taken by Newell (2000) that Haas’ work implies a one-way transfer of knowledge/power from the expert to the policy community. However, it has been demonstrated here that the policy community itself is playing a vital role in creating the knowledge currency of business. As Connelly and Smith (1999) outlined, being granted the status of an insider group purely means that an actor(s) has(have) been included into the policy community, which does not necessarily mean that influence accompanies such inclusion. In contrast the ‘monopoly of legitimacy’ awarded to MNCs has created a significant degree of tacit influence within sustainable development policy decision-making.

In the case of sustainable development policy in the UK, particularly in the case of the production of the UK NSDS, MNCs as a non-state actor group, are being given the status of expert, through the perception that MNCs are the actor(s) which are best placed to understand the issues within sustainable development and to devise appropriate solutions. However, in this context we can see the role of MNCs is going further than that of policy expert, insider group or epistemic community, as they are not only being invited to the policy discussion by government but their role is being promoted through this perception by other actors that business 'know-best'. The creation of a 'monopoly of legitimacy' through the perception of other actors of the ability of MNCs corresponds with what Crenson (1971) calls 'politically enforced neglect' as discussed in Chapter Three. Crenson argues that "The mere reputation for power, unsupported by acts of power, can be sufficient to restrict the scope of decision-making" (*ibid* 1971: p177). In this case not only is business being acknowledged as the possessor of power, but that it has the adequate knowledge and experience (beyond that of other actors) with which to solve the problem of sustainable development. Such a perception has been translated into power which has been exercised through mainly tacit modes of influence, therefore as a result, MNCs do not need to take any action in order to influence and play a role in the formation of UK sustainable development policy.

The importance of business

A 'monopoly of legitimacy' held by MNCs was further realised along with the subsequent promotion of a business agenda as a result of a range of actors, both state and non-state, overtly highlighting the importance of business throughout the decision-making process. This emphasis on the importance of business highlights another example where tacit influences (on the part of MNCs), linked closely with the concept that business 'know-best', has led to the adoption of a business-based agenda within the policy decision-making process.

The importance of having MNCs involved in the review process has translated into an adoption of a 'business-friendly' environment in order to attract businesses, particularly MNCs to the discussion and in an attempt to make them stay 'involved' and contribute. It seems ironic that this action has meant that, to some degree, MNCs did not actually need to take part in the formal discussion which had been designed specifically with them in mind. The emphasis placed on MNCs by a range of actors

has been evident in meetings and discussions, interviews and the documents reviewed; as outlined in Chapter Five. As stated previously, the importance of business involvement in the development of a new UK SDS was highlighted in the main *'Taking it on'* consultation document where business are allocated a dedicated section in the report; no other actor-specific group was treated in this way.

Such emphasis on the importance of business, alongside the perception that business 'knows-best' has created a conducive environment within which MNCs' influence was optimised, often without any direct action or influence on the part of corporations themselves.

"The language is very much; there is a market solution, that I think it becomes the prominent one. As trade unions do we get in the trenches and protect the public services ethos....or do we go with the flow but try to ensure that where market solutions are obviously the only ones the government is interested in we make sure the market operates on the level playing field..?"

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

The results, outlined earlier, showed that on completion of the development of the *'Securing the future'* Strategy, the government was disappointed with the level of business engagement in the process. This stance highlights two important issues; firstly that government, as an actor in the decision-making process is not aware of the influence it is providing to MNCs through its own (and others') tacit actions; and secondly that the decision holders are not aware of the extent of business MNCs' influence on UK sustainable development policy. This interestingly contradicts the thoughts of representatives interviewed from both the DTi and SDU who both stated that they thought business did not have the level of influence people thought they had, both direct and tacit. Both interviewees both considered that MNCs should be involved more in the policy decision-making process and that business had not been involved enough in the development of the new UK NSDS; *'Securing the future'*, both considering that it was the 'usual suspects' who got involved. By this, reference is being made to the small number of companies which take a proactive stance on sustainable development and to varying degrees get involved in most of the Government's activity around sustainable development.

Corporate-Centric Language: The Dominant Policy Discourse

Alongside the notion that business 'knows-best' and the importance placed on business involvement in sustainable development policy, the presiding policy agenda centred towards business was further enhanced by the dominance of a corporate-centric language within the decision-making process.

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, discourse is vital in the understanding of MNC's influence at play in UK sustainable development policy. The concept of policy discourse, following the work of Fischer and Hajer, was also introduced as an important mechanism through which, and therefore by which, influence can be exerted and understood. Within this thesis this has been evident in the identification of corporate-centric language as the dominant policy discourse.

The dominance of corporate-centric language in this thesis has acted to legitimise the knowledge and understanding of MNCs on sustainable development and in turn MNCs have been taken as the agents of this knowledge. The identification of such a dominant discourse in this setting is in line with the work of Hajer (1995) and Fischer (2003) and plays an important part in promoting the business agenda as the agenda of sustainable development in UK policy-making.

The proposition that MNCs are becoming an agent of knowledge follows the Foucauldian view of discourse (Rouse 1994) and relates to his concept of 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980). Such a situation corresponds with the link Foucault established between knowledge and power, even if in this case the knowledge is perceived by the other actors involved in the policy process. Patton highlights the link between accepted discourse, the development of truth and the resulting influence. He states that "a discourse which is accepted to present itself as the truth always conveys certain effects of power, notably the exclusion of other kinds of discourse" (Patton 1979: p115).

In 1999 Hajer and Fischer outlined the 'up-beat' and conciliatory messages, which were replacing the apocalyptic tones of the 1970s, that at the time were dominating environmental discourse; these included "ecological modernisation" (as discussed in Chapter Two), "changing course" and "greening of industry" (Jamison 2001). Maybe a decade later these discourses have moved to be even more conciliatory, no longer

focusing on the greening of industry but 'corporatisation of sustainable development'. Although this maybe seems like an extreme proposition, however, this thesis has found that this is certainly the case within the current UK policy decision-making arena; an argument which is to some degree in line with the arguments put forward by Welford *et al* in 1997, in their discussion of 'hijacking environmentalism'. It is not being proposed that MNCs are trying to derail sustainable development in its entirety; more that they are limiting it to what is safe for them. As Jamison states:

"It is not that the companies are doing nothing, for many are indeed doing a great deal; it is rather that the quest for sustainable development is being reduced or limited to those activities that can turn a profit".

(Jamison 2001: p124)

Although Jamison's argument relates more directly to the actions being taken by business, this thesis suggests that the role MNCs are playing in sustainable development policy is to limit the scope of policy-making to areas which are 'safe' to them. In this instance this is being achieved through the dominant, accepted policy discourse being one which is corporate-centric, espousing a very firm agenda.

The emphasis placed on CSR/CR demonstrates the use of corporate-centric language and how this has been adapted within the policy process. It became clear throughout the policy process that CSR/CR has begun to be used interchangeably with sustainable development, by MNCs and state and non-state actors. The quotations highlight this interchangeable use of the terms and are taken from 'Taking it on' consultation meetings. Such a finding is in-line with the work of Moon (2007) who argues that "Both terms [sustainable development and CSR] are often used vaguely and interchangeably." (ibid: p 297). Notably within the same work Moon proposes that there are "weaknesses, limitation and challenge" relating to CSR as an appropriate mechanism to achieve sustainable development. Considering the findings of this thesis, both directly relating to CSR and to the wider emphasis placed on business, such limitations raise questions in policy terms regarding the appropriateness of the policy agenda and subsequent policy recommendations.

It is noteworthy that the stance taken regarding agenda-setting at the outset of this research has been confirmed in contrast to that taken by Newell. In Newell's (2000) work on international policy-making surrounding climate change he argues that agenda-setting occurs at the beginning of a decision-making process. However, this thesis argues that in fact agenda-setting runs throughout the decision-making process as an intermediate influence which interacts with the mode of influence and the political context.

Business Role in Implementation

The business-focused agenda was further strengthened by the emphasis placed on the role of MNCs in the implementation of the final strategy and in the wider sense of achieving sustainable development. The role MNCs could play in implementation was highlighted within discussions at the '*Taking it on*' consultation meetings, with the stance being stated both directly by MNCs and indirectly by government and other actors. This is highlighted in the quote below, which had been given by a non-business related actor during a '*Taking it on*' consultation meeting.

"Business is critical in implementation and delivery"

(Themed Meeting: DTi: 13th May 2004)

The emphasis placed on MNCs in relation to the implementation of sustainable development policy in the UK is aligned with the findings of Newell (2000), who in his investigation of the role of the fossil fuel industry found that the same business groups were heavily involved in the discussion on which implementation methods were considered appropriate at a national level. Here, Newell introduces the idea of a 'process of referral' relating to the situation in which business provides government with an opinion of whether policy proposals are feasible or not at the national level. The findings of this thesis suggest that such a 'process of referral' is present in the making of UK sustainable development policy.

The perception that MNCs are able to lead the way in terms of implementation also relates to the issue of definition raised in Chapter Two. One of the main concerns raised in relation to the contested nature of sustainable development is that it is difficult to translate the concept into real action. The emphasis placed on the ability of

MNCs within implementation of the strategy was often linked with their considered experience of operationalising sustainable development.

MNCs: A Summary

In summary, this thesis has found empirically that MNCs are playing both a direct and tacit role in UK sustainable development policy. Most interestingly, the combination of the four findings outlined above have acted together to create an overall policy agenda which is business-focused. The creation of such a business-focused agenda is neatly summed up in the following quote from the East of England consultation meeting:

"Business and government are talked about together as if they have the same standpoint and face the same issues."

(Regional Meeting: East: 29th July 2004)

As well as providing MNCs with influence, which in most cases needs little investment, such a business-focused agenda is also acting to maintain the current political environment, an outcome which is as useful to Government as it is to MNCs. This situation reflects the findings of Ghazi (1997) who identified that governments were using lobbyists' positions to support their own 'conservative' policy position. It cannot be ascertained within the constraints of this thesis whether a business-agenda has been actively promoted in order to achieve such a position or whether has developed in a passive, tacit manner. It may be the case that a situation of 'compatibility of agendas' as outlined by Newell (2000) is present here; with the government and MNCs possessing similar agendas, therefore if the policy agenda addresses both concerns a 'no regrets' solution can be reached.

6.4.2 Applied Finding: Policy Making

As stated previously, in addition to findings discussed above which are MNC-facing, this thesis has identified areas of interest which are of particular relevance to the policy context. These consider whether the definition of sustainable development is still an issue, the relevance of the UK NSDS as a policy tool, and the question of stakeholder

involvement, all of which could have significant impact on the way policies are made and perceived in a UK setting.

A question of definition – an on-going debate

“Sustainable development has become an unthinking orthodoxy. When everyone from the most ruthless CEO to the most radical NGO will assent to a label then it can have no value in differentiating one position from another”

(Written Response: Think Tank: dna)

A long established debate within the arena of sustainable development has been that of definition as discussed in Chapter Two; this has been found to be the case within this thesis. As discussed in the previous section, throughout the review of the UK NSDS and the production of *‘Securing the future’*, language and definition has played a huge role in setting the boundaries of policy decision-making. The importance of language within the decision-making process can be seen at two levels; in the production of specific policy instruments, in this case the UK NSDS and in the wide policy discussion arena around sustainable development.

As outlined in previous chapters sustainable development is a contested issue, with many definitions being formed and discussed (for further discussion see Parkin 2000, Giddings *et al* 2002, Hopwood B *et al* 2005). Similarly, as may be expected, such a contested nature is present in the discourse of UK sustainable development policy. As outlined earlier it is not the aim of this research to provide a definitive definition; however the question of definition is an important one in the context of influence within policy decision-making. The contested nature of the concept is acknowledged at various stages of the decision-making process. The quote below is taken from an early consultation meeting during the development of the new UK sustainable development strategy.

“[There is a] problem of getting over the definition of sustainable development for society it is more abstract and academic.”

(Themed meeting: DTi: 13th May 2004)

"We don't have a common understanding of sustainable development. Environmental/social elements of development, or is it something more fundamental?. We need to argue what we mean"

(Regional Event: East :29th July 2004)

The problem of definition is clearly highlighted in the 'Taking it on' consultation document;

"The term 'sustainable development' has become more widely used and recognised. But there are different views on how to best describe what it means, and no clear vision of what it might look like in practice for the UK. We think that developing a common understanding of sustainable development and vision of where we would like to be in the long term will be useful to help us to make it a reality"

(Consultation Documentation: DEFRA 2004a: p14)

This extract also demonstrates the attention placed on achieving a consensus definition for sustainable development. Such emphasis on the need for an agreed and operationalised definition within decision-making can slow down the process and serves to set the agenda and the language by which the central concept is discussed, and fundamentally non-decision-making occurs. Following on from the extract above DEFRA state that:

"The most frequently used definition of sustainable development is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. However, there have been many different explanations of what this actually means, including within government in the UK"

(Consultation Documentation: DEFRA 2004a: p14)

This is a move away from previous policy statements, the previous strategy; 'A better quality of life' outlines sustainable development as;

"At its very heart is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. A widely-used international definition is

'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'

(Government Strategy: DETR 1999: p8)

The resulting *'Securing the future'* document settles for an agreed *'purpose'* of sustainable development adopted by the UK Government and the Devolved Administration.

"The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations."

(Government Strategy: DEFRA 2005: p16)

Written responses submitted as part of the *'Taking it on'* process also reflect the importance of definition and language used.

"We are constantly struck by the lack of understanding of sustainable development among management and staff in many organisations, and in the general public. A coherent and easily understood explanation of sustainable development is therefore essential to the delivery of a more sustainable society..... We support the continued use of the Brundtland definition and the need to underpin this with some clarification about what sustainable development means in reality."

(Written Response: MNC: dna)

The need for a consensus around definition in a situation where the dominant agenda is one which is business-focused, discussed using a corporate-centric language, creating an environment where the influence of MNCs may be further augmented. If this need for a consensus definition continues it is highly likely, in the current policy context, that one which is heavily influenced by the corporate arena will occur.

From a policy-making perspective it is difficult to provide, and make decisions, within policy contexts which have yet to reach a consensus on the fundamental concepts on which policies are made. However this is not unusual, Parson (1995) argues that policy problems are ill-defined by their very nature. Parsons states that

“politics arises because we do not share perceptions of what problems are, or if we do, what follows from the definition in terms of what can be or should be done. A definition of a problem is part of the problem.”

(ibid.: p88 emphasis added).

From this standpoint, if problems within policy making are commonly ill-defined, does this make the contested issue of sustainable development a problem, something that cannot be worked with, or is it an implicit part of the process which decision-making has to deal with? i.e. is sustainable development any different from other policy making? Following Parson's argument it can be argued that it is not, and therefore, is the question of definition one which should slow down, or in fact bring the decision-making process to a halt? In taking this stance the use of a discourse, centred on a contested nature and thus creating non-decisions, becomes even more important to this thesis.

The Strategy – A Significant Policy Document ?

This thesis began by setting out a number of assumptions, two relating to NSDSs, which were; NSDSs are important policy tools and that MNCs have an interest in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and that they will use different methods to try and influence the UK SDS. With respect to these propositions, an interesting finding within this thesis is that MNCs do not see the UK NSDS as an important enough policy tool for them to consider direct involvement in its formation. However, the results of this thesis indicate that MNCs are still influential in the development of the Strategy through tacit modes of influence, as discussed in Section 6.3.

