Sustainable development in Quebec and Flanders
A comparative policy analysis

par Sander Happaerts

Sander Happaerts is a research fellow and PhD candidate at the Institute for International and European Policy at KULeuven. In the fall of 2010, he held a visiting position at the CRSDD. Sander's research focuses on governance for sustainable development at the subnational level. For his PhD, he compares the policies of Flanders, Wallonia, Quebec, North Rhine-Westphalia and North Holland. Sander's project is partly financed the Policy Research Centre for Sustainable Development (www.steunpuntdo.be), funded by the Flemish government.

Discussants
Jacques Blanchet, écoconseiller, BNQ
Philippe Bourke, General Director, RNVREQ
Luc Vézina, Director, Bureau de coordination du développement durable, MDDEP

CHAIRE de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable
ESG UQÀM

Preface

This document represents the research that I conducted during a two-month stay at the *Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable* in the fall of 2010[1]. It focuses on a comparative analysis of the sustainable development policies of Quebec and Flanders. The results of that analysis were presented at a seminar organized by the *Chaire*, in cooperation with the *Institut d'études internationales de Montréal* and the *Institut des sciences de l'environnement* of the UQÀM. The comments made by three discussants at that seminar are included in Annex 2.

The research topic of this *cahier* forms part of my broader PhD research, which is focused on sustainable development policies of subnational governments, and compares Flanders, Wallonia, North Rhine-Westphalia, North Holland and Quebec. The first parts of this *cahier* give a brief overview on the problem setting, the theoretical foundations, the analytical model and the methodology of that research. Subsequently, a detailed analysis of the sustainable development policies of Quebec and Flanders are given. Next, the results of the within-case analyses are compared and explained. Conclusions are presented in a final section. Based upon the comparative analysis, a series of policy recommendations are formulated for the government of Quebec.

---

[1] I would like to thank all the professors, researchers and students of the *Chaire* for the fruitful interactions during my stay. Special thanks goes out to Corinne Gendron, who invited me to Montreal, guided and inspired me during my stay and provided valuable feedback on my research.

Table des matières

1. Setting the stage: sustainable development and subnational governments

Sustainable development arose on the political agenda with the increasing consciousness of the impact of human activities on the environment. It is rooted in the genesis of global environmental politics. After the 1972 Stockholm Conference, it became increasingly difficult to reconcile environmental concerns, often ventilated by countries of the North, with the development priorities of the global South. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission's report *Our Common Future* advanced 'sustainable development' as a common challenge for humanity as a whole. Its aim was to put an end to the 'economy versus environment' debate, by putting forward the view that environmental challenges lie at the heart of economic development, social problems and even international peace and security. Sustainable development—defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987: 43)—aspires well-being for everyone within the carrying capacity of the Earth. It is about the integration of different objectives, the inclusion of long-term perspectives, and the solidarity with other societies and future generations. In 1992, the Rio Summit popularized the idea that sustainable development entails three 'pillars': economic, social and environmental (UNCED 1992a: §8.41). That idea had already been put forward in the 1980 *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN 1980: §1.3), but only after Rio it received widespread support. However, there is no universally accepted understanding of how those three pillars relate to each other.[2]

In international relations, sustainable development is because of its genesis seen as a political concept that intends to

---

[2] The vision promoted by the *Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable* is that social and individual development is the ultimate aim, the environment is the condition, and the economy is an instrument (Gendron et al. 2005: 21).

reconcile environmental and development ambitions, and more broadly the concerns of the North and of the South. Aside from that, in a sociological point of view sustainable development can be seen as another kind of consensus. Gendron (2006) shows how the concept evolved into a compromise between the industrial elite (who would never abandon the premise of economic growth) and the environmental movement (which strives for fundamentally new priorities and decision-making criteria). While sustainable development was previously supported by the environmental movement only, it is now broadly applied by all societal actors. Their 'battle' is now fought with regard to the exact interpretation of sustainable development (Gendron 2006: 188). It thus becomes a legitimating concept: through multiple interpretations, sustainable development can legitimize diverging or even opposing ambitions (Gendron and Revéret 2000: 113).

Sustainable development requires multi-actor governance, meaning that different actors must be involved. A key role is put aside for governments. They are the only actors that can rely on a legitimate democratic mandate to represent collective interests and be held accountable for it (Meadowcroft 2008: 111; Pierre and Peters 2000: 196-197). Moreover, it has been observed on countless occasions that in an era of 'governance', 'government' continues to play a central role (Baker and Eckerberg 2008; Jordan 2008: 27). In the international policy discourse, sustainable development is presented as a general goal for public policy and governments are explicitly addressed to make it happen. International commitments require them, for instance, to issue sustainable development strategies, meant to harmonize their existing plans and policies and direct them towards the attainment of sustainable development (Meadowcroft 2007: 153-155; Steurer and Martinuzzi 2005: 457-458). As a political concept, sustainable development can be studied in two different ways. A first possibility is to analyze the policies of specific problems central to sustainable development, such as biodiversity or climate change. I adopt a second approach, in

which sustainable development is understood as a general 'steering' concept or as a meta-policy, "a policy designed to guide the development of numerous more specific policies" (O'Toole 2004: 38).

My interest goes out to the policies of subnational governments (situated between the local and the national level of governance). While a significant amount of scientific studies have already been conducted with regard to international, national and local efforts for sustainable development (e.g. Lafferty 2001; Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000c; Pallemaerts 2003), subnational governments have been much less researched. Nonetheless, the subnational level is a vital link in the multi-level governance of sustainable development. In many countries, subnational governments are responsible for a large part of the implementation (or even formulation) of policies directed towards sustainable development (OECD 2002: 19). Many problems related to sustainable development (e.g. with regard to energy, transport, spatial planning) often become tangible precisely at the subnational level, and depending on the distribution of powers within countries they can sometimes only be handled by subnational governments. Despite that important role, subnational governments are rarely recognized as decision-making actors at the international level. That is why they are becoming increasingly active at the international level, trying to display their commitment to sustainable development and claiming a role in multilateral decision-making.[3] Although the

---

[3] For instance, during an event at the Johannesburg Summit, 23 subnational governments signed the Gauteng Declaration, to denounce their lack of representation in the multilateral discussions and to affirm their commitment of developing a subnational sustainable development strategy (Happaerts et al. 2010b: 130-131). Flanders was among the initiators of the event. The government of Quebec, which did not have a ministerial presence in Johannesburg, did not take part. However, Quebec recently joined the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), which grew out of the initiative and for which the agreement to the Gauteng Declaration is an admission criterion.

findings of existing research on sustainable development policies at other levels of governance are insightful, investigating subnational policies is fundamentally different from analyses of national policies. Subnational governments do not dispose of the full policy-making autonomy as national governments do, and they cannot draw from the complete range of policy instruments (e.g. negotiating international agreements). Moreover, since the capabilities of subnational governments depends on each national context, there is no similar level playing field. Those characteristics require a specific approach for the study of subnational sustainable development policies, as the current scientific knowledge is least advanced at that level of governance.