The results show that MNCs in general regard the UK NSDS as a policy tool which is too high level and 'wishy-washy', and subsequently do not see the development of a new NSDS as a process which is important enough to warrant expending their resources. As outlined in the previously, such a stance was reflected in the design of some of the regional consultation events, namely the GO London event, which was designed specifically to attract business. To do this the focus was placed on climate change, as a specific issue, rather than sustainable development in the wider context.

“Business involvement in key areas not in wider process; involving business is the answer to the question”

(Meeting: Yorkshire and The Humber: 1st July 2004)

This stance was also reiterated in the interview data, when interviewees were asked whether they agreed with this assessment that the UK NSDS was a policy tool that MNCs got involved in; the response was generally no. It was felt that some of the proactive companies got involved as part of the ‘branding’ exercise to be seen as companies which are ahead of the pack, and that others felt that they could/have influenced sustainable development policy through other avenues. More specifically it was felt that MNCs were more likely to get directly involved in policy tools which include hard targets and policy initiatives, for examples energy or waste policy. The lack of involvement in the formal process may also be a result of the experience of some actors that the policy process has become too open, and as a result they are reverting back to traditional one-to-one conversations in order to influence Government. This finding will be discussed further in the next section.

Decision-Making: A Transparent Process?

In contrast to the current prominent policy language of transparency, engagement and inclusiveness a number of interviews have suggested that the decision-making process has become so open that the opposite is happening, and to a certain extent actors are reverting or indeed just relying more on conversations held in the ‘corridors of power’ as opposed to open dialogue.

“And that’s why as much as the whole language, UN etc, multi-stakeholder partnership etc, is increasing participation,. I think that actually it is potentially weakening the hand of all concerned, except for those who have the most power to begin with, which is in most case the companies, I do think that. I think that all that in the Type II²³ agreement model, the beneficiaries tend to be more the industry partners as they get the legitimacy through their partnerships whilst pretty much having their business objectives met in first places, and how those relationships are brokered and negotiated and carried out is seen as insignificant.

²³ Type II agreements were developed at the Johannesburg summit as a means of achieving the WSSD objectives. They are informal agreement between non-state parties, either between themselves or with Governments.

In the policy discussion the ability to really put your cards on the card and say exactly where you think the problems lie are constrained when you have representatives from big companies in the room who are not going to like what you say."

(Interview: Think Tank: 24th March 2004)

The issue of 'openness' actually leading to less transparency in decision-making was also raised during interviews with Central Government, as outlined in the extract below. A government official stated that:

"if the process becomes too open and transparent this often leads to more back room talking."

(Interview: Government Official: 30th May 2005)

Such sentiments were also expressed through an internal memorandum which was provided following an interview with a representative of an MNC, as outlined in the extract below.

"Attendees were largely from the NGO community, 40 organisations were invited, 30 turned up; only three representatives from industry. There doesn't seem to be any process by which industry can sensibly contribute to this debate other than by one-to one meetings or by feedback seminars clearly aimed at the business community. It quickly became apparent that it wasn't the forum to express industry views."

(Interview: MNC: 4th March 2004)

When asked whether they had witnessed this shift back to 'backroom' decisions, one trade union interviewee said that in one particular important policy discussion they had gone through the more open channels, by talking to civil servants, but ultimately a direct conversation with the Prime Minister was held, as highlighted in the extract below. It is noteworthy here that the open channels are not even referring to open meetings which involve a number of stakeholders, as witnessed within this thesis.

"I know when we have had big issues with the health service etc. we have all had meetings with civil servants, we have written the letter, we have had the meetings with Secretary of State, we have met the ministers, but in the end the boss has had to go and speak to Tony Blair"

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

This discussion suggests that a number of non-state actors share a similar view that transparency has been lost. Such a finding is of particular concern within the context of sustainable development policy, as transparency is one of the key tenets of multi-stakeholder engagement upon which sustainable development is meant to be built. A shift away from transparency in this way raises the question of marginalisation within the decision-making process, with those actors with the privileged position of traditional power gaining more influence. This finding is important, as such a shift directly undermines the approach which exists in the current UK sustainable development decision-making process and may also be present in wider policy-making. In addition, the issues raised within this discussion may be informing MNCs' decision not to take part in the formal consultation process around the production of the new UK NSDS.

Access versus Influence

Throughout the discussion in Chapters Five and this Chapter it has become clear that although MNCs are not directly involved in all sustainable development policy decisions they do become involved in those which are issue specific and directly related to their market place. Perhaps more interestingly, it has been evident that, particularly in the case of the production of a new UK NSDS there was limited formal participation from MNCs; however, influence linked to them was still strong. This demonstrates that tacit influence is vitally important and points to the finding that participation does not necessarily equate to influence. The flip side of the situation, the negative side from a policy perspective, is that other non-state actors do participate in the process; however, they gain relatively little influence in return. This finding is in-line with Connelly and Smith's (1999) view that although some actors gain insider status this does not always lead to influence. However, there is little development of this argument.

“Access is easy [for us].....to have real influence is a different thing. I think it’s about the quality of the argument and how you put things forward...the current government it’s all about solutions.....so I think there is a certain amount of consultation that is P.R-ish but we have to do it, and it’s important we talk to stakeholders..”

(Interview: Trade Union: 7th November 2005)

The extract above reinforces the finding in this thesis that it is relatively easy to participate in the policy decision-making process; however, the participation-influence equation is less than straightforward.

6.6.1 *The Policy Implications*

As Lukes (1974) proposes, some actors do not challenge power out of choice, and not because they are unable to have power, or that power is not in their self-interest. In this context it is argued that MNCs not only do not elect to act directly in all forms of sustainable development decision-making, namely the UK NSDS, as other actors are acting on their behalf and in doing so, are maintaining the political status quo; benefiting both MNCs and the Government of the day. In this vein it is beneficial for the Government to promote and maintain the position of authority bestowed on MNCs as this helps to maintain the New Labour agenda, which places business in such an important position within both policy-making and wider civil society.

Although sustainable development policy in the UK is conducted in a multi-level, multi-stakeholder environment this thesis has demonstrated that influence is not allocated equally within this environment. So although consultation, participation, and transparency has increased, within the policy-making process modes of influence still exist, particularly those of a tacit nature which are undermining these changes in the policy process. This is further undermined by what could mark the beginning of a trend to revert back to the old style corridor and back room discussions, particularly on the part of MNCs.

The use of AIF to organise the data within this thesis has shown that MNCs do play an important role in UK sustainable development policy, particularly in the case of the UK NSDS, through both tacit and direct modes of influence. It has been demonstrated that both the actors themselves and the design of the decision-making process play a vital role in the presence of different modes of influence and subsequent intermediate influence. Therefore, it is vital that policy makers consider all these elements when entering into policy discussion and are aware of the impact of their decisions, as well as the actions of the other actors on the policy process.

6.4 RE-ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The early sections of this Chapter and Chapter Five have presented, reviewed and discussed the empirical data and the application of the AIF within this thesis. At this point it is now possible to re-address the research assumptions which were outlined at the onset of this thesis; these four assumptions are:

1. MNCs have the power to influence Government policy.
2. NSDSs are an important element of UK policy.
3. MNCs will have an interest in sustainable development policy, specifically the UK NSDS, and will play a role in its development.
4. The influence of MNCs will have an impact on the NSDS formation.

The use of the AIF in organising and framing the data in Chapter Five has demonstrated that assumptions one and four are correct. The discussions have shown that MNCs do have the power to influence government and importantly this power is not necessarily exerted by MNCs but occurs through tacit influence. The discussion has also demonstrated that influence relating to MNCs has had an impact on the NSDS formation. Fundamentally, it has affected the boundaries in which the Strategy was developed and the discourse through which it was discussed, a discourse which is corporate-centric. In contrast, assumption three; that MNCs will be interested in, and play a role in the formation of the new UK NSDS, cannot be taken as correct. The discussions in this thesis have demonstrated that although MNCs are interested in broad terms in sustainable development policy, and that a small number of MNCs were willing to take part in the formal production process of the new UK NSDS, in

general the NSDS was not seen as important or relevant enough for MNCs to be involved. Unlike the three assumptions already outlined, it is not possible to make a firm assessment of the relevance of the second assumption. However, based on the effort involved in the production of the UK NSDS and the emphasis placed on NSDS at an international and European level, this assumption would be taken in future studies. Following the re-assessment of the thesis assumptions, the next chapter will build on the discussion outlined this Chapter and draw this thesis to a conclusion, outlining the main findings and the contributions made.

7

Conclusion

7.1 RESEARCH REVIEW

This thesis began with the aim of investigating the role of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in UK sustainable development policy and was driven by three guiding research questions; How is influence exerted in UK decision-making relating to sustainable development?; How do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy? And What does this influence mean for policy-making and MNCs? In order to fully address these questions the investigation had to consider the complex situations of both sustainable development and multi-level governance, and what happens when the two are combined. In order to successfully answer the research questions when located in such a complex setting it was imperative that the research position and design was flexible yet systematic and holistic. Subsequently, it was proposed that a qualitative approach, which was influenced by the constructivist and interpretative traditions, would provide such a solution. Within this qualitative framework a multimethod design was used, with data being collected through interviews (17 hours 18 minutes), document review (340 documents) and observation at consultation events (28 hours). To maintain the systematic and holistic approach to this thesis an evaluation framework, the AIF, was developed to

enable organisation and framing of the data collected. Such an approach allowed for the successful consideration of the research questions posed as summarised below:

1) How is influence exerted in UK decision-making relating to sustainable development?

Types of influence were drawn together in Table 3.3, this was then used to develop the modes of influence and intermediate influence which were incorporated within the AIF. The possible modes of influence available to MNCs have been outlined in the AIF; this was then used as a mechanism to frame the influence, associated with MNCs which occurred during the development of the UK NSDS and which was experienced in wider sustainable development policy discussions.

2) How do MNCs influence UK sustainable development policy? MNCs have influenced sustainable development policy, with particular reference to the production of the UK NSDS through both direct and tacit means. This influence has often been a result of the perceptions and action of other non-state and state actors. Following the application of the AIF Table 3.3 was re-addressed, as shown in Table 6.1 to demonstrate what influence can be attributed to MNCs.

3) What does this influence mean for policy-making and MNCs? Due to the tacit nature of influence which has occurred, it is important in future policy decisions that this type of influence is neither ignored or underestimated. From a MNC's perspective this thesis has demonstrated that in order to have influence often no action is required.

The main findings and contributions of this thesis, as outlined in Chapter Six can be divided into those which are theoretical (Sections 6.2 and 6.3) and those which are applied (Section 6.4). The theoretical contribution made by this thesis lies in its handling of influence; it has drawn together a wide ranging, interdisciplinary debate, accumulating in the production of Table 3.3, which has subsequently fed into the development of an original evaluation framework. This element of the thesis has been published in Ellis (2007), see appendix IV. Further theoretical contribution was then made in the testing of the AIF in the setting of UK sustainable development, and thus enabled the aim of this thesis to be met. The synthesis position, forming the basis of the AIF, advances the debate

regarding influence within the field of policy analysis. By drawing upon the concepts outlined in the dimensions of power debate (Dahl (1961), Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963, 1970) and Lukes (1974) along with the discursive elements of post-modernism and post-empiricism, direct and tacit modes of influence can be accounted for. Furthermore, contribution is made through the nested nature of the AIF, this approach means that the complex nature of policy-making can be evaluated, with at the primary level, the process of policy-making along with the political system, at its broadest are addressed. It is at this level that the consideration of ideas such as pluralism (Kingdom 1994, Wilson 2003), corporatism (Smith 1995) and networks (Lowndes 2002) has been made. The secondary level of the AIF accommodates another increase in complexity; it is here that the individual modes of influence available to policy actors can be considered. A unique contribution to theory can be found within this level of the AIF, that of intermediate influence. By including this concept the interactions which occur throughout the decision-making process can be broken down, allowing for a greater understanding of influence as part of the policy journey. It is no longer necessary to wait, and rely upon the 'end point' for the analysis of influence. The tertiary level then allows for the evaluation of a policy specific context, as demonstrated within Chapter Five. Empirically, the AIF was initially informed in its development by existing literature on the political role of MNCs, and related business organisation within the UK context, as outlined in Section 3.3. However, the approach and design taken is original to this thesis. The AIF was then subsequently revised based on its application within this thesis. This thesis has shown that influence in the decision-making arena does not follow a linear cause-effect relationship, therefore, the mode-intermediate influence relationship provided by the AIF is a valuable theoretical contribution made by this thesis.

The applied findings can be split, as in Chapter Six, into those which are MNC-facing and those which are policy-facing. The first MNC-facing contribution is the finding that that, yes, MNCs are playing a significant role in UK sustainable development policy. However, particularly in relation to the UK NSDS, this is largely tacit, often without MNCs being involved in the policy decision-making process. So looking back at the original problematic of this thesis, it was set within a debate between those who think that MNCs

have a significant role to play in sustainable development, with some MNCs actively promoting the concept, and those who think that there is a fundamental conflict between the concept and the purpose of MNCs, and that MNCs are actively seeking to derail it. Based on these findings is it appropriate to have MNCs as the sole unit of investigations in such a debate? A wider view of the governance structure, its actors and the prevailing discourse is therefore needed within such a debate.

The second MNC-facing finding which has contributed to the wider debate of sustainable development was the eager adoption of a corporate-centric language and the willingness to bestow greatness on MNCs by other non-state, and state actors, even in situations where there were no MNCs present. It was expected that the policy preference and language of some non-state actors may have been altered by the presence of MNCs in policy decisions. However, it appears that MNCs have been crowned the champion of sustainable development, both in terms of the way they can talk about it and the way they can do it. Subsequently, MNCs hold a 'monopoly of legitimacy' within the policy process, which allows for a high degree of influence.

From a policy perspective, the main contributions of this thesis are that MNCs do not see, in the UK context, NSDSs as an important policy tool. The UK NSDS was seen as being too high level and 'wishy-washy', having no real relevance to, or impact on the operation of MNCs. Therefore it was not considered appropriate to use resources in participating in the formal review process, even though a significant effort on the part of government had been exerted in trying to design a consultation process which was conducive to the MNC community.

The second policy-facing contribution is the finding that there are moves beginning to revert back to backroom one-to-one conversations rather than open dialogue. The impact of such a finding is interesting both in the academic sense and in a policy sense; it seems that the move towards a transparent inclusion policy arena is indeed achieving the exact opposite to the objective it set out to achieve – open decision-making. This is significant both in the study of influence but also in relation to the day-to-day business of policy-making and the claims being made by government. Therefore this thesis makes

contributions to policy analysis in its general sense and specifically to the debate surrounding the role that MNCs play in sustainable development policy. The thesis's contribution to the field of policy analysis is through the development of an evaluation framework which allows for a synthesis position to be taken and articulated; it takes the debate away from a polarised spectrum to a position which acknowledges the fundamental role of language in the construct of worldviews but also recognises that within this, direct actions still have consequence and influence. The contribution made to the debate about the role of MNCs in sustainable development is one which is systematic and focused, addressing influence rather than purely looking at rhetoric from both sides. Fundamentally, this thesis has demonstrated that, yes, MNCs are playing a significant role in sustainable development policy, a role which is greater than other non-state actors; however, this role is not always realised through thought and intention on the part of MNCs.

7.2 REFLECTION AND LIMITATIONS

Specific strengths and limitations of the research design and analytical approaches have been discussed previously in Chapter Four. However, it is useful to reflect on the study as a whole. If this thesis had been completed under different time constraints, i.e. more time was available, further evaluation of the AIF would have been undertaken. As the AIF was amended following its application within this thesis it would have been beneficial if the new AIF could have then been applied within subsequent sustainable development decision-making. This would have allowed for a more in-depth evaluation of the AIF.

In a practical sense if I was to undertake the same research now I would attempt to undertake more interviews during the consultation events at which I observed. This would have allowed for more interviews to be completed and it would have made the issue of scheduling easier. I also think it would have increased the number of willing participants. Within the environment of the meeting people were more willing to talk about the subject and agreed to be interviewed; however, it was then often difficult to

schedule interviews afterwards. Such an approach may have addressed the problem of recruiting representatives from the NGO community, as discussed in section 4.6.1.

7.3 LOOKING FORWARD: POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE WORK

The findings of this thesis and the highlighted limitations both provide a basis for potential future work. Firstly, addressing the theoretical contribution of the AIF, as discussed in Chapter Six; further application of the AIF would have allowed for a more robust evaluation. With this in mind future work may include further application of the AIF within the broad context of UK sustainable development policy. However, it will be more insightful from both a theoretical and an applied perspective to make use of the AIF in slightly different contexts. Firstly, the investigation of influence, using the AIF within a more focused, but related policy context is proposed. For example, climate change policy would provide an interesting and useful focus. As this thesis has found, the high level nature of the UK sustainable development strategy meant that a significant number of MNCs felt that as a policy document it was too 'wishy-washy' and not wholly related to them therefore they did not consider it important enough to directly participate in its development. In contrast climate change is a much more focused issue, which has explicit relevance to MNCs and includes specific targets. Secondly, it would be useful to use the AIF in a comparative exercise. NSDSs are a policy tool which have been, and are being developed globally. A number of studies comparing how this development is being carried out and how effective the strategies are, have been and are being completed (George and Kirkpatrick (2006); Lafferty *et al* (2007); Russel (2007); Bordhag and Taliere (2006)). A small number address the question of participation; however, there is little, if indeed no evidence of the study of influence within the NSDS. Therefore, the use of the AIF would be a good starting point for such research, with its systematic framework allowing for consistent comparison across geographical boundaries. The potential for further study also exists through using the AIF in policy analysis which is not related to sustainable development. It would be interesting to discover whether the secondary

level²⁴ of the AIF would require alterations if it was used to frame other influence in different policy decision-making situations.

To extend this thesis further it would be interesting for future work to address some of the wider issues relating to power which were touched upon within this thesis; for example, in many senses it can be argued that MNCs have already 'won the war' and therefore do not need to take part in policy discussions around sustainable development. Therefore, expanding the remit of the thesis to include a more detailed analysis of issues such as marketing strategies, which could have a significant effect on the third dimension elements of power, would be beneficial, and a little challenging. As outlined in Section 6.2, this thesis did not identify political donations or the consideration of business location or relocation to be modes of influence through which MNCs are playing a role in UK sustainable development policy, however, in the wider political environment these economic-based considerations maybe important and therefore should not be discounted. Subsequently, it would be interesting to develop further research which can account for such influences.

The applied findings also raise suggestions for future work. The identification of the dominance of a corporate-centric language, specifically the links which are being made with corporate social responsibility (CSR) sit well with the growing academic and professional work which is calling for further investigation of the real link between CSR and sustainable development (Moon 2007), and the need on a practical level for political activity to be a key element of CSR (SustainAbility and wwf (2007), with this subsequently being reflected in societal and government expectations of a MNCs CSR approach. The findings of this thesis would provide a good basis to develop this direction of enquiry, demonstrating that declaring political donations and affiliation to political groups is not sufficient to account for all political activity in this area.

²⁴ it would be expected that the primary and tertiary levels should not require alterations, as the primary level relates to generic policy-making and the tertiary provides a framework for addressing specific policy contexts.

The question of corporatisation of sustainable development can be developed further, investigating to what extent MNCs are aware of the influence they are having on sustainable development policy through the tacit modes of influence outlined in this thesis. In conjunction with this, an investigation into the concept of 'complementary agendas' would be interesting; investigating the question: Are MNCs and Government working to support each other's stance or are they working separately towards a similar goal?

In response to the finding that there appears to be a backlash to increased inclusiveness within the policy process, a potential future for work may lie in working with policy-makers in using the AIF as a mechanism for improving the understanding of influence within the decision-making process. It would be interesting to investigate if the AIF could be employed in a purely applied setting in its current form or whether it would need to be amended to make it more usable for policy makers.

7.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Revisiting the guiding aim of this thesis, to investigate the role of MNCs in UK sustainable development policy, the discussion outlined here has demonstrated that, yes, MNCs do play a role in the decision-making process surrounding sustainable development, but what is particularly noteworthy is that the majority of the influence has occurred through tacit modes of influence. MNCs had significant influence in the production of the UK NSDS, whilst many thought that as a policy response the UK NSDS was not important and need not warrant any participation on their part. Two interesting points have been raised here; the first is that MNCs do not need to act to have influence and the second is that the UK NSDS is not considered a useful activity by what can be seen as the most powerful non-state actors, who are seen by others as being instrumental in achieving the aims set out in the Strategy. The first point raised is also interesting from a methodological perspective, demonstrating the need to acknowledge the role that discourse is playing in UK decision-making. It has been demonstrated within this thesis that MNCs have gained significant influence through the nearly universal adoption of a corporate-centric language

and the gift of a 'monopoly of legitimacy' given to MNCs by other actors in the process. These findings, and the appropriateness of the AIF have proven that the synthesis position proposed at the outset of this thesis was the correct way to frame this research.

This thesis has also highlighted that although on the surface sustainable development policy-making in the UK is a multi-stakeholder, transparent process, in reality this is questioned. Not only does tacit influence mean that participation in the process is not equating to influence, there is an observable shift back to informal, 'corridors of power' discussions, with the increase in transparency and stakeholder involvement achieving the exact opposite of its stated aim, with instead a displacement effect being evident. This fundamentally challenges the claims made by Government and also, in a more practical sense undermines the vast investment which is being ploughed into consultation around sustainable development, and indeed other Government policies.

So, MNCs are playing a significant role in UK sustainable development policy, but not through direct action, and it could be questioned if it is through any real fore-thought on their part. Due to comparatively little activity, indeed inactivity, sustainable development policy, particularly that of the UK NSDS, is in the control of MNCs and does not reflect the broad-based ownership it is perceived to have, and therefore can be viewed as being fundamentally biased. This is a situation which suits the New Labour regime and the MNCs as the idea of sustainable development, which was designed to increase environmental, economic and social equity, has been reduced to a concept which does not challenge the current political status quo.

References

- Adler, P.A. and Adler, P. (1994) Observational Techniques. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, p377-93, London, UK: Sage
- Adler, P.A. and Haas, P. (1992) Conclusions: Epistemic Communities, World Order and the Creation of a Reflective Research Programme, *International Organization*, 46,1, p 367-390
- Atkinson, P. and Coffey, A. (1997) Analysing Documentary Realities, In D. Silverman (ed.) *Qualitative Research*, London, UK: Sage, p45-62
- Ayres, R.U, van der Bergn J. and Gowdy, J.M. (1998) Viewpoint: Weak versus Strong Sustainability. *Tiribergen Institute Discussion Papers* No. 98 -103
- Bachrach, P. and Baratz, M. (1962) Two faces of power, *American Political Science Review*, 56: p1947-1953
- Bachrach, P. and Baratz, M. (1963) Decisions and Non-decisions: An Analytical Framework', *American Political Science Review*, 57: p641-651
- Bachrach, P. and Baratz, M. (1970) *Poverty and Power: Theory and Practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Beder, S. (2006) *Suiting Themselves. How Corporations Drive the Global Agenda*, London, UK: Earthscan
- Bernhagen, P. and Brauninger, T. (2005) Structural Power and Public Policy: A Signalling Model of Business Lobbying in Democratic Capitalism, *Political Studies*, 53, p43-64
- Bernstein, S. (2001) *The Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Bendell, J. and Kearins, K. (2005) The Political Bottom Line: the Emerging Dimension to Corporate Responsibility for Sustainable Development. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 14, p372-383
- Bevir, M. (2005) *New Labour. A Critique* London, UK: Routledge
- Bevir, M (2006) Democratic Governance: Systems and Radical Perspectives, *Public Administration Review*, May/June 2006 p426-436
- Bevir, M. and Rhodes, R. (2003) *Interpreting British Governance*. London, UK: Routledge

Boehmer-Christiansen, S. (1989) The Role of Science in the International Regulation of Pollution. In Andersen, S. And Osterns, W. (ed) *International Resource Management. The Role of Science and Politics*. London, UK: Belhaven Press, p143-168

Bordhag, C and Taliere, S (2006) Sustainable Developments Strategies: Tools for Policy coherence. *Natural Resources Forum*, 30, p136-145

Bullis, C. And Ie, F. (2007) Corporate Environmentalism, In May, S. Cheney, G. And Roper, J. (eds) (2007) *The Debate Over Corporate Social Responsibility* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p321-336

Burke, T. (1999) Sustainable Development - The Agenda, *Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Annual Report*, December 1999

Business Task Force for Sustainable Consumption and Production (2006) *Aims* www.sustainable-development.gov.uk, accessed 8th March 2008

Browne, J. (2002) The Role of MNCs in Economic and Social Development of Poor Countries. Leading Towards a Better World? *Corporate Environmental Strategy*. 9, 3, p217-225

Bruno, K. and Larliner, K. (2002) *earthsummit.biz. The Corporate Takeover of Sustainable Development*. Oakland, CA: FoodFirst Books

Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government*, London, UK: The Stationery Office

Cabinet Office (2004) *Guidelines on Consultation*, London, UK: The Stationery Office

Carpenter, C. (2001) Businesses, Green Groups and the Media: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Climate Change Debate, *International Affairs*, 77

Casagrande, E.J.R. and Welford, R. (1997) The Big Brothers: Transnational Corporations, Trade Organisations and Multilateral Financial Institutions, In Welford, R *Hijacking environmentalism: Corporate Response to Sustainable Development*, London, UK: Earthscan, p137 - 157

Cashore, B. (2002) Legitimacy and the Privatization of Environmental Governance: How Non-State Market-Driven (NSMD) Governance Systems Gain Rule-Making Authority. *Governance* 15, 4, p503-529

Caulkin, S. and Collins, J. (2003) *The Private Life of Public Affairs*, London, UK: Green Alliance

Cerny, P.(2000) Structuring the Political Arena: Public Goods, States and Governance in a Globalising World. In Palan, R. (ed) (2000) *Global Political Economy. Contemporary Theories*. London, UK: Routledge, p21- 36

Clegg, S.R. (1989) *Frameworks of Power* London, UK: Sage

- Cobb, R. and Elder, C. (1972) *Participation in American Politics. The Dynamics of Agenda-Building*. Boston, US: Allyn and Bacon Ltd.
- Connolly, J. and Smith, G. (1999) *Politics and the Environment. From Theory to Practice* London, UK: Routledge
- Cousins, M. and Hussain, A. (1984) *Michel Foucault, Theoretical Traditions in the Social Sciences* London, UK: MacMillan Education Ltd.
- Cowe, R. (1998) CBI attacks plan for energy tax. *Guardian*, 5 August. p6
- Cox, R.W. and Jacobsen, H.K. (1973) *The Anatomy of Influence. Decision-making in International Organisations*. New Haven, US: Yale University Press
- Coxall, B., Robins, L and Leach, R (2003) *Contemporary British Politics (Fourth Edition)* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave
- Crabtree, B.F. and Miller W.L. (1992) Primary Care Research: A Multi-Method Typology and Qualitative Road Map. In Crabtree, B.F and Miller W.L (eds) *Doing Qualitative Research* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage p457
- Crenson, M. (1971) *The Unpolitics of Air Pollution* London, UK and Baltimore, US: John Hopkins Press.
- Czempiel, E. and Rosenau, J.C. (1992) *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Dahl, R. (1961) *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, US and London, UK: Yale University Press
- Daly, H (1993) The perils of Free Trade, *Scientific American*, 269, p50 -57
- Daly, H (1995) On Wilfred Beckerman's Critique of Sustainable Development, *Environmental Values* 4 p49-55
- Daly, H. and Cobb, J.B. (1990) *For the Common Good*. London, UK: Greenprint
- Damania, R. (2002) Influence in Decline: Lobbying on Contracting Industries *Economics and Politics*, 14, 2, p209 - 223
- Darier, E, (ed) (1999) *Discourses of the Environment* Oxford, UK: Blackwell
- Denzin, N.K. (1989) *The Research Act (3rd Edition)* New Jersey, US: Prentice-Hall

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2005) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd Edition), London, UK: Sage

Department for Environment (1994) *Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy*. London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2003) *Achieving a Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK*, London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2004a) *Taking it on: Developing UK Sustainable Development Strategy Together. A Consultation Paper*. London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2004b) *Taking it on. List of Consultees*, www.sustainable-development.gov.uk accessed 11th November 2004

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2004c) *An Evaluation of the 2004 "Taking it on" Consultation on the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy*. Supplied by DEFRA

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2004d) *Taking it on: Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment*. Supplied by DEFRA.