Since research on subnational governments has been limited, and because understanding and explaining is the ultimate research aim of social sciences (Nørgaard 2008: 3), I aim to contribute to a more systematic understanding of sustainable development policies at the subnational level of governance. Since sustainable development is a contested concept (Bruyninckx 2006: 270; Jacobs 1999; Zaccaï 2002: 35-36) that has given rise to multiple policy interpretations (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000a: 426-427), it is my endeavour to explain how and why policy choices with regard to sustainable development are made at the subnational level. The investigation of such causal explanations is indeed the endeavour/aim of political science (Nørgaard 2008: 14). My initial research goal is thus to explain what determines sustainable development policies of subnational governments. My research design is constructed around that research aim, and not specifically around the evaluation of those policies. Policy evaluation is a very specific branch of political science, oriented towards the analysis of policy effects and the establishment between the policy intentions and those effects, with the ultimate aim to contribute to more evidence-based policy-making (De Peuter et al. 2007a). There is no scientifically accepted method of evaluating policy effects in the case of sustainable

development—*inter alia* since that would also imply an analysis of the capacities of future generations to meet their development needs. Nevertheless, the understanding and explanation of policy choices is a first step towards the evaluation of policies. Moreover, even though the research design is not constructed around evaluation, it does permit me to formulate policy recommendations. The framework put forward in this paper for instance allows me to verify whether different policy dimensions are in tune with each other, or to assess which policy instruments have resulted in real policy practices and which have not. Furthermore, this kind of policy research is relevant for policy-makers, because they experience the need to know about the actions of their peers, and to learn from them in order to adapt their own policies. Also, at the eve of the 'Rio +20' summit in 2012, it is important to draw the current state of affairs and to increase the understanding of sustainable development policies at all levels of governance.

2. In search of explanatory factors: theoretical guidelines

Considering the lack of scientific studies that have been conducted with regard to subnational governments, despite their important role in governance for sustainable development, I want to find out how subnational governments deal with the policy concept and contribute to a more systematic understanding of sustainable development policies at that level of governance. In order to explain what determines sustainable development policies of subnational governments, the theoretical framework is aimed at identifying those explanatory factors. Since there is no encompassing theory of sustainable development policy, I develop a model in which I make use of three main theoretical insights.

The footing of the theoretical framework is constituted by the literature on policy convergence and divergence. Situated in the field of comparative policy analysis, it offers causal explanations on the similarity or dissimilarity among policies. On the one hand, it studies international factors such as international commerce or international law as reasons for policy convergence (Bennett 1988, 1991). It also pays attention to international policy issues resulting in soft law, and to mechanisms of 'transnational communication' which presuppose nothing but information exchange with other governments or international organizations (Holzinger and Knill 2005; Holzinger et al. 2008). On the other hand, the literature on policy convergence and policy divergence shows how domestic features, such as the specific political or socioeconomic context of governments, are responsible for differences or similarities between policies (Heichel et al. 2005; Lenschow et al. 2005).

Second, the literature on governance for sustainable development is added to accommodate policy-specific factors. Scholars emphasize the fact that sustainable development is different from many other policy issues, e.g. because of its intrinsic vagueness or because it requires vertical and horizontal policy integration (Jordan 2008; Lafferty 2004b; Steurer 2009).

The literature also offers insights on how specific features of societies influence their governments' implementation of the concept. For instance, it shows how socioeconomic conditions affect how governments deal with sustainable development (Kern 2008: 136-137; Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000a: 423). It also points towards the importance of the distribution of competences between levels of governance (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000a: 427; OECD 2002: 20-21). Yet most important is the presence of political will, which ultimately determines whether governments put sustainable development on the agenda (Jordan and Lenschow 2008; Steurer and Martinuzzi 2005: 461, 465; Swanson and Pintér 2007).

The previous two theoretical traditions were developed mainly on the basis of analyses of national policies. Since the study of subnational policies requires a specific approach, the framework is completed by insights drawn from the literature on comparative regionalism and federalism. That theoretical tradition takes into account the particular situation of subnational governments. It attaches large importance to the specific competences that are enjoyed (or not) by different subnational governments (Hooghe et al. 2008b; Keating and McEwen 2005). Moreover, scholars demonstrate how some subnational governments conduct policies with an explicit or implicit strategy of identity politics (Keating 1999; Paquin 2004).

Those three theoretical literatures point towards a variety of potential explanatory factors. Four clusters of factors appear most significant: international factors, the degree of autonomy of subnational governments, their political context and their socioeconomic conditions.

3. Explaining subnational sustainable development policies: research question and analytical framework

The research consists of two main parts: a descriptive-analytical part and an explanatory-analytical part. The first part describes and analyzes the policies under scrutiny, and is a necessary preliminary step before turning to the core, explanatory, research aim. The explanatory-analytical part is guided by the following research question: Which factors explain the choices that subnational governments make in their SD policies?

As the previous section made clear, four explanatory factors were withheld. They now need to be operationalized. Moreover, the concept of 'policy'[4] needs to be specified. It is broken down into smaller, observable elements called 'policy dimensions'. That is a technique frequently applied in the literature on policy convergence and divergence (Heichel et al. 2005: 828). I withhold three policy dimensions: policy framing, policy goals and policy instruments. It has to be emphasized that they are not three separate or delineated categories. Rather, they are different elements of a single reality that serve as analytical lenses to approach a complex reality in a concrete and accessible way. Figure 1 outlines the different elements of the analytical model which are described below.