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2005a) *Securing The Future. Delivering UK Sustainable Development. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy* London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (2005b) *One Future - Different Paths. The UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development* London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) *Opportunities for Change* London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) *A Better Quality of Life. A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom*, London, UK: The Stationery Office

Department for International Development (1999) *National Strategies for Sustainable Development, Key Sheet Issue 1*, August 1999, www.dfid.gov.uk, accessed 7th March 2003

DeSimone, L. And Popoff, F. (2000) *Eco-efficiency. The Business Link to Sustainable Development* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Dine, J. (2001) *Multinational Enterprises: International Codes and the Challenge of 'Sustainable Development'*, *Non-State Actors and International Law*, 1, p81-106

Dodds, F. and Strauss, M. (2004) *How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings*, London, UK: Earthscan

- Dowding, K. (2006) Three-Dimensional Power: A Discussion of Steven Lukes' Power: A Radical View. *Political Studies Review*: 4, p136 - 145
- Dreiling, M. (2000) The Class Embeddedness of Corporate Political Actions: Leadership of the NAFTA. *Social Problems*, 47(1), p21-48
- Drisko, J.W. (2000) Qualitative Data Analysis. It's Not Just Anything Goes! *Charleston, S.C: Society for Social Work and Research Annual Conference*. 30th January 2000
- Dryzek, J.S. (1997) *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dryzek, J.S., Hunold, C., Schlosbery, D., Downes, D. and Hernes, H. (2002) Environmental Transformation of the State: the USA, Norway, Germany and the UK, *Political Studies*, 50, p659-682
- Dunleavy, P. (1991) *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Dowdings, K.M. (1991) *Rational Choice and Political Power*, Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar
- Easton, D. (1953) *The Political System*, New York: Alfred A Knopf
- Easton, D. (1965) *A Framework for Political Analysis* New Jersey, US: Prentice-Hall
- Ecologist, The (2003) *Behind the Lies: Shell*. www.theecologist.org/pages/archive_detail.asp?content-id=372, accessed 13th August 2008
- Eden, S. (2000) Environmental Issues: Sustainable Progress? *Progress in Human Geography* 24, 1, p111-118
- Electoral Commission (2008) *Political Parties' Latest Donations and Borrowing Published*. <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/news-and-media/news-releases/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-donations/political-parties-latest-donations-and-borrowings-published>; accessed 1st September 2008
- Elkington, J. (1997) *Cannibals with Folks. The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*, Oxford, UK: Capstone Publishing
- Elliot, L. (1992) Non-governmental Organisations in International Environmental Politics: Practice and Theory. *BISA paper* University of Swansea, December 1992

Ellis, L. (2007) Who influences policy? Analysing actor influence on the UK sustainable development strategy, *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development*, 6, 1, p 36-52

European Council (2001) *A sustainable Europe for a better world: A European Union strategy for sustainable development*, http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0264en01.pdf, accessed 3rd March 2008

European Commission (2001) Sustainable Development in the European Commission. Cutting across all policy areas. http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/ec_activities/index_en.htm accessed 3rd August 2008

European Commission (2004) *National Sustainable Development Strategies in the European Union: A First Analysis by the European Commission*, http://europa.eu.int/comm./sustainable/docs/sustainable_development_strategies/pdf accessed 3rd August 2008

European Commission (2007a) *The EU Sustainable Development Strategy*, <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd> accessed 3rd August 2008

European Commission (2007b) *Stakeholders form our society. Mobilising actors and multiplying success*. http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/civil_society/index_en.htm accessed 3rd August 2008

ENDs (1999) Sustainable Development Strategy Docks Resources Efficiency Challenge *Ends Report*, May 1999, No. 292

ENDs (2006) Business Leaders Chosen for Consumption Task Force, *Ends Report*, March 2006

ENDs (2008) *Salaries and Careers survey 2007*, available at: <http://www.endsdirectory.com/index.cfm?action=articles.view&articleid=200801>, accessed 11th April 2004

Environment Agency (EA) (2008) *WEEE: Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment* <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/1745440/444663/1106248>; accessed 1st September 2008

Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) (2004) *Thirteenth Report. The Sustainable Development Strategy: Illusion or Reality?* HC: 624-1 Session 2003-2004. London, UK: Stationery Office

Eweje, G. (2007) Strategic Partnership between MNEs and Civil Society: the Post-WSSD Perspectives, *Sustainable Development*, 15, p15-27

Farnsworth, K. (2004) *Corporate Power and Social Policy in A Global Economy. British Welfare Under the Influence*. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press

- Fischer, F. (2003) *Reframing Public Policy. Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Fischer, F. and Forester, J. (1993) *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. Durham NC: Duke University Press
- Fischer, F. and Hajer, M. (1999) *Living with Nature. Environmental Politics as Cultural Discourse*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Flick, U. (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London, UK: Sage
- Forum for the Future (2000) *Annual Report* London, UK: Forum for the Future
- Foucault, M. (1972) *Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, UK: Routledge
- Foucault, M. (1980) Knowledge/Power. In Gordan, C. (ed) (1980) *Michel Foucault: Knowledge/Power: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Worcester, UK: Harvester
- Foucault, M. (1991) Governmentality. In Burchell, G Gordon, C and Miller, P (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago, US: University of Chicago.
- Frankel, C. (1998) *In Earth's Company. Business, Environment and the Challenge of Sustainability*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers
- Friedman, M. (1970) The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profit *New York Times Magazine*, Sept. 13 1970
- Friedrich, I (1937) *Constitutional Government and Democracy*, New York, US: Gipp Press
- Friends of the Earth Europe (2002) *After Johannesburg - Don't Let Big Business Rule the World!* Presented at the European Social Forum, 8th November 2002
- Friends of the Earth (2002) *It's a Wrap*. Available at: http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/corporates/news/earth_summit/4_september.html, accessed 11th April 2008
- Friends of the Earth (2003) *Big Business in Bournemouth*, London, UK: Friends of the Earth
- George, C. and Kirkpatrick, C. (2006) Assessing National Sustainable Development Strategies: Strengthening the links to Operational Policy. *Natural Resources Forum* 30, p146-156
- Ghazi, P. (1997) Climate Deal undermined by Sceptics *Guardian*, 9th March 1997

- Gibbs, L (1993) Foreward. In Hofichter, R. (ed) *Toxic Struggles Us*. Philadelphia, US: New Society ix-xi
- Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: Renewal of Social Democracy* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press
- Giddens, A. (2000) *The Third Way and Its Critics* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press
- Giddings, B. Hopwood, W, Brien, O (2002) Environment, Economy and Society. Fitting the together in Sustainable Development. *Sustainable Development* 10, 4, p187 -196
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago, US: Aldiul
- Grant, W. (1989) *Pressure Groups, Politics and Democracy in Britain*, London, UK: Philip Allan
- Green Alliance (2008) *Mission* available at <http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/grea1.aspx?id=32>, accessed 8th April 2008.
- Gouldson, A and Murphy, J (1998) *Regulatory Realities: The Implementation and Impact of Industrial Environmental Regulation* London, UK: Earthscan
- Gouldson, A. and Beddington, J. (2007) Corporations and the Governance of Environmental Risk. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 25,p4 -20
- Goverde, H. Lery, P and Letner H (eds)(2000) *Power in Contemporary Politics: theories, Practices, Globalisation*. London, UK: Sage
- Haas, P. (1992) Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination, *International*, 46, 1, p1-35
- Haas, P., Keohane, R. And Levy, M (eds) (1993) *Institutions for the Earth: Sources of Effective International Environmental Protection* Cambridge MA: MIT Press
- Habermas, J (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action* translated by T McCarthy, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press
- Hajer, M.A. (1995) *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernisation and the Policy Process*: Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Hajer, M.A. and Wagenaar, H. (2003) *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governace in the Network Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Hajer, M. (2005) Setting the Stage. A Dramaturgy of Policy Deliberation, *Administration & Society* 36, p624 - 647
- Hall, S. (1992) The West and The Rest, In Hall S and Gieben B (eds) (1992) *Formations of Modernity*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

- Hall, S. (2001) Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse. In Wetherall, M., Taylor, S. And Yates, S.J (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*. London, UK: Sage p72-81
- Hall, S. (2004) Foucault and Discourse, In Seale C. (2004) *Social Research Methods*, London, UK: Routledge
- Hay, C. (2002) Divided by a Common Language, in C. Hay (2002) *Political Analysis*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave
- Hay, C. and Marsh, D. (2000) Introduction: Demystifying Globalisation, In Hay, C. And Marsh, d. (eds) (2000) *Demystifying Globalisation*, Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan
- Health and Safety Executive (dna) *Regulatory Impact Assessment*, [www,hse.gov.uk/ria](http://www.hse.gov.uk/ria), accessed 8th August 2008
- Helm, D. (2006) *Who is Dieter Helm?* www.dieterhelm.co.uk, assessed 11th March 2008
- Henriques, A. (2007) *Corporate Truth. The Limits of Transparency* London, UK: Earthscan
- Herman, E.S. and Chomsky, N. (1998) *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Vintage
- Hill, M. (2005) *The Public Policy Process* (4th ed.) Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman
- Hill, M. and Hupe, P (2006) Analysing Policy Processes as Multiple Governance: Accountability in Social Policy, *Policy and Politics*, 34, 3, p557-73
- Hindess, B. (2006) Bringing States Back In, *Political Studies Review*, 4, p115 - 123
- Hogwood, B.W. and Gunn, L.A. (1984) *Policy Analysis in the Real World*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Hopwood, B. Mellor, M and O'Brien, G (2005) Sustainable Development: Mapping Different Approaches, *Sustainable Development*, 13 p38-52
- Howarth D., Norval, A. and Stavrakakis, Y. (2000) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis. Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Huber, J. (1982) *The Lost innocence of Ecology. New Technologies and Superindustrial Development*. Frankfurt, Germany: Fisher Publishing
- Huber, J. (1985) *The Rainbow Society: Ecology and Social Policy*. Frankfurt, Germany: Fisher Publishing
- Huber, J. (1991) Towards Industrial Ecology: Sustainable Development as a Concept of Ecological Modernisation. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 2: p269-285

- International Institute for Sustainable Development (1997) *Sustainable Development Timeline*, www.iisd.org/rio+5/timeline/sdtimeline.htm, accessed 8th August 2008
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (2003a) UN Launches Commission on the Private Sector and Development. *IISD Linkages* www.iisd.ca/media/sustainabledevel2003.htm, accessed 10th July 2008
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (2003b) International Labour Organisation Officially Embraces Sustainable Development, *IISD Linkages* www.iisd.ca/media/sustainabledevel2003.htm, accessed 10th July 2008
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (2005) Thirteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. *Earth Negotiation Bulletin* Vol 1.
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (2007) Summary of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development 30th April - 11th May 2007, *Earth Negotiation Bulletin* Vo. 5 No. 254
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (1980) *World Conservation Strategy. Caring for the Earth*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN
- Jamison, A. (2001) *The Making of Green Knowledge: Environmental Politics and Cultural Transformation*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Janickle, M (1992) Conditions for Environmental Policy Success: An International Comparison' In Jachtenfuchs, M and Strubel, M (ed) *Environmental Policy in Europe: Assessment, Challenges and Perspectives*, p26-39
- Jenkins W.I. (1978) *Policy Analysis: A Political and Organisational Perspective*, London, UK: Martin Robertson
- Jones, B. (2006) Trying harder: Developing a new sustainable strategy for the UK, *Natural Resources Forum*, 30, p124-135
- Jordan, A. (2002) Efficient Hardware and Light Green Software: Environmental Policy Integration in the UK. In Lenshaw, A. (2002) *Environmental Policy Integration: Greening Sectoral Policies in Europe*. London, UK: Earthscan p35-56
- Keffer, J. and Hill, R (1997) An Ethical Approach to Lobbying Activities of Business in the United States, *Journal of Business Ethic*, 16: p1371-1379
- Kingdom, J (1994) *Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press
- Klein, N (2001) *No Logo* London, UK: Flamingo
- Korten, D. (1992) Sustainable Development, *World Policy Journal* 9 (1) p157 - 190

- Korten, D. (1995) *When Corporations Rule the World* London, UK: Earthscan
- Knill, C and Lehmkuhl, D. (2002) Private Actors and the State: Internationalization and Changing Patterns of Governance. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions*, 15, p41-63
- KPMG (2005) *International Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2005*. London, UK: KPMG
- Kripps, H. (1990) Power and Resistance. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 20(2) p170-182
- Lafferty, W.M, Knudsen, J. and Larsen, M. (2007) Pursuing Sustainable Development in Norway: the Challenge of Living Up To Brundtland at Home. *European Environment* 17, p177-188
- Ledgerwood, C. and Broadhurst, A (2000) *Environment, Ethics and the Corporation*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan
- Lindblom, C.E. (1977) *Politics and Markets: The Worlds Political Economic Systems* New York: Basic Books
- Lindblom, C.E. and Woodhouse, E.J. (1993) *The Policy-making Process*, 3rd Edition, New Jersey: Prentice-Hill.
- Lowe, P. and Goyder, J. (1983) *Environmental Groups in Politics*, London, UK: Allen and Unwin
- Lowe, P. and Ward, S. (1998) British Environmental Politics and Europe. *UK Ceed Bulletin*, 52 Winter 97.98. p7-9
- Lowndes, V. (2002) Intuitionism. In Marsh, D and Stoker, G *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Second Edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: A Radical View*. London, UK: Macmillan
- Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: A Radical View* (2nd ed.) Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- Lynch, M. (1991) Laboratory Space and the Technological Complex: An Investigation of Topical Contextures *Science in Context* 4(1) p51-78
- Lynn, L. E. Jr (1981) *Managing the Public's Business*, New York: Free Press
- Lynn, L.E. Jr (1991) *Managing Public Policy*, Boston, MA: Little Brown

- Machan, D. (1999) Power Broker, *Forbes* 15th Nov. www.forbes.com/global/1999/0223108a.html, accessed 21st August 2008
- Marsh, D. and Furlong, P. (2002) A Skin Not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science, 17-41 In Marsh, D. And Stoker, G. (2002) *Theory and Method in Political Science*, 2nd Ed. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- Marsh, D. and Rhodes, R.A.W. (eds) (1992) *Policy Networks in British Government*, Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press
- Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London, UK: Sage
- Mayhew, N. (1997) Fading to Grey: The Use and Abuse of Corporate Executive Representative Power. In Welford, R. (1997) *Hijacking Environmentalism: Corporate Responses to Sustainable Development*. London, UK: Earthscan p63-99
- McRae, S. (2005) *Hidden Voices. The CBI, Corporate Lobbying and Sustainability. A Friends of the Earth Report*. London, UK: Friends of the Earth
- McCloskey, M (1999) The Emperor has no clothes. The Conundrum of Sustainable Development, *Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum*, 9, p153-159
- Meadows, D. Meadows, D. Randers, J. And Behrens III, W. (1972) *The Limits to Growth* Potomos Associate and London: Pan Books
- Miles, M.B and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage
- Mills, S. (2003) *Michel Foucault* London, UK: Routledge
- Milroy, L. (1980) *Language and Social Networks* Oxford, UK: Blackwells
- Mol, A. and Spaargaren, G (1993) Environment, Modernity and the Risk Society: The Apocalyptic Horizon of Environmental Reform. *International Sociology* 8, 4, p431 - 459
- Mol, A. and Sonnenfeld, D. (2000) Ecological Modernisation Around the World: An Introduction, *Environmental Politics* 9(1), p3 - 16
- Monbiot, G. (2001) *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain* London, UK: Pan Books
- Moon, J. (2002) The Social Responsibility of Business and New Governance, *Government and Opposition* 37(3) p385-408
- Moon, J. (2007) The Contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility to Sustainable Development, *Sustainable Development*, 15, p296-306
- Munnik, V. and Wilson, J. (2002) *The World Comes to One Country: An Insiders History of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*. Johannesburg, SA: Heinrich Book Foundation

Newell, P. (2000) *Climate for Change: Non-state Actors and the Global Politics of the Greenhouse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Naess, A. (1986) The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects. *Philosophical Inquiry*. Vol VIII, no 1-2, p10-31

Niestroy, I (2005) *Sustaining Sustainability*, EEAC Series Background Study No. 2

OECD (2000) *The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, Revision 2000*. Paris: OECD

OECD (2002) *Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book*, London, UK: Earthscan

OECD DAC (2001) *The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development: Guidance for Developing Cooperation*, Development Cooperation Committee, OECD, www.sourceOECD.org

Osherenko, G and Young, O (1993) The Formation of International Regimes: Hypotheses and Cases. In Young, O. and Osherenko G (eds) (1993) *Polar Politics: Creating International Environmental Regimes*, New York, US: Cornell University Press p1-21

Ostrom, E. (1999) 'Institutional Rational Choice: An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework', in P.A. Sabatier (ed) (1999) *Theories of the Policy Process*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press p35-71

OXERA (2006) *Who we are*. <http://www.oxera.com/main.aspx?id=92>, accessed 13th August 2008

Parkin,S. (2000) Sustainable development: The concept and the practical challenge *Civil Engineering* 136(2), p3-8

Parry, G. and Morriss, P. (1974) When is a decision no a decision, in Crew, I. (ed) *British Political Sociology Yearbook*, vol.1. London, UK: Croom Helm

Parsons, W. (1995) *Public Policy. An introduction to the theory and practice of policy analysis* Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar

Patton, P (1979) Of Power and Prisons, In Meaghan, M. and Patton, P (eds) (1979) *Michel Foucault. Power, Truth and Strategy*. Sydney, Australia: Feral.

Pearce, D. Markandya, A. and Barber, E.B. (1989) *Blueprint for a Green Economy*. London, UK: Earthscan

Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, London, UK: Sage

- Prakash, A. (2002) Beyond Seattle: Globalisation, the Non-market Environment and Corporate Strategy. *Review of International Political Economy* 9(3): p513-537
- Redclift, M.(1987) *Sustainable Development: Exploring the Contradictions*, London, UK: Methuen
- Rees, W. (1998) Understanding Sustainable Development. In Hamm, B. And Muttagi P (eds) (1998) *Sustainable Development and the Future of Cities* London, UK: Intermediate Technology p19-42
- Rikhardsson, P. and Welford, R. (1997) Clouding the Crisis: the Construction of Corporate Environmental Management, in Welford, R. (1997) *Hijacking Environmentalism. Corporate Responses to Sustainable Development* London, UK: Earthscan p40- 63
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997) *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks Reflexivity and Accountability*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press
- Roseland, M. (1998) *Towards Sustainable Communities: Resources for Citizens and their Governments*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society.
- Rowlands, I. (2000) Beauty and the Beast? BP's and Exxon's Position on Global Climate Change. *Environment and Planning C*, 18(3) p339-354
- Rutherford, P. (2003) 'Talking the Talk': Business Discourse at the World Summit on Sustainable Development' *Environmental Politics* 2(2), p145-150
- Runhaar, H., Dieperink, C. and Driessen, P. (2005) Policy analysis for sustainable development. Complexities and methodological responses. *Workshop on Complexity and Policy Analysis*, Cork, Ireland 22 - 24 June 2005
- Russel, D. (2007) The United Kingdom's Sustainable Development Strategies: Leading the Way or Flattering to Deceive? *European Environment* 17, p189-200
- Robbins, P. T. (2001) *Greening the Corporations: Management Strategy and the Environment*, London, UK: Earthscan
- Roberts, P. (2006) Evaluating Regional Sustainable Development: Approaches, Methods and the Politics of Analysis. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 49, 4, p515 - 532
- Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research* (2nd Edition) Oxford, UK: Blackwell
- Rouse, J. (1994) Power/Knowledge. In Gutting, G. (ed) (1994) *Cambridge Companion to Foucault. Truth and Power*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press p92 - 115
- Rosen, M.A. (1996) A Worldwide Perspective on Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development, *International Journal of Energy Research* 22, p1305-1321

- Ross, A. (2005) The UK Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development in Government: A Case Study in Joined-up Working. *Journal of Environmental Law* 17, p27-49
- Rydin, Y. (2003) *Conflict, Consensus, and Rationality in Environmental Planning. An Institutional Discourse Approach*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Sabatier, P.A. and Jenkins-Smith, H.L. (1993) *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press
- Sadler, D.R. (1981) Intuitive Data processing as a Potential Source of Bias in Education Evaluation. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 3, p25-31
- Sagawa, S. and Segal, E. (2000) Common Interest, Common Good: Creating Value Through Business and Social Sector Partnerships. *California Management Review*, 42(2): p105- 122
- Saunders, P. (1979) *Urban Politics* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin
- Schattschneider, E. (1960) *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist View of Democracy in America*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Schmidheiny, S. (1992) *Changing Course: A Global Business Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Schmidt, V.A. (2002) *The Future of European Capitalism* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Seldon, A. (2001) (ed) *The Blair Effect. The Blair Government 1997-2001*. London, UK: Little Brown
- Silveria, M. (2006) Introduction National sustainable development strategies: Moving from theory to practice, *Natural Resources Forum*, 30, p86-89
- Silverman, D. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research. A Practical Handbook*. London, UK: Sage
- Simonis, U. (1989) Ecological Modernisation of Industrial Society, Three Strategic Elements, *International Social Science Journal*. 121, p347-361
- Sinclair, A.J. (2002) Public Consultation for Sustainable Development Policy Initiatives: Manitoba Approaches. *Policy Studies Journal* 30, 4, p423-443
- Skelcher, C. (1998) *The Appointed State* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press
- Smith, M.J. (1995) *Pressure Politics* Manchester, UK: Baseline Books

Starkey, R. and Welford, R. (2001) *The Earthscan reader in Business and Sustainable Development*, London, UK: Earthscan

Stern, N. (2006) *The Economics of Climate Change. The Stern Review*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Steurer, R. and Martinuzzi, A (2005) Towards a new pattern of strategy formation in the public sector: first experiences with national strategies for sustainable development in Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 23, p455-472

Steurer, R. (2007) From Government Strategies to Strategic Public Management: an Exploratory Outlook on the Pursuit of Cross-Sectoral Policy Integration, *European Environment*, 17, p201-214.

SustainAbility (dna) The Janus Programme available at : <http://www.sustainability.com/insight/scalingup.asp>, accessed 8th April 2008

SustainAbility and WWF (2001) *Politics and Persuasion. Corporate Influence and Sustainable Development Policy*, London, UK: SustainAbility

SustainAbility and WWF (2005) *Influencing Power: Reviewing the Conduct and Content of Corporate Lobbying*, London, UK: SustainAbility

SustainAbility and WWF (2007) *Coming in from the Cold: Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility*, London, UK: SustainAbility

Sustainable Development Commission (2004) *Shows Promise. But Must Try Harder*, London, UK: SDC

Swanson, D, Pinter, L, Bregha, F, Volkery, A and Jacob, K. (2004) *Sustainable Development: Challenges, Approaches and Innovation in Strategies and Coordinated Action*. International Institute for Sustainable Development and Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit: Winnipeg

Thomas, C. (2000) *Global Governance, Development and Human Security. The Challenge of Poverty and Inequality* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Tils, R. (2007) The German Sustainable Development Strategy: Facing Policy, Management and Political Strategy Assessment, *European Environment* 17, p164-176

Timberlake, L. (2002) (on behalf of WBCSD Executive Committee) The Business Case for Sustainable Development: Making a Difference towards the Earth Summit 2002 and Beyond. *Corporate Environmental Strategy* 9(3) p226-235

Turner, Kerry R. (1992) Speculations on Weak and Strong Sustainability. *CSERGE Working Paper GEC 92-26*

- UK Government (2004) *Corporate Responsibility as a Business Response*, www.sustainable-development.gov.uk, accessed 10th March 2008
- UK Government (2006) *Sustainable Development Task Force*, www.sustainable-development.gov.uk, accessed 10th March 2006
- UK Government (2008a) *Ministers and Committees*, www.sustainable-development.gov.uk, accessed 10th March 2008
- UK Government (2008b) *What Government is Doing*, www.sustainable-development.gov.uk accessed 10th March 2008
- United Nations (2002) *Johannesburg Summit: Key Outcomes of the Summit*, www.un.org, accessed 14th December 2002
- United Nations (2006) *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, 20 February 2006*, www.unfccc.int, accessed 20th January 2008
- UN DESA (2002) *Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium*, background paper 13, www.johannesburgsummit.org
- UN DESA (2008) *CSD-16 Review Session*, www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm, accessed 16th June 2008
- UNED-UK Committee (2003) *Where Next for the UK on Sustainable Development? – Final Report* www-sd-commission.gov.uk accessed 2nd April 2003
- UNED Forum (2003) *UNED-UK Committee* available at www.unedforum, accessed 4th September 2003
- UN ESCO (dna) *Education for Sustainable Development. UN Decade 2005-2014*, www.unesco.org, accessed 10th March 2008
- Van Dijk, T. (1996) *Discourse Studies: A Multi-Discipline Introduction*. London, UK: Sage
- Voisey, H. and O’Riordan, T. (1998) *Sustainable Development: the UK National Approach*. In *The Transition to Sustainability: the Politics of Agenda 21 in Europe*. O’Riordan T. and Voisey H. (eds). London UK; Earthscan: p156-173
- Vogel, D. (1997) *Trading Up: Consumers and Environmental Regulation in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- von Frantzus, I. (2004) *World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002. A Critical Analysis and Assessment of Outcomes*. *Environmental Politics*, 13:2, p467-473

Wade, M. (2005) Good Company Citizenship. In (Petschow, U. Rosenau, j, and von Weizsacker, E. (eds) (2005) *Governance and Sustainability: New Challenges for States, Companies and Societies*. Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf p186 - 199

Weale, A. (1992) *The New Politics of Pollution*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press

Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates S.J. (2001) *Discourse Theory and Practice. A Reader*. London, UK: Sage

Welford, R (1997) *Hijacking Environmentalism: Corporate Response to Sustainable Development*, London, UK: Earthscan

Wheeler, D. (2001) Racing to the Bottom. Foreign Investment and Air Pollution in Developing Countries. *Journal of Environment and Development* 10, 3, p225-245

Williamson, P. (1989) *Corporatism in Perspective*. London, UK: Sage

Wilson, G. K. (2003) *Business and Politics. A Comparative Introduction*, 3rd Edition, London, UK: Palgrave.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

World Trade Organisation (dna) The GATT Years from Havana to Marrakech. www.wto.org, accessed 10th March 2008

Young, O (1989) Science and Social Institutions: Lessons for International Resources Regimes. In Andersen, S. and Ostreng, W. (eds) *International Resource Management: The Role Science and Politics*. New York and London: Belhaven Press p7 -25

Zadek, S. (2007) *The Civil Corporation (2nd ed.)* London, UK: Earthscan

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Basic details

- Provide an introduction of myself and give a brief overview of the research. Explain the focus is on sustainable development, but can draw from other experiences too.
- What is your current position within your organisation?, please provide a brief description
- What is your professional background?

The following questions are used as pointers and to ensure all elements are discussed but the interview is completed in an unstructured manner.

- In what context are you involved with UK Government?
- Do you have on-going relationships with Government?
- Do you have an ad-hoc relationship with Government?
- Is sustainable development policy important to you?
- Do you get involved in Government policy-making relating to sustainable development?
- In what ways are you involved?
- Please could you describe a situation where you have been involved in policy-making
 - What actors were involved?
 - What are the different approaches used by the different actors
 - What do you think your influence has been?

- How do you think you have influenced the decision-making?
- Who else was involved in the process?
- Which actor/organisation has the most influence?
- How do you think other actors see you?
- If the discussion includes or excludes other actors does this change anything?
- Do you work in coalition/conjunction with other groups?
 - Do they work with Government on your behalf?
- In what context are you involved with European or international decision-making?
- Do you have any links with international interest groups?
- Is there anyone else, in your organisation, or in other organisations that you think I should speak to?

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview with: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Organisation: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Position: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Date: 30/3/05

Interview type: Face-to-face

LAE - gave a brief introduction to research and overall PhD. Backlash to business having too much power - no systemic research to look at this. Emphasis on policy, not what businesses are doing internally. So basically looking at the way actors have influence in the policy-making process - direct and tacit. Interviewing as many people as possible - all actors, to get a perspective of what they think - no quantifying.

LAE - can you tell me more about your role.

BJ -head of sustainable development unit - which is in DEFRA, but a cross govt. unit which acts as a lead and coordinator and developer of generic policy frameworks on s.d. Emphasis on generic, because what we don't do is develop specific policy designed to advance s.d., so we don't do c.c. policy or energy efficiency policy. What we do if you like is provide the intellectual framework which is part of the strategy, and guidance, we help people to interpret the framework up to a point. And we make sure that the institutional architecture is fit for delivering it. So in other words we look at: What are the barriers? Why isn't this happening? What can we do to change that? What can we do to get the institutions right, get the right incentives in place, get the right tools and information out there to help people do it? So it's a sort of setting the intellectual, conceptual framework and then doing some enabling work. To make sure that people are able to take that framework and put it into practice, but we don't put it into practice ourselves.

LAE – so you say it's cross-cutting between different departments. So are you just a unit that sits on your own, and you liaise?

BJ – we are in DEFRA and we are in a kind of management structure within DEFRA but DEFRA is the lead on SD within govt. but we expect every department to make a contribution to it. It's a bit like the Home Office is a lead on race equality but they would expect every department policy to support race equality, so it's a bit like that. So our remit is across govt. but we do it from the point of view, from a home base in DEFRA. Which provides us with the department's institutions and ministers as a platform to go out and do this. So cross-cutting units are bedded out in departments like we are, and some are in the centre like the strategy unit. And there are pros and cons, and people do periodically say that the SDU should be part of the centre of govt. and whether that means that strategy unit, or no.10 or something like that, or the cabinet office. And there are pros and cons; from my point of view it is more about what we do rather than the position from which we do it.

LAE – I would imagine it's a bit of a much of a muchness to a certain point.

BJ wherever you are there are relationships you have to make work, and it's all about making them work properly.

LAE – in terms of you as a unit, rather than talking specifically about the strategy for the moment. How do you interact with business, what's the process?

BJ – Well, indirectly I'd say. In the first place, as I described, we don't do s.d. policy for people; we want people to do it themselves. So according to that model we would want the DTi to take up the baton of sustainability in business and for them to be the main people who engage business, and after all they know them better; they are their client group. They have a lot of the levers at their disposal, whereas DEFRA doesn't by and large. And they, if they don't support it, they could be a barrier to us getting the message through. So those are the reasons why we want them to do it. So our interaction primarily tends to be with DTI. And through them, using them with business. But there are other

ways that we can interact which don't have to be through DTi e.g. we have, and you should probably speak to them, a division called Environment Business and Consumers, who work closely with DTi but which nevertheless have their own remit which is around environmental technologies, shifting consumer behaviour and getting business to adopt more environmentally friendly means of production, processing, marketing, all of that. Which is a big programme of work which DEFRA leads.

LAE – and that'd DEFRA, not SDU?

BJ – That is elsewhere in DEFRA .

LAE – Ok

BJ – we also can obviously deploy our ministers to engage business through speaking at business events and having contacts with business leaders, and Mrs Beckett has recently set-up, Terence can tell you more about this, but we used to have an advisory committee on business and the environment, and that has been closed, but its successor bodies enable ministers to have direct contact with businessmen. Whereas DEFRA officials don't have that direct contact, as there is not much in DEFRA to talk about. When we do meet them it is usually about regulation, which is always a good starting point for a discussion. Because we are a heavily regulated department. And there is a whole set of cultural issues about that. If you want to engage with business on a positive agenda and your main history of interaction with them has been regulatory then that's quite difficult to pull off. So there are ways in which we engage directly with business but we don't want to usurp the DTi role and indeed we want DTi to champion sustainability with their client group. That's not very easy to achieve because Dti, we find, have an increasingly narrow view focused on competitiveness, and in the last spending round their money was hacked back a lot. It just made them even more focused on a narrow agenda rather than prepared to embrace a wider one. So we find that quite difficult at the moment.