---

[4] I define a *governmental policy* as an intentional course of action or inaction designed by governmental bodies and officials, that consists of a set of interrelated decisions concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them, in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern (based on Adolino and Blake 2001: 10; and Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 5-8).

Figure 1   Analytical model
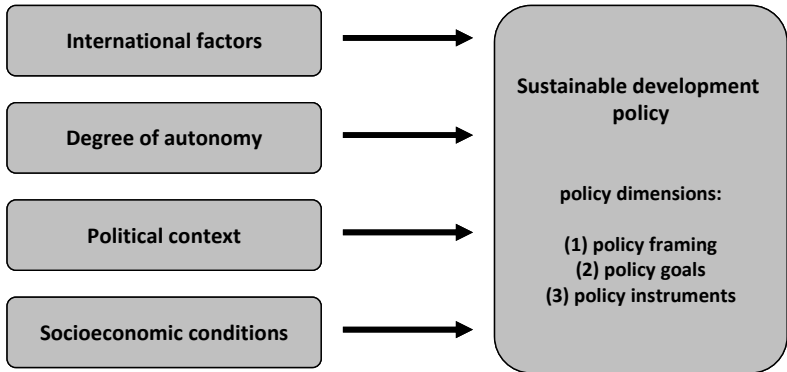
3.1 Subnational sustainable development policies: three policy dimensions

For the following operationalization of the three policy dimensions, insights are drawn from the combination of two of the theoretical literatures used in the theoretical framework. On the one hand, the policy literature has a long tradition of analyzing the main policy dimensions. On the other hand, the literature on governance for sustainable development is a necessary complement, in that it focuses the attention on the specificities of sustainable development as a policy issue. Those specificities make that certain characteristics of the policy dimensions are less relevant, while others need to be added in the operationalization.

3.1.1 Policy framing

Governmental policies deal with a specific problem or matter of concern. Governments need to identify that problem before designing a policy. *Policy framing* refers to the process of interpreting a concept and to give meaning to a problem. It involves the use of available knowledge and information in order

to select, name, emphasize or organize certain aspects of a policy problem (Daviter 2007: 654; Schön and Rein 1994: 26; Ward et al. 2004: 291-292). The conceptual vagueness and the complexity attached to sustainable development open up the possibility to frame the concept in different ways (Dryzek 1997: 8; Harrison 2000: 2). Previous analyses have shown that, because of different policy framings, governments emphasize distinct aspects of sustainable development and have diverging policies (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000b: 340-341). The selection of a certain framing involves subjectivity on the part of political actors (Harrison 2000: 2). It has even been stated that political actors deliberately 'spin' sustainable development into a framing that suits their political ideology or preferred solution (Blühdorn and Welsh 2007: 192).

A question that is related to policy framing, is what Bachus et al. (2005) refer to as 'governance models for sustainable development'. They found that governments organize their sustainable development policies within a small number of different models. The choice of a governance model goes hand in hand with policy framing. Four ideal-types of governance models for sustainable development are identified:

1. The holistic governance model defines sustainable development as an overarching concept, with equal consideration of economic, social and environmental objectives. In its policy translation, sustainable development has implications in all policy domains. Typically, the sustainable development policy consists of an overarching plan with actions to be taken in all policy areas, without prioritizing any area above another (Bachus et al. 2005: 96-97).

2. In the policy principles model, the integration of sustainable development is based on a given set of principles. That requires institutional adaptations, such as the

creation of instruments to integrate the principles into decision-making (Bachus et al. 2005: 97-98).

3. The <u>environmental integration model</u> uses a conventional definition of sustainable development, but opts to attain it through environmental policy integration. New policy instruments are used to integrate environmental concerns into other policy domains (Bachus et al. 2005: 97).

4. When applying the <u>ecological interpretation of sustainable development</u>, a government explicitly chooses a strategy with an environmental emphasis. The sustainable development policy wants to improve environmental policy and to assess it with economic and social parameters (Bachus et al. 2005: 97).

3.1.2 Policy goals

A government's policy goals can be divided into strategic policy goals and operational policy goals (Bouckaert et al. 2003: 11; Joyce 1999). *Strategic policy goals* are goals which express a government's vision on the future. Typically, they are abstract rather than concrete, and can sometimes express nothing more than ideas or core values. Strategic policy goals are associated with the intended end result or effects (outcome) of a policy. *Operational policy goals* are goals through which a government concretizes its strategic policy goals. They are usually more concrete and measurable than the strategic policy goals and can include performance targets. They refer more to output (the immediate tangible effects) than to outcome. Furthermore, much has been written in the public management literature and in the literature on governance for sustainable development about how policy goals *should* look like (De Peuter et al. 2007b: 43; Lundqvist 2004: 100-102; OECD 2001a: 27). I withhold the following characteristics to analyze strategic and operational policy goals across cases:

- Which <u>thematic areas</u> are targeted by the policy goals? This is an important characteristic to analyze in the context of

SD. SD policies should encompass different policy domains (Meadowcroft 2008: 115; Spangenberg 2004: 6), but its conceptual vagueness facilitates different interpretations (cf supra). This characteristic is thus related to policy framing.

- Are the policy goals <u>clear and specific</u>? Is the intended outcome (strategic) or output (operational) of the goals unambiguous? The potential variance is wide, from extremely abstract and vaguely stated ambitions to very concrete objectives linked to specific indicators (Lundqvist 2004: 102). The more specific and explicit the goals, the stronger the steering capacity of the SD policy (Lundqvist 2004: 102).

- Related to specificity of the goals and to the distinction between strategic and operational goals, what is the <u>timeframe</u> of the policy goals? Do they target long-term and/or short-term results? In the context of SD, it is widely believed that governments should formulate a long-term vision, but also determine concrete goals to intervene on a short term (OECD 2001a: 27).

- Are the goals <u>based upon an analysis of the current situation</u>? Goals of a SD policy should be founded on a sound analysis of local and global trends and challenges, depending on reliable information (OECD 2001a: 27).