APPENDIX III

DATA HANDLING INCLUDING EXAMPLE OF NOTATION - CODING

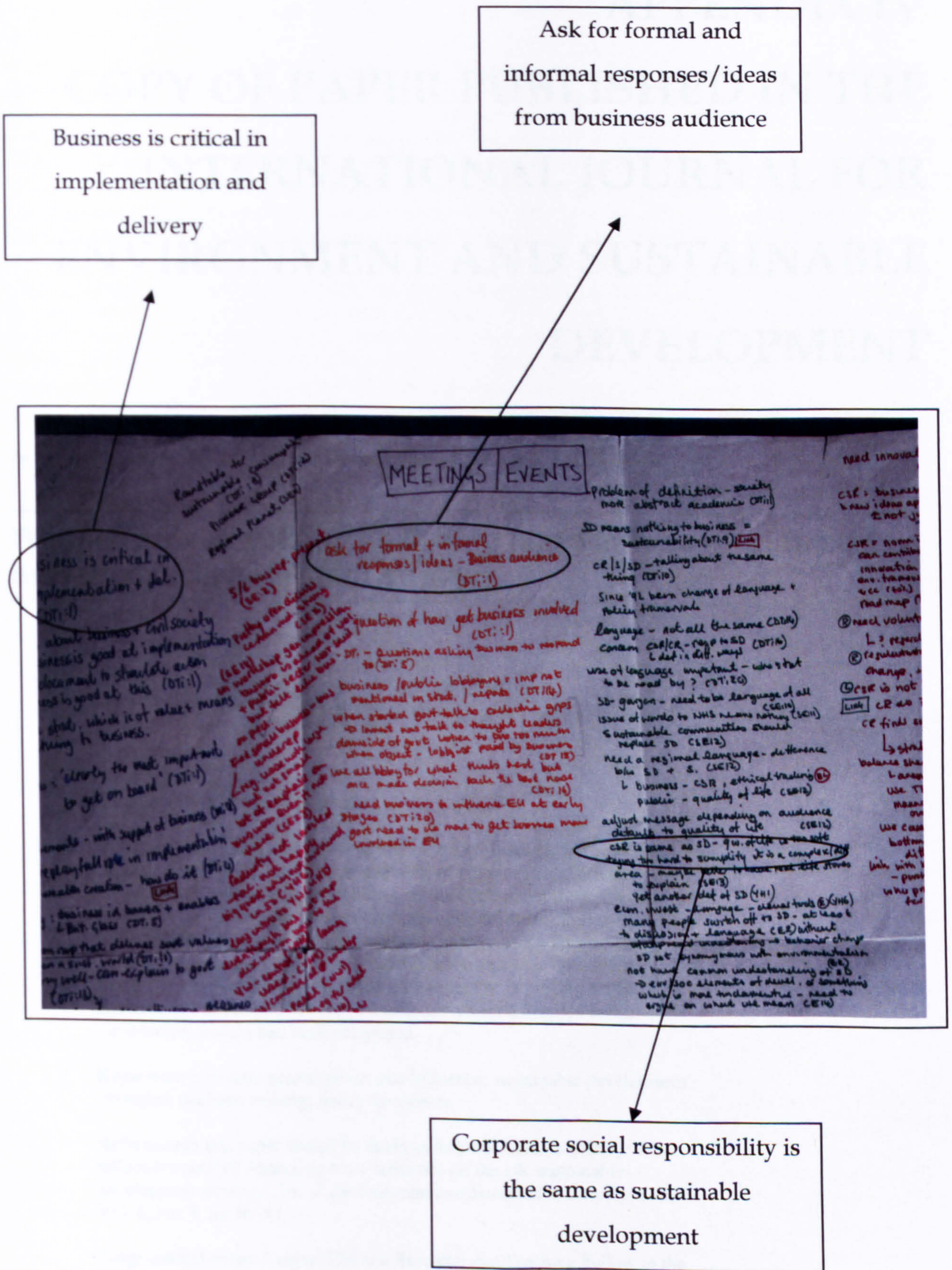
The interview transcripts, meeting notes and documents were reviewed with the research questions and objectives in mind, using Miles and Huberman's (1994) and Silverman's (2000) approaches for handling data as guides (As outlined in Chapter Four). A list of emerging themes were developed, this was then narrowed to seven themes (outlined in Table III) which all occurred within the different data sets. Each theme was assigned a colour, using these colours quotes responding to these themes were taken from each data set, as shown in the Figure III.

Figure III is a photographic snapshot of the data coding and notation process, this process was completed for the three data sets. Each quote was given a code which referred to its origin, i.e. meeting location, interview or document, along with a page number from which it was taken, the page number pointed the researcher to the data's origin and date, as outlined in Table III.

Table III: Summary of data analysis

Theme	Example Quote	Coding	Notation
Business knows best	"Involving business is the answer to the question"	Meeting: YH, 5	Regional Event: Yorkshire and the Humber: 1 st July 2004
Language is management speak	"The language is very much; there is a market solution....."	Interview: 20, 4	Interview: Trade Union: 7 th November 2005
Definition, definition no action	"Problem of definition, society is too abstract and academic"	Meeting: DTi, 9	Regional Event: DTi: 13 th May 2004
Stakeholders are being marginalised	"If the process becomes too open and transparent this often leads to more back room talking"	Interivew 5: 10	Interview: Government official; 30 th May 2005
The Strategy is not considered an important policy	"Business response is better if the discussion is more focused on a specific issue rather than the broad nature of the SD strategy"	Interview 2:2	Interview: Regional Government: 30 th July 2004
Regulation love/hate stance	"An overly prescriptive approach to SD will reduce choice and innovation....."	Written:CBI, 5	Written Response: CBI: p5, dna
Dual pressure	"...there is a mixed position, I think the days of us all standing square behind a retail consortium or trade body are going..."	Interview: 7, 6	Interview: MNC: 25 th August 2005

Figure III: Example of the colour coding and notation of the research data.



APPENDIX IV

COPY OF PAPER PUBLISHED IN THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Int. J. Environment and Sustainable Development, Vol. 6, No. 1, 200736-52

Who influences policy? Analysing actor influence on the UK sustainable development strategy

Louise Ellis

Sustainability Research Institute,
School of Earth and Environment,
University of Leeds,
Leeds LS2 9JT, UK
E-mail: louise@env.leeds.ac.uk

Abstract: Sustainable development is a multiactor concept, but who really has influence in the policy arena? A framework of influence has been devised to aid the identification and understanding of such influence, incorporating theories of power and discourse. This framework has been applied to the review of the UK sustainable development strategy, using the qualitative methods of observation, interview and discourse analysis. Through the use of the framework it is demonstrated that tacit influence is playing a significant role in policy development even in a situation where a detailed formal consultation process had been completed.

Keywords: non-state actors; power and influence; sustainable development strategies; decision making; policy formation.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Ellis, L. (2007) 'Who influences policy? Analysing actor influence on the UK sustainable development strategy', *Int. J. Environment and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp.36–52.

Biographical notes: Louise Ellis is a Research and Teaching Fellow in the Sustainability Research Institute (SRI) at the University of Leeds. Louise's research investigates the role and power of non-state actors within the decision-making process surrounding sustainable development. She also has research interests in corporate social responsibility and governance. Prior to joining SRI Louise was an environmental and corporate sustainability consultant with Deloitte and Mott Macdonald.

1 Introduction

Different actors have influenced the development of the UK national sustainable development strategy. A framework of influence has been devised to aid the identification and understanding of such influence, with particular reference to business. The theoretical basis of the framework has been informed by the debate on the dimensions of power (Lukes, 1974, 2005), pressure politics, government/business relations and the structural approach of epistemic communities all in conjunction with the use of discourse analysis. The completed framework allows for a more robust understanding of the policy decision-making process. It provides non-state actors with a tool to assess theirs and others strategies, it allows policymakers to better understand the activities of non-state actors within the process and provides analysts with a structured method to assess the true role of non-state actors, particularly MNCs in sustainable development policy. The data from the UK case study is derived from; interviews with relevant personnel in government, business and other non-state actors; non-participant observation at meetings and review of documents, produced by both government and consultees. This paper provides an overview of the framework and its development, reviews the consultation process surrounding the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy and finally evaluates the influences at play in this policy decision-making process through the use of the framework of influence.

2 A framework of influence

Before evaluating the specific example of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy a brief discussion of the framework of influence is given. The framework of influence has been developed to systemically view the role of different actors in the UK sustainable development policy arena. Due to its focus on both influence and actors, the framework is referred to as the Actor Influence Framework (AIF). The AIF serves as a lens through which the activities of the actors participating in the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy decision-making process and the formulation of the new strategy '*Securing the future*' can be assessed. The policy decision-making process is dynamic and fluid, particularly in an interdisciplinary area such as sustainable development and exists within a complex governance structure; therefore it is vital for the AIF to reflect such an environment. The AIF allows for the overall role of different actors within national sustainable development policy to be broken down into the individual actions, from this point any interrelationships between actions and actors can be assessed. Subsequently, the AIF provides a mechanism to identify the affecting and resulting influence of such actions. This is an important element of AIF as influence can be noted throughout the policy process, this is referred to as intermediate influence and not just at the point of final policy outcome. In a broader sense the AIF allows for the evaluation of differential access which may occur within the policy setting.

The framework incorporates the works of Lukes (1974, 2005), Dahl (1961) and Bachrach and Baratz (1970) relating to the dimensions of power, along with the integration of discourse analysis, specifically addressing the question of discursive formation (see Cousins and Hussain, 1984). Literature relating to pressure politics, government/business relationship and epistemic communities has also been considered. The work of Newell (2000) addressing the involvement of non-state actors in the global politics of climate change has also been drawn upon both in theoretical and methodological terms. Newell's work has been expanded upon through the integration of discourse analysis. The theoretical development of the AIF demonstrates the key to the framework; tacit and direct influence are both incorporated.

In this context the term discourse refers to an overarching set of language and practices which are evident within documents, meetings and interviews. The use of discourse is important for three reasons. Firstly, it allows for the intrinsic link between power/knowledge and discourse (see Foucault, 1972, 1980), employing discourse as a system of representation rather than a purely linguistic review. Secondly, from a decision-making perspective it allows for more understanding of the position of the different actors as, to a certain extent, it provides a lens to view the underlying assumptions of an actor. Finally, discourse enables an understanding of the key themes being promoted and considered during the policy decision-making process.

2.1 *The actor influence framework*

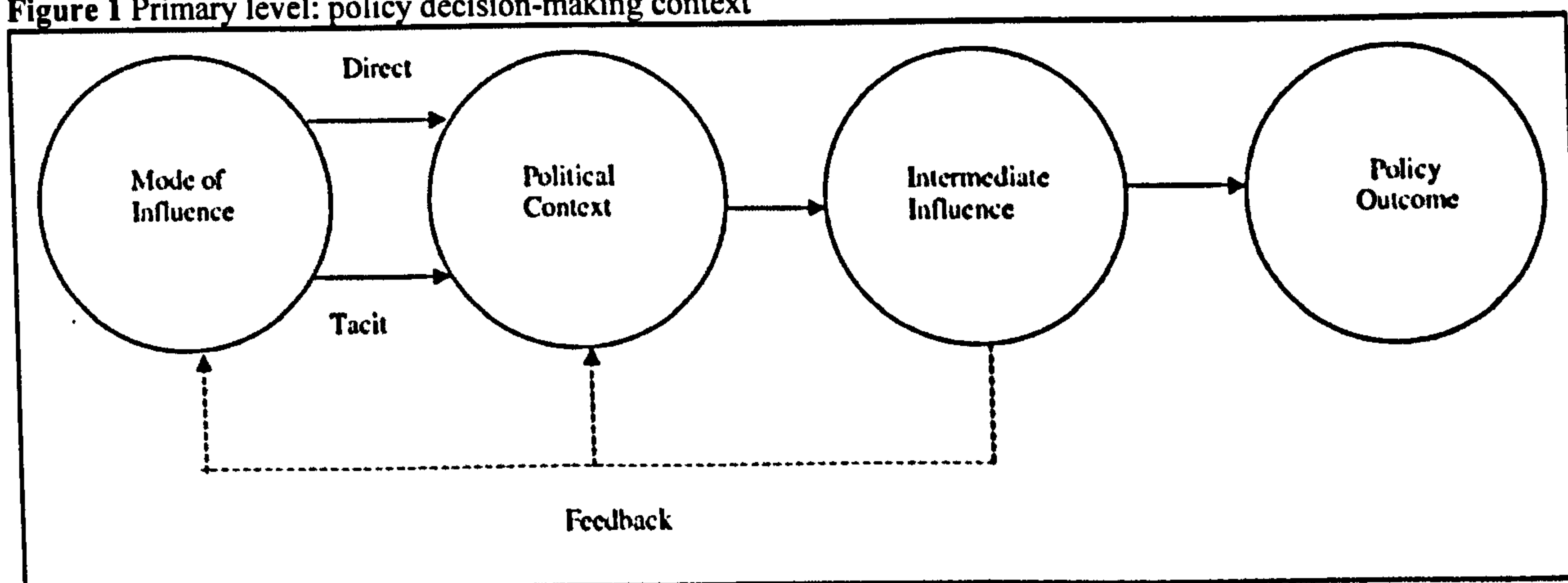
The AIF is stratified along three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary level is the policy decision-making context; the secondary level expands the notion of mode and intermediate influence and

the tertiary level details the complex national interrelationships. The complexity of detail increases with each level. Stratification enables the framework to include the detail of specific decision making and relates this to the wider governance structure in which sustainable development is located. The three levels of AIF are outlined below.

2.1.1 The primary level

The *primary level* represents the policy making context, it is divided into four elements (see Figure 1); the mode of influence, political context and intermediate influence. The elements can interact and feedback a number of times before a policy outcome is reached. The policy outcome represents the completion of the decision-making process, this is often not a definitive and point. In terms of the national sustainable development strategy there are on-going decisions relating to issue specific policy and discussions. The four elements are outlined in a little more detail below:

Figure 1 Primary level: policy decision-making context



Mode of influence: a method which an actor can employ which may influence the policymaking process. These modes can employ either a direct or tacit approach.

Political context: this can be International, European or National. The political context allows for the institutional structures at play in the decision-making process to be taken into account. In this case the National political context is the UK sustainable development strategy, will be further broken down in the tertiary level of the model.

Intermediate influence: the specific result of the interaction between the mode of influence and the political context, this is an intermediate stage prior to the final policy outcome. This element is vital as it allows the continuous process to be assessed and does not see the policy process as a simple causal A effects B model.

Policy outcome: the final policy decision that is only reached once the decision-making process is complete and a policy is ratified.

The mode of influence; political context and intermediate influence, occur within a cyclic relationship, through a feedback mechanism. The impact of the political context on the chosen mode of influence may be such that it leads the actor to alter their activities or indeed change the mode of influence which they are adopting. Furthermore, the outcome of the intermediate influence maybe such that it leads to a change in the basis of the decision-making process. Consequently non-state and state actors may alter the mode of influence employed. Feedback is not restricted to the decision-making process itself; the intermediate influence maybe such that it affects the actor themselves. For example, the intermediate influence maybe that the status of a company has increased, this will subsequent alter the way in which the actor performs within the policy process in future as an increase in status often leads to an increased acceptance of the actor within the decision-making process.