- What is the <u>backing</u> of the policy goals? Backing refers to the 'acceptable' character of policy goals and gives an indication of their authority and democratic legitimacy. Policy goals for SD should be backed politically (by all political parties, preferably endorsed by parliament) and societally (by non-governmental stakeholders). Policy goals can be formulated by a single government department behind closed doors or they can be unanimously agreed upon by all political parties and enshrined in law after an extensive societal consultation process (Lundqvist 2004: 101-102). The latter option might imply weaker ambitions but holds a stronger chance for continuity and lasting support.

3.1.3 Policy instruments

Policy instruments are defined as "the actual means or devices governments have at their disposal for implementing policies, and among which they must select in formulating policy" (Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 87). The analysis looks at the specific type of policy instruments that is used in the sustainable development policies of subnational governments. The following types are retained:

1. Institutional instruments are applied when a government uses its organizational powers or planning activities to achieve its policy goals. Obvious examples are the reorganization or creation of government departments, units or agencies. In the case of sustainable development, the introduction of the policy concept sometimes triggers an administrative reorganization or the creation of new institutions. The adoption of planning or strategy documents to organize policy-making is also grouped within this category. Moreover, governments can create public enterprises or voluntary organizations outside the governmental sphere (Berger and Steurer 2008; Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 90-102).

2. Legal instruments use a government's law-making powers. These instruments include the use of regulations, laws or constitutional provisions to attain policy goals (Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 90, 103-107; Kaufmann-Hayoz et al. 2001: 36). The use of legal instruments for sustainable development was introduced by Agenda 21 and was further stimulated by the Johannesburg Summit (Cordonier Segger 2004).

3. Economic instruments use money or market mechanisms as their main resource. This category contains the most traditional of government tools, i.e. taxes, as well as the 'new' market-based instruments that are described by the literature on 'new environmental policy instruments', such as tradable permits. Under this heading it is also important to

point at the significant role of governments as clients and consumers themselves, who can choose to influence markets with their procurement strategies (Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 90, 108-113; Jordan et al. 2005: 482; Kaufmann-Hayoz et al. 2001: 37-38; OECD 2001b: 134-135).

4. With <u>information instruments</u>, governments rely on nothing but information to get things done. These instruments include public information campaigns, mission statements, research activities, etc. (Howlett and Ramesh 2003: 90, 114). Efforts to use certain types of information (such as scientific studies or statistical data) to monitor, evaluate or benchmark policies also fall within this category when they are applied to attain policy goals. Recommended by Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992a: §40.4), indicators for sustainable development are widely regarded as one of the essential policy tools for sustainable development. Other prominent examples include the increasingly popular use of eco-labels for products and services (Jordan et al. 2005: 482).

3.2 Explanatory factors of subnational sustainable development policies

3.2.1 International factors

Sustainable development was conceptually developed at the international level, and a significant part of policy-making still takes place in multilateral organizations such as the UN, the OECD or the EU. International negotiations on sustainable development mainly result in soft law measures (e.g. political declarations, policy recommendations, guidelines) rather than in legally binding obligations. A useful mechanism to study the international influence of soft law is *transnational communication* (Happaerts and Van den Brande 2010), which refers to a set of mechanisms that presuppose nothing but information exchange and communication with international organizations or foreign governments (Holzinger et al. 2008: 559). A first mechanism is the promotion of policy models by international organizations. Through the dissemination of information, guidelines, best

practices and benchmarks, they exert legitimacy pressures on their members to adopt certain policies (Holzinger and Knill 2005: 785). Of significant importance in this context are global summits such as the ones in Rio and Johannesburg, at which policy solutions are promoted by international organizations. A second mechanism of transnational communication is policy copying. That can involve lesson-drawing, which denotes rational learning processes through which governments use foreign experiences to solve domestic problems, or policy emulation, meaning that governments, driven by a desire of conformity, adopt a certain policy because they observe others around them doing the same (Holzinger and Knill 2005: 783-785). Third, transnational communication is stimulated by networking activities, through joint problem-solving and information-sharing. In the area of sustainable development, subnational governments have created specific transnational networks (Happaerts et al. 2010c).

3.2.2 Degree of autonomy

In all countries, whether federal or unitary, sustainable development cuts across different levels of governance (Steurer and Martinuzzi 2005: 462). When looking at the policies of subnational governments, their degree of autonomy is an important factor to consider. Degree of autonomy contains both *shared rule*, the capacity of subnational governments to shape national decision-making, and *self-rule*, their independence to exercise authority within their own borders (Marks et al. 2008: 114-115). It is assumed that especially the degree of self-rule of subnational governments influences the content of their sustainable development policies. Self-rule can be measured by a recently developed index by Hooghe et al. (2008b).[5]

---

[5] In the *Regional Authority Index*, 'self-rule' is an aggregated subindex of four indicators. 'Institutional depth' measures the extent to which the administration of the subnational government is independent from central government control. 'Policy scope' indicates in how many policy areas the subnational government can operate. 'Fiscal autonomy' refers to the autonomy to decide on taxes. 'Representation' shows whether the citizens of a subnational entity elect their representatives in a direct way (Hooghe et al. 2008a: 124-131).

Governments with a high degree of self-rule will be able to conduct self-designed policies with a large thematic scope and with a range of different policy instruments, while governments with a low degree of self-rule might rather be limited to the implementation of national policies.

3.2.3 Political context

While the theoretical literature points towards a variety of factors relating to the political context of a government, the analysis is limited to certain factors that are most likely to influence the choices with regard to sustainable development policies. One of those is political will. Although it has been labelled as a 'trash can' variable in political science (Nilsson et al. 2009: 145), all previous studies of sustainable development policies identify it as a very significant factor (e.g. Steurer and Martinuzzi 2005: 461, 465). Especially the political weight that is given to sustainable development at the highest level of decision-making is of relevance. That usually translates in the political capital that is invested in the policy. A second factor that I look at is party politics. The question there is whether the ideological orientation of a government is decisive in its sustainable development policy. Finally, in an analysis of subnational policies it is relevant to verify whether so-called identity politics play a role in sustainable development.