2.1.2 The secondary level

The *secondary level* expands the notion of mode and influence in the decision-making process. It represents an intermediate stage of the AIF giving specific details of the mode of influence and intermediate influence without addressing the interplay and interdependences between these elements. Table 1 outlines how the different modes and intermediate influences link together. It can be seen here that a number of the intermediate influences are a result of the enactment of various modes. Although the

secondary level addresses the influence relationships enacted at an International, European and National context, this paper focuses only on the National context. The objective of the secondary level of AIF is to identify all possible modes of influence and subsequent related intermediate influence. The modes of intermediate influence are described in Table 2, some of the less self-evident modes are expanded upon below.

Table 1 Secondary level mode-influence: relationship between mode and intermediate influence

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Intermediate influence</i>
<i>Direct</i>	
Lobbying	1, 2, 3, 4
Political donations	2, 4
Consultation	1, 4, 5
Advisory committees	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
Task force	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9
Quangos	1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10
Staff secondment	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11
Revolving door	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, on a longer term basis as staff secondment
<i>Tacit</i>	
Trade associations	1, 2, 4, 15
Agenda setting	1, 2, 7
Marketing strategy	1, 2
Cross department influence	2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 14
Perceived power	2, 4, 5, 7
Research	1, 9, 13
Support of external organisations	1, 2, 7, 9, 12
Business location/relocation	2, 4, 5
<i>Code</i>	<i>Intermediate influence</i>
1	Accepted discourse
2	Non-decision-making
3	Timescale
4	Policy preference
5	Anticipated reactions
6	Increased status
7	Mobilisation of bias
8	Accepted insider
9	<i>Status</i>
10	Cross-issue influence
11	<i>Business insight</i>
12	Negotiating positions of others
13	<i>Leadership</i>
14	Clash ministerial powers
15	Dual stance

Table 2 Secondary level mode-influence: outlines of intermediate influences

Non-decision-making	"Is the politically imposed limitations upon the scope of decisionmaking" (Crenson, 1971, p.178)
Accepted discourse	Accepted understanding and articulation of sustainable development recognised by the majority of actors, particular the policy makers themselves
Negotiating position of others/anticipated reaction	Activity/stance of one actor leads to others changing their policy requirements. Perceived power of an actor is such that other actors change their negotiating position
Dual stance	Being part of an organised external group allows an actor to take and individual 'acceptable' stance whilst the group takes a more controversial stance
Policy preference	Activity of one actor changes the policy preference of other actors, particularly that of government
Timescale	Chosen mode of influence leads to either a delay in decision-making or a policy being rushed through to prevent open discussion
Increased status	Leads to an increase in the perceived standing of the actor both by other actors within the policy making arena and wider society.

Mobilisation of bias	Individuals and groups become seen as 'experts'
Accepted insider	Activity of an actor results in decision-making being confined to 'safe' issues Group which is given legitimacy by government/policy-maker and subsequently consulted on a regular basis
Cross-issue influence	Influence in other policy decision-making processes involve other, usually related policy negotiations

Agenda-setting is the method by which actors and policy makers set the boundaries and language in which policy decision-making is framed. Agenda-setting is key to the acceptance of discourse and the resulting intermediate influence of non-decision making. For further discussion see Schattschneider (1960) and Cobb and Elder (1972).

In this research, agenda-setting has been addressed as a mode of influence rather than as an outcome. For other authors, such as Newell (2000) it has been seen as a stage in the policy process. Although this can be seen as correct, in relation to the stage at the beginning of the policy decision-making process which focuses primarily on the problem and scope of the action. Nevertheless, discourse is constructed and manipulated throughout the life of the decision-making process. Therefore, this research takes the stance that an actor can gain influence through this means within this process. The phenomenon of *revolving door* (Newell, 2000) occurs when former business executives, particularly those in senior positions leave company positions to take up office with the Government, European Commission or associated groups and vice versa. This provides for a continual exchange of ideas and principles between institutions, often in a more open and effective way than when individuals are seconded on a limited timeframe.

An important, yet often overlooked, element of the policy decision-making process is that of *perceived power* (following Dowding, 1991; Lukes, 1974, 2005) this is in essence a truly tacit mode of influence. The power of a certain actor or group of actors is such that either the other non-state actors or indeed the policy makers 'second guess' their stance and take a position to reflect this. Perceived power can lead to positive and negative responses. For example, a NGO may decide what they think is going to be a business stance and subsequently take a more extreme position than normal or in contrast take a position which is more aligned with their perception in the hope of securing an agreed outcome. Within this research perceived power is seen as a mode of influence rather than a resultant intermediate influence, as the existence of such a perception is the method which leads to a variety of intermediate influences, as outlined in Table 1. In addition, the perceived power also plays an important role in the use of status and legitimacy by the actor themselves, moving towards a more direct mode of influence.

It is important to see how this perceived power relates to the institutional structure of the decision-making process.

The intermediate influence primarily refers to outcomes of the modes employed, which affect the overall decision-making process. However individual outcomes form part of the feedback loop to the political context, mode of influence and the actor. A crucial element of AIF is the ability to identify and break down the modes of influence and intermediate influence into their individual components. These individual components are subsequently incorporated into the final stage of the model to evaluate the full interplay of the actors and their methods. In itself the secondary level begins to demonstrate the number of different modes of influence which are available within the current governance systems, at all levels of the political context. It also shows that it is not a straightforward cause and effect system which directly connects mode of influence with the final policy outcome.

2.1.3 The tertiary level

The tertiary level of the model is established through the use of case studies, combining empirical data with related literature. The aim of this level of the AIF is to examine the interrelationships and interdependencies, between actors, modes and influence, which are at play within the national policy decision-making process. The result of all the intermediate influences on the policy outcome will be evaluated. It aims to provide a framework by which any barriers or differential access to non-state actors due to the activity of others can be assessed. Although this level of the framework will focus on the national policy process it will not and indeed cannot, exclude influence from the wider European and International political contexts.

3 Approach and context

The AIF described above has been applied to the consultation process of the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy. The Government referred to this as the 'taking it on' process. The qualitative empirical data gathered has been analysed, identifying patterns of behaviour, both reported and observed and discursive formation employing discourse analysis. The data sources are complementary and allow for triangulation providing for a robust final analysis.

The three data sets are:

- Non-participant observations were undertaken at meetings/events included in the 'taking it on' process. In total five events were attended, from regional events to issue-centred events. Marginal observation allowed the researcher to remain independent of the subject and have limited effect on the group dynamic. This is key in an investigation of power relationships and subsequent influence. Observation of this kind provides primary data which has not been exposed to prior interpretation. This is particularly beneficial as all the actors involved in the policy process will have their own set of agendas, which will affect the way they perceive the actions of others.
- A selection of documents relating to the 'taking it on' consultation process were analysed, with the aim of identifying which actors had responded to the consultation exercise; to investigate how the details of the events had been translated into the formal responds documents and to identify the dominate discursive formations. To this end regional consultation documents, individual and organisational responses to DEFRA and internet sources were examined.
- Further data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews with a selection of actors representing government (central and regional), NGOs and business; ten interviews have been conducted. Interviewees were selected initially that were known to have been involved in the 'taking it on' process, with subsequent interviewees being identified through the snow-balling technique.

3.1 *The consultation process*

The current UK approach to sustainable development is one of interagency. The lead government department is the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), with particular leadership coming from the Sustainable Development Unit. All government departments are responsible for integrating sustainable development into their practices and policies. The UK governance structure has a further level of detail, accounting for devolution of certain decision-making aspects to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and increasing emphasis on regionalisation in England. The interagency government approach is located in a wider governance context, one which is multiactor and complex in nature. In their discussion of environmental policy Barry and Paterson (2004, p.777) describes this system as a "loose policy coalitions centred around senior civil service, policy entrepreneurs such as those in PIU, some key industries and elite environmental NGOs such as Green Alliance and Forum for the Future". The structure and relationships within this governance configuration are vital in the understanding the influence occurring within decision making. As an approach to sustainable development the Government addresses both policy and practice, the primary focus in this research being policy and related decision-making. Within this context the UK Government employs the national sustainable development strategy as an overarching framework under which specific issues-driven policies are produced.

The production of issue-specific policies reflects and is often driven by, the formation of issue-specific policy groups, such as those outlined by Barry and Paterson. These groups exist in a number of guises such as: task forces, roundtable groups and working groups.

The consultation process, underpinning the review of 'A better quality of life', included a number of stages, commencing with an initial 'fact finding' exercise 'Where next for the UK on Sustainable Development?' This consisted of an online forum, written consultation and a subsequent one-day seminar, with the aim of identifying the main priorities to be focused upon within the review (see UNED-UK Committee, 2003).

The primary consultation exercise, 'taking it on: developing UK sustainable development strategy together', was launched in April 2004. The 'taking it on' process consisted broadly of four approaches (DEFRA, 2005a):

- 1 Circulation and request for comment on one main consultation paper, which included specific questions to be considered by stakeholders, this document was sent out to 1735 invited participants as well as being openly available on the internet.

- 2 Online consultation consisting of; a virtual panel for invited participants and a general access space.
- 3 Organised events and meetings, including one meeting in each devolved administration and English Region (9). In addition, to regional meetings issue and actor specific (themed) meetings were also held, made up of 9 events which encompassed 23 workshops, with six workshops being organised with local authorities and local strategic partnerships.
- 4 Informal dialogue and submission of opinion.

The actors involved in this consultation process fall into the following categories; business, professional associations and trade unions, local authorities and local strategic partnerships, academic, non-governmental organisations, community and voluntary groups and government and other public bodies. The circulated consultation paper, 'taking it on: developing UK sustainable development strategy together'. A consultation was based around four main priority areas (DEFRA, 2004, p.19):

- climate change and energy
- sustainable consumption, production and use of natural resources
- environment and social justice and
- helping communities to help themselves.

The document also sets out that "to make progress in these areas we (the Government), and others need to take action to";

"help change behaviour; take sustainable development internationally and in Europe; get the structures and tools right so that we have the institutional capacity and leadership in the UK from the national to the local level; and increase the business contribution to achieving sustainable development"
(DEFRA, 2004, p.19).

These priority areas provided some degree of structure for the related workshops and events. In addition, as a basic requirement the 'taking it on' process had to follow the Government's criteria for public consultation.

To understand the influence of the process of consultation on decision making it is important to review the format of the workshops and events. Each English Region was asked to hold a regional dialogue event by DEFRA. Although suggestions for the format of the event were supplied, each region had the power to conduct the event as it wished. All events attended, to differing degrees, were multistakeholder, however, the format of the events varied. A number of the events were based loosely along the same structure, with key regional institutions/individuals presenting keynote addresses; this was followed by breakout sessions for the discussion of specific issues. At one meeting these issues were identified in the earlier session by the audience and did not necessarily mirror those set out in the consultation document. Others followed the consultation document, in one meeting it was a mixture of the two approaches. One English Region held quite a different style of event. Prior to the event delegates were asked to submit questions which could be put to a panel, these were then reviewed and a limited number were tabled to a panel, of regional representations, including large business. This question and answer approach was accompanied by an online survey. Subsequent to the events each region produced a consultation report which was supplied to DEFRA for consideration. Themed workshops often worked along the same lines as the regional events. The focus of the themed events included: business engagement, the 'prosperity objective', behaviour change, international dimensions and community development.

These events were run both by government departments and other groups such as NGOs and government sponsored groups. Again, as with the regional events reports reflecting the discussions were produced for consultation purposes. An important consideration, from a multiactor analysis perspective is that the majority of the delegates at these regional events and indeed the issue specific events were selected and invited directly by the organisers. Although the meetings were open, it seemed few delegates had 'approached' the organisers for places.

The 'taking it on' process fed into the production of the 2005 UK Government's sustainable development strategy: 'securing the future, delivering UK sustainable development strategy' and an overarching strategic framework 'one future – different paths. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development' (DEFRA, 2005b). The framework provides a vision for sustainable development to 2020.

4 Preliminary findings: influence within a multiactor consultation – ‘taking it on’

The AIF has been employed as a mechanism to evaluate the influences at play in the production of the UK national sustainable development strategy. The findings are presented in the context of the AIF, outlining the secondary level modes and intermediate influence at play with explicit consideration of dominant themes and discursive formations.

4.1 Political context: ‘organising in’ influence

The political context discussed here is that of the production of the ‘*securing the future*’ Strategy. The data indicates that the political context itself is creating and is subject to intermediate influence. As discussed earlier each English Region designed individual consultation event, with the aim the events would reflect the differences which occur between the regions. In theory this is a good approach to adopt, as each region does have slightly difference needs and aspirations and it ensures regional ownership. However, in practice some approaches clearly operated more efficiently than others, in terms of collating the issues raised by the different stakeholders in the region. This is not a reflection of the organisation of the events but of the overall approach adopted. The events which had a more open-forum type approach with facilitators/note-takers appear to have generated much more discussion and subsequently more agreement in the identification of the priority issues, such as, climate change or sustainable communities. Some delegates did express the view that although these discussions were interesting and valid they had limited regional focus and in some cases were dominated by a limited number of individuals. In contrast when time and space was limited, for example in the ‘selected question’ approach, a limited number of issues were discussed and there was little consensus evident regarding the subsequent final response. This was a result of the reduced time frame and the prior selection of questions; these reservations were reflected in the consultation response produced by the region itself;

“... in view of the effort afforded to the task by project partners, and the relatively high expectations, the average response for a consultation of this nature was disappointing. Of particular note was the limited engagement of the private and community sectors. The lack of smaller businesses in particular reinforces the findings for the survey carried out as part of the AfS [Action for Sustainability] consultation process.... A number of lessons have been learned about the way the engagement took place, including:

- The venue....
- The consultation timetable as a whole was too short....
- Efforts were made to engage LSPs [Local Strategic Partnerships] and other partnerships and some representatives did respond....
- There was insufficient resource or time to develop dedicated surveys or other consultation mechanisms to meet the needs of a variety of audiences....”

(Sustainability Northwest, 2004, pp.9–10).

An approach such as prior selections of questions could lead to the intermediate influences of accepted discourse; non-decision-making; policy preference and mobilisations of bias. The use of a selected panel in itself creates similar intermediate influences and allows individual and organisations to become accepted insiders resulting in two-way intermediate influences of status and leadership. The use of keynote addresses also leads to such influences and it can be seen from the choice of panel members and speakers that large business representatives were often in this position, alongside regional and government representatives.

A number of regional and themed events were organised and run by professional consultants. From a time-resource perspective this was seen by some regional Government Offices as a positive approach. However, some delegates felt that the agenda supported by these individuals was disproportionately represented in discussion and documentation. The issue of agenda-setting and mobilisation of bias has also been identified on some occasions through the use of facilitators in workshop sessions.