3.2.4 Socioeconomic conditions

The presence of similar socioeconomic conditions is often used to explain policy convergence across cases (e.g. Holzinger et al. 2008: 582). For instance, the specific economic situation in which a government operates is said to determine its willingness to commit to a sustainable development agenda and the kind of commitment it attaches to it (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 2000a: 423; Lenschow et al. 2005: 802). Socioeconomic conditions are particularly relevant in the context of this topic, since sustainable development aims specifically at adapting prevailing economic and social institutions (Bruyninckx 2006: 268; Lafferty 2004a: 19-20; Meadowcroft 2008: 110). Furthermore, the overall socio-economic structure of a society is decisive in the context of

sustainable development as well (e.g. the degree of urbanization or industrialization). An important factor here is population density, which impacts a society in several different ways (transport, infrastructure, housing, etc.).

4. Methodological considerations

The research questions can best be answered through a comparative design. In order to test the explanatory power of the four highlighted factors, the study will first identify similarities and differences between the sustainable development policies of different governments, and then explain them by means of the four factors. The investigation is thus situated within the field of comparative policy analysis, a subdiscipline of policy analysis and of comparative politics.

In my PhD research, I apply a comparative case study analysis. In that approach, the researcher systematically develops a small number of individual cases, and then analyzes them by comparison (Agranoff and Radin 1991: 203). It is a qualitative approach that is fitted for the comparison of policies, because of its attention to specific contextual variables. Policies, indeed, cannot be interpreted without an understanding of their specific setting (deLeon and Resnick-Terry 1999: 18). Moreover, attention to context is deemed extremely important in a domain such as sustainable development (Zaccaï 2002: 19, 331). The method I propose differs from a multiple case study design (or 'country-by-country' approach) in that it compares the cases in a systematic manner. The systematic character is assured when the comparison is both structured and focused (George 1979: 61-62; George and Bennett 2005: 67-70). The method used is *structured* because it requires the researcher to ask the same questions, which reflect the research objective, to guide the data collection and examination of each case. The method is *focused* because the comparison deals with specific aspects of the examined cases (i.e. the three policy dimensions). The data collection relies primarily on policy documents, interviews and secondary literature. A list of interviewees is provided in Annex 1.

This *cahier*, which reflects a part of my broader PhD research, offers a structured and focused comparison of two cases: Quebec and Flanders. It first analyzes both governments' sustainable development policies, using the three policy dimensions as analytical lenses. Subsequently, the observed

similarities and differences between the two cases are explained. The detailed analysis of the cases then allows to formulate policy recommendations.

5. The sustainable development policy of Quebec

Parts 5 and 6 respond to the first, descriptive-analytical part of the research. Part 5 gives a detailed analysis of the sustainable development policy of Quebec. First, a brief historical overview of the policy is given, in order to frame the policy in its right context (5.1). Subsequently, the policy is analyzed following the three policy dimensions: policy framing (5.2), policy goals (5.3) and policy instruments (5.4).

5.1 Historical overview

Quebec is one of the ten provinces of federal Canada. The government of Quebec was among the pioneers to put sustainable development on the political agenda. In 1988 it was the first Canadian government to create a Round Table on Environment and Economy (*Table ronde québécoise sur l'environnement et l'économie*). The instauration of such round tables was a recommendation of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers[6]—more particularly of the Quebec representative in it (Mead 2005: 67-68)—and a direct consequence of the visit of the Brundtland Commission to Canada in 1986[7] (Toner 2000: 58; Toner and Meadowcroft 2009: 84). The Round Table had the task of making the idea of sustainable development concrete for Quebec. As a direct consequence of the activities of the Round Table, the Environment Ministry in 1989 announced the creation of a division for sustainable development (*Sous-ministériat au développement durable et à la conservation*). It was the first entity within the Quebec administration to be formally dedicated

---

[6] The Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers is one of the sectoral councils that assemble the federal and the provincial level. It is one of the typical instruments of intergovernmental relations in Canadian federalism.

[7] The activities and the report of the Brundtland Commission had great resonance in Canada (Toner and Meadowcroft 2009: 78). The secretary-general of the WCED, Jim McNeill, and one of its members, Maurice Strong, were Canadians.

to sustainable development. Its installation within the Environment Ministry has made that in Quebec, until today, that ministry takes the lead in the sustainable development policy. At the initiative of the head of the sustainable development division, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Sustainable Development and Conservation, the government in 1991 launched the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development (*Comité interministériel sur le développement durable*), a horizontal coordination body which represents all departments at the level of assistant deputy ministers[8] and is chaired by the Environment Ministry. It is clear that those early steps to put sustainable development on the agenda were to a large extent triggered by the global sustainable development debate. Quebec has actively participated in the international activities on sustainable development since the mid-1980s. That is marked by the decision of the government to fund the French edition of the Brundtland Report in 1988 (Gouvernement du Québec 1992: 47). The government also declared that it formally committed to the principles and goals of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 (Gouvernement du Québec 2009a), and it feels bound by the engagements taken in Johannesburg (Gouvernement du Québec 2010: 4).

Also during the period of the sovereignist governments between 1994 and 2003 Quebec was active in the international debate. Yet under those governments led by the *Parti québécois* (PQ), no horizontal initiatives to advance the institutionalization of sustainable development were taken, although, as shown by my interviews, there had often been supporters for it. An exception is the creation of the Quebec Action Fund for Sustainable Development (*Fonds d'action québécois pour le développement durable*) in 2000.[9] However, the lack of initiatives did not mean that sustainable development was completely absent from the

---

[8] Within the Quebec administration, an assistant deputy minister is the head of a directorate-general of a ministry.
[9] The Action Fund was created as a result of a budget surplus. It evolved into an association without lucrative purpose that funds projects aimed at promoting behavioural change for sustainable development.

agenda. Rather, the issue reappeared frequently within sectoral policy domains.

The major event triggering the current institutionalization of sustainable development was the return to power in 2003 of the Liberals (PLQ, *Parti liberal du Québec*). The new Prime Minister Charest was a former federal Environment Minister. Having been responsible for an initiative at federal level to launch a multistakeholder partnership for sustainable development in keeping with the Rio commitments[10], Charest mandated his own Environment Minister in 2003 to launch a similar 'green plan' in Quebec. The idea to do so formed part of the Liberals' election programme (PLQ 2002: 24). The PLQ promised the 're-engineering' of the state, including the environmental reorientation of governmental activities (Audet and Gendron 2010). Yet according to observers, the intentions of the new government's Environment Minister Mulcair were overly ambitious, for instance with regard to fiscal measures, and his green plan was blocked by ministers with an economic orientation (Audet and Gendron 2010; Gendron et al. 2005: 23). The initial green plan was then turned into a sustainable development plan, which Mulcair laid down for public consultation at the end of 2004, together with a draft Sustainable Development Act and a strategy and action plan on biodiversity

---

[10] At the Rio Summit, Conservative federal Environment Minister Charest presented the Green Plan as Canada's approach to sustainable development (Tarasofsky 2007: 4). The Green Plan had been developed by his predecessor in 1990, as a response to the Brundtland Report, and had the ambition of being the first comprehensive environmental policy plan in Canada. Although it was backed by significant financial resources, it was mostly aimed at information measures and it was criticized for lacking substance (Gale 1997; Hoberg and Harrison 1994). After Rio, Charest launched his own *Projet de société*, intended to transform the existing Green Plan into a proper Canadian sustainable development strategy. The process failed after the disappearance of political momentum and because of organizational difficulties (Tarasofsky 2007: 6; Toner 2000: 61-62). As a reference to Charest's federal experience, the 2007 Quebec sustainable development strategy is surtitled *Un projet de société pour le Québec*.

(Gendron 2005: 23). The Act was passed in 2006 and intends to promote sustainable development by embedding it into public administration (Assemblée Nationale 2006). It calls for a sustainable development strategy and for the development of sustainable development action plans by each ministry and a series of public organisms (governmental agencies and public enterprises), almost 150 in total. The Act also creates the position of a Sustainable Development Commissioner within the office of the Auditor General of Quebec. The Commissioner has to audit the government with regard to sustainable development and report to Parliament on the implementation of the Act, including on the compliance of the sixteen sustainable development principles that are defined in it. Furthermore, the Act creates the Green Fund and adds the right to a healthful environment and one in which biodiversity is preserved to Quebec's Charter of human rights and freedoms.

5.2 Policy framing

This section analyzes how sustainable development has been framed by the government of Quebec. The chronological overview is subdivided in three main periods: the period before the return to power of the PQ in 1994, the period of the two governments led by the PQ up to 2003, and the period after the return to power of the PLQ in 2003. Subsequently, Quebec's governance model for sustainable development is presented.

5.2.1 1987 to 1994

The first mention of sustainable development in the policy discourse of Quebec was in 1988, in the same year that the government sponsored the French edition of the Brundtland Report. The mention was made in a strategy document of the Environment Ministry, presenting a new approach in environmental policy focused on protection and conservation. In the document, sustainable development was presented as a new social contract between environment and development (see Baril 2006: 70). Although no definition is given, the influence of the WCED is evident, framing sustainable development as the

reconciliation of environment and development.[11] In the document, development is understood as economic progress (Gouvernement du Québec 1988: 16). The interpretation of sustainable development as the conjunction of environmental protection and economic development is noticeable in other initiatives that were taken during this period. It is manifested in the name of the institution that was mandated to define the reach of sustainable development in Quebec (the Round Table on *Environment* and *Economy*). Furthermore, when sustainable development was mentioned for the first time in the government's opening address to Parliament in 1989, it was linked to the same idea. In that speech the government also stressed that environmental protection would have a major stake in its economic development policy (Assemblée Nationale 1989: 9).

5.2.2 1994 to 2003

After the initial period of growing awareness for sustainable development, ten years followed in which the government of Quebec, led by the PQ, took no major transversal initiatives for sustainable development. Sustainable development, then, was largely absent from the main political discourse as a meta-concept. But that does not mean that the themes central to it received no attention. The tone for that trend was set in the government's opening address in 1994, marking the PQ's return to power after ten years. In his speech, Prime Minister Parizeau talks about the Rio Summit, about biodiversity and about climate change, but sustainable development is not mentioned (Assemblée Nationale 1994). That is surprising, since the concept had a prominent place in the PQ's election programme. The programme, for instance, says that the economy must take a necessary bend (*virage*), and that environmental protection must be a factor of economic growth. It also announces that a PQ government will include economic, social and environmental

---

[11] Interestingly, in the English version of the document, '*développement durable*' is translated as "lasting development" (Gouvernement du Québec 1988: 16). The consciousness with regard to the concept in that period should thus not be overestimated.

considerations in its decision-making processes (PQ 1994: 34-36). In the 1996 party programme, the PQ even announced the creation of new governmental structures for sustainable development (PQ 1996: 104), but that was never acted upon when the party was in office.[12] The creation of the Quebec Action Fund for Sustainable Development could be seen as a soft version of the electoral promises. Yet, according to interviewees that only happened because of a budget surplus that the PQ did not want to invest in debt reduction. The creation of the FAQDD did allow the government to state that sustainable development was one of its economic priorities (Baril 2006: 71).

The only transversal document that can be considered to express the government's view on sustainable development in the 1990s, is a report prepared by the Environment Ministry and the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development in 1996. The report, written for the UN General Assembly's special session on 'Rio +5', was meant to give an overview of the actions taken in Quebec since the Rio Summit. The themes developed by it are clearly inspired by Agenda 21.[13] The approach on sustainable development taken in the document reflects the three pillars of sustainable development and stresses the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Furthermore, it is the first document by the government of Quebec that mentions objectives of sustainable development. Those objectives are: ecological

---

[12] The 1996 programme also offers an interesting definition of sustainable development, as "economic development that can be extended to all inhabitants of the planet without compromising the equilibrium of the biosphere, that does not compromise the development of future generations and that exploits the resources of the planet in such a way that they can be renewed" (PQ 1996: 101, personal translation).

[13] The themes elaborated in the report are the quality of life on Earth, the efficient use of natural resources, the protection of common global resources, the management of chemical products and waste, sustainable economic development, the reinforcement of partnership, and the implementation of Agenda 21 (Gouvernement du Québec 1996).

integrity, equity between nations, individuals and generations, and economic efficiency (Gouvernement du Québec 1996: 4).

While the PQ governments have taken no transversal initiatives to institutionalize sustainable development, during their reign the concept frequently emerged within sectoral policy areas. That is said to be the merit of the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development (Gouvernement du Québec 2001: 16). Three examples are given here, concerning environmental, energy and economic policy. The examples show that although the concept of sustainable development is present in many domains, there is no real integration.