For example, a facilitator from a larger corporate organisation on a number of occasions brought the discussion back to issues faced and addressed by his own corporation. Furthermore, the same facilitator began the workshop session with a monologue relating to the role of business in this agenda and their lack of representation at that regional event. This raises the question of representation, as stated earlier the delegates invited were drawn up by the organising Government Office (or commissioned organisation).

On a number of occasions, at different events, it was stated that the private sector was under represented. In addition, a more limited number of concerns were expressed stating that the voluntary sector has little voice, particular the smaller regional groups.

4.2 Business as a specific actor

In addition to open regional events, business focused events were also held. The Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) hosted an event at the beginning of the 'taking it on' process, the aim being to engage business more in the consultation process.

In a similar way Government Office London organised a business breakfast focusing specifically on climate change. The organisers stated that this approach was taken for two reasons; business does not generally attend full day events and climate change is a focused issue that businesses understand and recognise as a direct impact on their operations. Government officials see the direct involvement of business in 'taking it on' as limited. However this research shows that the business community, particularly MNCs have indirect influence. Before discussing more tacit forms of influence it is useful to address why business involvement was limited. One reason is the majority of business, including MNCs, do not feel that the strategy is of sufficient relevance to their organisations to warrant their direct involvement in the consultation process. This is reinforced by a statement by a Government Official: "its [the Strategy] not specific enough yet for them to see what this will mean for them and that's to be expected from a very high level strategy". Interviews with both MNCs and government departments also indicated that the increased number of actors involved in the meetings partly resulted in the limited direct involvement of business. On one occasion the business representatives were so out number by NGOs that the business individuals felt unable to express their views. The following excerpt is taken from an internal memo of a large MNC relating to this issue:

"attendees largely from NGO community, 40 organisations were invited, 30 turned up only 3 organisations representatives from industry. There doesn't seem to be any process by which industry can sensibly contribute to this debate other than by one-to one meetings or by feedback seminars clearly aimed at the business community. It quickly became apparent that it wasn't the forum to express industry views."

This response not only has implications for the 'taking it on' process it also has wider implications for transparency in decision making and the assessment of the modes of influence. The significance of the role of NGOs in this specific decision-making process was further highlighted in interviews with government and business representatives, who when asked which groups had the most influence in the 'taking it on' process responded the NGO groups. On further evaluation it appears that the larger NGOs, such as, Friends of the Earth, have more experience with the subject and can articulate their viewpoint more efficiently than other actors. However, in discussions on how these groups influence the process the interview data suggests that it is primarily through direct modes of influence such as responses to the consultation, advisory committees and lobbying, rather than tacit modes of influence.

Notwithstanding businesses limited involvement in the formal consultation process, modes of influence outside the boundaries this process were at play. Cross-departmental influence occurred primarily as a result of the interdepartmental approach to sustainable development, both championed and employed by the UK government. Government officials from various departments stated that business influence comes through their relationship with the DTI. In interviews with DTI officials the following modes of influence have been identified as taking place in terms of sustainable development:

- ad hoc, informal conversations between individuals
- trade association lobbying
- speakers at events, by both government and business
- production of briefing papers
- secondments, however this is limited.

Although these influences are discussed in general sustainable development terms, they play a part in setting the agenda in which the national strategy has been developed. The importance of discourse and discursive formation are key in this context and in the evaluation of business influence (this is discussed further below). The formal aspects of the 'taking it on' consultation process was seen as the dominate vehicle through which actors, including business could influence the final national sustainable development strategy. However, the data suggests that even within a bounded consultation approach the mode of influence available to the various actors was much wider than direct involvement.

4.3 Representation versus influence

Although the numbers of responses and consultees can be assessed it is important to recognise that this does not necessarily automatically relate to influence on the policy outcome; in this case the final

strategy. This position is highlighted in the Government's consultation review with reference to written responses.

"Whilst it is clearly incumbent on the Department [DEFRA] to consider all responses fully, it would be unusual not to accord somewhat greater importance to responses from organisations with particular expertise, influence or representativeness. Defra has indeed done this, at least informally, but it has also taken notice of any innovative suggestions from any source" (DEFRA, 2005a, p.26).

Here the influence of actors on the policy decision-making process external to the boundaries of the formal consultation exercise can be seen. In such a situation a number of the modes of influences and intermediate influence are evident. The effect of lobbying or a role in an advisory committee by an actor, either an NGO or business, creates a position of accepted insider status; this can subsequently be translated into agenda-setting, through perceived power.

In contrast the online general access consultation was non-attributable and responses were dealt with by a user number rather than a name. The aim of this approach was to "enable online participants to say what they wanted incognito, possible outside their organisational view, and was anticipated to encourage full participation and ensure equality of responses (i.e. with no weighting of response)" (DEFRA 2005a, p17). In this situation some of the influences outlined above did not occur. However, this was seen by some actors to give disproportionate importance to the written consultation, which was attributable, creating a less than transparent process. For this reason it is more difficult to ascertain the modes of influence and resulting intermediate influence.

More investigation is required in this area; however, documentation reviewed suggests that although reoccurring themes are taken from the online consultation, more weight is given to those written responses from recognised organisations or individuals. The consultation has been described in a Government document as 'not being a referendum' (DEFRA 2005a), with importance and representativeness of specific response needing to be taken into account.

4.4 Policy outcome: the final stages

More tacit forms of influence exist at the final stages of the sustainable development strategy consultation process. To compile the final document, small working groups of civil servants produced short reports on specific key issues for the Strategy. These reports were subsequently presented to a high level programme board, consisting of range of senior officials, with the remit to generate a first draft of the strategy. At this point in the process influence outside the formal consultation period could occur, for example, cross-issue influence, clash of ministerial power, mobilisation of power and anticipated reaction. These intermediate influences result from the exercise of modes of influence by non-state actors that included informal communication, lobbying and more tacit forms such as agenda-setting and perceived power. Due to the importance and timing of this stage in the process this type influence can be considered to impact on the policy outcome.

As outlined previously the policy outcome; the 'securing the future' document is not a static end point. An example of the way in which influence continues is evident through the establishing of the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce. The taskforce is a business-led group and is to be chaired by Sir Neville Simms who is associated with a number of MNCs.

4.5 Dominant themes and discursive formation

Influence, therefore, exists both within the formal bounded consultation process, external to these boundaries and tacitly in and outside the formal process. The use of discourse allows the framework to incorporate such different modes of influences. As no actor exists within isolation in the formal process it is vital that modes of tacit influence are addressed in the assessment of influence in policy decision-making. A useful starting point is to outline the main themes debated as part of the 'taking it on' process, which can be linked with discursive formation. One of the challenges here is to deconstruct the relationship; has discourse created the main themes or have the main themes led to the dominant discursive formations. In general there was broad agreement that the priority areas outlined by the Government were correct and appropriate. However, a number of the actors raised concerns regarding the continued use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the primary indicator for sustainable growth. Many respondents felt this continued emphasis on economics as opposed to an integrated view of sustainability undermined the ethos of sustainable development and perpetuated the conflict between environmental and social well-being and economic growth. This reflected a wider discourse which has been occurring both inside and external to the 'taking it on' process. However, this discourse is not evident in the Government's consultation documents. More notably GDP remains within the final strategy as an

indicator for economic growth and although the wording of guiding principle has changed slightly there is no reference to the question of redefining sustainable economic growth.

The 'taking it on' process incorporated a number of consultation themes; the majority of which represented crosscutting ideas and were discussed within the context of the priority issues of the strategy and sustainable development more generally. These themes included; implementation, less rhetoric and more action and, leadership and partnership. The dominant themes given most significance within the consultation have been selected for more investigation. To this end the discursive formation relating to language, business contribution and innovation were examined further. Sustainable development has been a contested issue for a number of years and there has been much debate in search of a perfect one-size fits all definition. There now seems to be two stances on this issue; that policy makers and individuals should be pragmatic and take action based on the current understanding and agreement and other that either consensus needs to be reached on the definition of sustainable development or indeed a new term is required.

Examining the effects of the latter, the need for a firm definition, in this context, leads to two outcomes; the decision-making process is delayed, which in the long-term creates non-decision-making. Secondly, the emphasis on language allows certain discourse to become more prominent than others. This is highlighted in the examples from consultees/interviewees given below:

"Sustainable development should be replaced by sustainable economies" (Consultee at a regional event).

"Sustainable communities should replace sustainable development" (Consultee at a regional event).

"CSR is the same as Sustainable development. Quality of life is too soft" (Chair of a session during a regional event).

The significance of this use of language is highlighted in one of the regional responses submitted to Government. In a discussion of the explanation of sustainable development the respondent stated that:

"This is a significant challenge as even within the field of people who court sustainability as a concept, particularly in the business sector, generally fail to use the concept in its true meaning" (Levett-Therivel, 2004).

Both at the specific business related event and the majority of the regional events, there is an overarching business-focused discourse present. One Government department communicated the message that business was needed to help them put pressure on central Government to raise the expectation of what can be achieved under sustainable development. The tacit influence of business was also evident at a number of the regional events. Even in a situation when business, particularly large corporations were absent from the events, the apparent discourse demonstrated an assumption that business is a leader, in particular in relation to the implementation of sustainable development and that business understand the situation more. It is noteworthy that on a number of occasions the discussion reverted to a business perspective, using the language of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), again in the absence of business. One delegate at a regional event stated that 'business understand more'. This discourse can also be identified in the emphasis placed on business in the 'taking it on' consultation document.

The document includes specific consultation questions relating to the involvement of business, however, this is not the case for any other non-state actor. In addition there is a section entitled 'The Business Contribution to Sustainable Development', the text in this section includes the following:

"The involvement and performance of business is critical to delivering environmental, social and economic goals. Business investment, enterprise and trading are essential in creating the wealth to tackle poverty and other social challenges at home and abroad. Government has an important role to play through active economic, social and environmental policies that support or stimulate action. But *ultimately it is the action taken by businesses themselves* that will deliver a supply of products and services that are clean, resource-efficient and fair to employees and communities" (DEFRA, 2004, p.34, emphasis added).

The business-orientated discursive formations leads to intermediate influences, such as, preference shaping, agenda-setting and most obviously accepted discourse. It creates a situation where business, through little, in some cases no direct activity of their own take on leadership and accepted insider roles. The importance of innovation further extends the business-orientated discourse and was outlined both in consultation meetings and consultation responses.

"Rewarding innovative solutions would encourage more sustainable solutions to be proposed" (Written response within 'Taking it on').

"Government should provide incentives for business to innovate" (Written response within 'taking it on').

“..business is keen to ensure continued emphasis on creating the right conditions for wealth creation alongside the social and environmental goals. This element remains critical to any strategy as it provides the means by which innovative solutions to difficult sustainability challenges are rewarded...” (Written response within ‘taking it on’).

The role of business, through the market, in innovation for sustainable development is evident throughout the final strategy document ‘securing the future’. The Prime Minister’s forward includes the statement:

“It involves channelling the power of business by stimulating the market to innovate and to produce cost effective and sustainable options for all purchasers” (DEFRA, 2005b, p.4).

A small selection of the discursive themes present in the ‘taking it on’ process which can be traced through to the ‘securing the future’ document have been highlighted. The link with influence through agenda-setting and non-decision-making is becoming evident and this can be linked to the model of influence.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

The AIF is beginning to illustrate the complex interrelationship between mode of influence and intermediate influence within the decision-making process associated with the ‘securing the future’ strategy. The political context of both national and specific policy levels is key in the examination of mode of influence available to state and non-state actors. However, this cannot be carried out in isolation when focusing on a specific policy decision-making context. The modes of influence and subsequent intermediate influence which exist outside this process cannot be ignored, to this end, the role of the discourse is key.

The perceived power of MNCs and the wider business community has led to other non-state actors anticipating reactions and adopting accepted discourse. Cross-government departmental influence is also strong, primarily due to the nature of sustainable development as an interagency policy. Interestingly, although engagement by business, in the formal consultation maybe more limited than other actors, influence still occurs through tacit means and through direct influence on other government departments outside this specific policy decision-making arena. The increased emphasis on CSR and the consideration by non-state actors as this being the only possible business contribution to sustainable development through business-orientated discourse demonstrates the influence of agenda-setting and the role of non-decisions. A high level of tacit influence at play in the consultation events themselves and in the responses returned to DEFRA for consideration, resulted in influence being exerted outside the formal consultation process. It is clear that engagement and influence are two separate issues in a situation where Government officials express concern about the level of business engagement when the evidence suggests a high level of influence exists, all be it more tacit than direct.

The case study of the ‘taking it on’ consultation process suggests that the use of facilitators in consultation meetings should be done so with caution; with an awareness of the influence they have and selection should be completed with due care and attention.

It is important that policy makers are aware of all of the modes of influence at play in the decision-making process, employing the AIF would provide a more systematic approach for policy makers to achieve this objective. Moreover it is vital that tacit influence of actors is recognised, by policy makers, against the same significance afforded formal direct influence.

References

- Bachrach, P. and Baratz, M. (1970) *Poverty and Power: Theory and Practice*, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Barry, J. and Paterson, M. (2004) ‘Globalisation, ecological modernisation and new labour’, *Political Studies*, Vol. 54, pp.767–784.
- Cobb, R. and Elder, C. (1972) *Participation in American Politics. The Dynamics of Agenda-Building*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon Ltd.
- Cousins, M. and Hussain, A. (1984) *Michel Foucault, Theoretical Traditions in the Social Sciences*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Crenson, M. (1971) *The Unpolitics of Air Pollution*, London and Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.
- Dahl, R. (1961) *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2000a) *Waste Strategy 2000 for England and Wales*, UK: HMSO.

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2000b) *Climate Change The UK Programme*, UK: HMSO.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2003) *Achieving a Better Quality of Life: Review of Progress Towards Sustainable Development, Government Annual Report 2002*, UK: HMSO.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2004) *Taking It On, Developing UK Sustainable Development Strategy Together. A Consultation Paper*, London: DEFRA Publications.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2005a) *An Evaluation of the 2004 "Taking it on" Consultation on the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy*, DEFRA, UK.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2005b) *Securing The Future, Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*, London: The Stationary Office.
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2005c) *One Future – Different Paths. The UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development*, London: The Stationary Office.
- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) *A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK*, UK: HMSO.
- Dowding, K.M. (1991) *Rational Choice and Political Power*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar.
- Environment Audit Committee (2003) *A Brief Guide to the Committee*, Available at: www.parliament.uk. Accessed on 4 September 2003.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1980) 'Knowledge/power', in C. Gordon (Ed). *Michel Foucault: Knowledge/Power. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, Brighton: Harvester.
- Hajer M.A. (1995) *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Levett-Therivel (2004) *UK Sustainable Development Strategy Consultation. Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Dialogue Report*, Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants.
- Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: A Radical View*, London: Macmillan.
- Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition, New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Newell, P. (2000) *Climate for Change: Non-state Actors and the Global Politics of the Greenhouse*, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Schattschneider, E. (1960) *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist View of Democracy in America*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sustainability Northwest (2004) *Sustainable Development. Taking it on in England's North West*, The Regional Panel of the North West.
- UNED-UK Committee (2003) *Where Next for the UK Sustainable Development Strategy? Final Report*, Available at: www.sd-commission.gov.uk. Accessed on April 2003.36 *Int. J. Environment and Sustainable Development, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2007*
- Copyright © 2007 Inderscience Enterprises Ltd.