In 1994, the Ministry of the Environment was restructured and received a new mandate, aimed at environmental protection and conservation "in a perspective of sustainable development" (Baril 2006: 67, personal translation). According to Baril (2006: 68), that same phrase surfaced in many other texts at the time. It was never specified, however, how such a perspective should be understood. Subsequently, in the Ministry's strategic plan of 2001, sustainable development is presented as a necessary bend (*virage*) that society needs to take. In doing so, it adopts the wording of the PQ's 1994 election programme. The plan further states that the principles of sustainable development demand a new type of environmental, social and economic policies. It also reconfirms environmental protection as an added value to economic growth (Gouvernement du Québec 2001: 16).

In the 1990s sustainable development also enters the discourse of Quebec's energy policy. The energy profile of Quebec is very specific. Its major source of electricity consumption is hydropower. Because hydroelectricity does not emit greenhouse gases it is traditionally put forward by Quebec as a contribution to sustainable development (Sérandour 1998: 60), but the massive scale of its production has significant repercussions on the environment and on local populations. The territory of Quebec encompasses the astonishing proportion of 16% of the world's freshwater reserves (compared to little more than 0.1% of the world's population) and many regions—very

often the ones inhabited by indigenous people—are fit for hydroelectricity production. The state-owned enterprise Hydro-Québec is the largest producer of hydroelectricity in the world. Although the importance of energy in Quebec's economy is decreasing, its share is still significant. The contribution of Hydro-Québec to Quebec's BBP is estimated at 3% (Hydro-Québec 2009: 34). The company's profits are a large source of revenue for the government, despite the low electricity price in Quebec. In 1996 the government adopted a new energy policy entitled *Energy at the Service of Quebec: A Sustainable Development Perspective* (Gendron and Vaillancourt 1998: 30). During the same period, Hydro-Québec adopted the discourse on sustainable development (Sérandour 1998: 62). The interpretation of sustainable development used in the plan and applied by Hydro-Québec is based on the need for economic growth, with the condition of safeguarding environmental quality and equity. Gendron and Vaillancourt (1998: 41) suggest that such an economically oriented interpretation was put forward in order to legitimize electricity installations with a large environmental impact. Sérandour (1998: 62) confirms that Hydro-Québec made no changes in its operations after its adoption of the sustainable development discourse. In short, the 1990s saw a reframing of Quebec's energy policy into a discourse on sustainable development, but the policy itself underwent no significant changes.

A last example elaborated here is economic policy. In 1998 sustainable development was presented as one of the three main goals of the government's economic strategy. Sustainable development was defined narrowly as "meeting the current needs of Quebecers without compromising future generations" (Gouvernement du Québec 1998: 169, personal translation). Several principles common to sustainable development were cited, but the operationalization of some of them raises serious questions. For instance, equity towards future generations was interpreted narrowly as having no budget deficit (Gouvernement du Québec 1998: 173). With regard to the environmental dimension, the preface of the strategy reads that the most

pressing issue is the cutback of bureaucracy. Furthermore, the strategy depicts a very instrumental picture of the environment, stressing its needed capacity to meet the needs of citizens and to process their waste (Gouvernement du Québec 1998: 171), which stands in sharp contrast with the emphasis on conservation in the government's environmental policy.

Those three examples show that, although sustainable development entered many sectoral policies of the government, there was no common vision on the concept. Interviews confirm that during that period there were many conflicts between the environmental and other ministers. In general, it seems that in the 1990s the sustainable development discourse was adopted by the government mainly to promote its economic assets (Sérandour 1998).

This second period is concluded by the report that Quebec presented at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. It defined sustainable development as "the harmony between economic development, environmental sustainability and social equity, in short between the elements that assure the quality of life of the Quebec nation" (Gouvernement du Québec 2002: 65). It also states that sustainable development implies a change in behaviour and in modes of production and consumption (Gouvernement du Québec 2002: 5). The report puts a large emphasis on the indigenous peoples of Quebec, but does not mention the rest of the world. Even when discussing the theme 'sustainable development in a globalized world', the North-South dimension is not mentioned. The theme merely deals with the ambition of Quebec to be present on the international scene.

As a general trend, the framing of sustainable development in this second period moved from the reconciliation of environment and economy towards the universal three pillar model, with a social dimension that is mostly understood as equity among Quebecers. The economic dimension is interpreted as a need for economic growth. As there was no common governmental vision on sustainable development, interpretations

by different sectors often contradict each other, for instance regarding the relation between economy and the environment.

5.2.3 2003 to 2010

The institutionalization of Quebec's current sustainable development policy started when Environment Minister Mulcair of the newly elected Liberal government presented his sustainable development plan in 2004. The plan contained a draft Sustainable Development Act and expressed the government's vision on a transversal sustainable development policy. It is considered as a watered-down version of Mulcair's initial green plan, which was blocked by other members of the cabinet, and it is said to accommodate more easily the economic priorities of the government (Gendron et al. 2005: 23-24). Nevertheless, the plan contained some very interesting elements, such as the framing of sustainable development in which a prioritization of the three pillars is presented. It states that "the environment is the condition of a sustainable development, society is the ultimate goal of development and the economy is the means to get there" (Gouvernement du Québec 2004: 10, personal translation). In contrast to earlier framings, the economy was thus interpreted as a means rather than as a goal of sustainable development. Yet in contrast to that strong wording, the definition of sustainable development in the plan was much weaker. It defined it as a

> "continuous process of improving the conditions of existence of current populations without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same, and which harmoniously integrates the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development" (Gouvernement du Québec 2004: 19, personal translation).

The unusual replacement of 'meeting the needs' with 'improving the conditions of existence' distances the definition from Brundtland (Gendron et al. 2005: 32). For the

operationalization of the concept of sustainable development, a series of principles is presented, which are be analyzed at a later stage (cf 5.3.1). Although the sustainable development plan was meant to present the government's common vision on sustainable development, the weight of the plan and of its interpretation of the concept were limited. It is striking, for instance, that the Prime Minister's message in the consultation document evoked a different framing of sustainable development than the plan itself: "In a context of strong pressures on public finance, we want to stimulate the creation of wealth and to ensure our energy security" (Gouvernement du Québec 2004, personal translation). None of those elements figure in the plan. In addition, on the same day that the Environment Minister made the plan public, the Minister of Economic and Regional Development stated that the plan would not prevent the government from funding polluting industries (Audet and Gendron 2010). In general, Gendron et al. (2005: 24) denounce that the government presented its sustainable development plan while at the same time taking countless decisions opposite to the spirit of sustainable development.

After an extensive consultation phase, the Sustainable Development Act was deposited in Parliament, and unanimously approved in April 2006. The Act frames sustainable development as an urgent need for change of the current way of developing, saying that it is aimed at realizing a necessary bend (*virage*) in society with regard to non-viable modes of development (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §1).[14] That sense of urgency also translated into a stronger definition of sustainable development as opposed to the previous plan. The Act states that

> "'sustainable development' means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of

---

[14] While the French version repeats the word '*virage*' which emerged in the 1990s, the English version of the Act talks of a 'change', a notably weaker choice of words (Mead 2009: 149).

future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities" (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §2).

The first part of the definition is more loyal to the Brundtland definition than in the plan, which is a reaction on the critiques that emerged during the public consultation (Halley and Lemieux 2009: 100). Also the second part of the definition, reflecting the three pillar model, stirred up a debate. The previous wording of the plan ('harmonious integration') was seen by many as a way to avoid arbitration between the three dimensions (Audet and Gendron 2010). While the new wording ('inextricable nature') does not offer a prioritization of the environment, it is still seen as a stronger framing (Halley and Lemieux 2009: 100). However, the plan's framing of the environment as a condition, of society as the ultimate goal, and of economy as the means, was not withheld. Audet and Gendron (2010) suggest that it might be the consequence of influence by business actors. The economic elite of Quebec favours formulations of sustainable development that avoid arbitration (Gendron 2006: 170), and the Liberal government is often perceived as the political arm of Quebec's business milieu (Boismenu et al. 2004: 13).

One of the most particular elements of the Act is its list of the sixteen sustainable development principles that need to be taken into account in the administration's policy and decision-making. The principles are said to be Quebec's response to the 27 principles enshrined in the Rio Declaration (Gouvernement du Québec 2004: 21). Indeed, ten of the sixteen principles bear very close resemblance to the Rio principles, while six others appear to have been added to accommodate domestic priorities, e.g. subsidiarity or protection of cultural heritage. I come back to the principles later, but it is important to affirm here that their choice and formulation are important aspects of the policy framing. As such, Gendron et al. (2005: 34, 40) claim that the principles

depart from economic growth and subordinate the social and environmental dimensions to the economic one.

The constant variation in the framing of sustainable development continues during the implementation of the Act. At the end of 2007, the government issued its first sustainable development strategy[15]. It repeats the definition of the Act and then translates it into the following societal vision:

> "A society in which the citizen's quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all of its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity. A society inspired by a government whose leadership inspires and guides towards this vision" (Gouvernement du Québec 2007b: 18).

It is surprising that the Act's image of an 'inextricable nature' is again replaced by the wording of 'harmony' that was put forward in the plan of 2004. Subsequently, with the adoption of the sustainable development indicators in 2009, the government again proposed a different framing of sustainable development (Gendron et al. 2009: 25), this time according to five types of capitals (human, social, production, financial and natural). In contrast to previous framings, it now prefers a five capital image of sustainable development instead of the three pillar model. It seems as though at each step of the institutionalization process, the government of Quebec feels the need to reinvent the wheel with regard to the interpretation of sustainable development.

---

[15] It should be noted that in 2006 (after the development of the Act but before the issuance of the Strategy), Environment Minister Mulcair—who had shown personal leadership on the issue of sustainable development—was discharged because of public statements against his own government's environmental policies (Audet and Gendron 2010).

5.2.4 Governance model

The governance model for sustainable development put in place by Quebec after 2003 should be interpreted as a combination of two of the models developed by Bachus et al. (2005). On the one hand, it shares many features with a typical holistic governance model. The horizontal character of the Act and of the Strategy commits all departments and public organisms to the same degree. The policy aims to give equal consideration to the three dimensions of sustainable development. The holistic character is also reflected in the mandate of the Sustainable Development Commissioner (cf infra), who can comment on the entirety of public policy in Quebec in the light of sustainable development. However, it is rather atypical of the holistic governance model that the coordination role is assumed by the Environment Ministry (since 2005 renamed the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks). On the other hand, the Quebec approach is a clear application of the policy principles model. The operationalization of the sustainable development policy needs to happen by means of sixteen principles that are defined in the Act. All departments and public organisms must apply those principles, and to help them the government has developed specific integration instruments (cf infra).

5.2.5 Concluding remarks

Sustainable development has been on the political agenda in Quebec since the very start of the activities of the Brundtland Commission. It is thus understandable that its policy framing has known a significant evolution. In the first few years, sustainable development was framed as the marriage between environmental conservation and traditional economic development, which was in accordance with the purpose of the WCED and more broadly with the major dynamics in international environmental politics since the 1972 Stockholm Conference. Subsequently, during the 1990s and in the run-up to the Johannesburg Summit, the bipartite interpretation gradually made way for the tripartite version that was popularized by the Rio Summit. Yet the lack of a transversal governmental vision

was responsible for multiple, sometimes conflicting sectoral interpretations. After 2003, the government of Quebec installed a new management framework based on sustainable development. The new policy is based on an interpretation of sustainable development that is inspired by the Brundtland formulation and by the linkage of the three pillars. Yet with regard to the relation between those three pillars, the interpretation shifts from one document to another. In the discourse a trend can be discerned that favours the economic dimension above the two others. Although the framing of sustainable development still manifests some differences in interpretation, the new policy is now supported by a common vision, most notably put forward by the Sustainable Development Act.

Despite the fact that the framing of sustainable development has evolved over the years in Quebec, some elements have always remained constant. In contrast to intergenerational solidarity, which is sometimes mentioned, it is very striking that the North-South dimension is completely absent from the government's sustainable development discourse. With the exception of the PQ's 1996 party programme (see footnote 12), the rest of the world is never mentioned in Quebec's sustainable development policy. The issue is viewed exclusively as a problem that needs to be resolved within Quebec, stressing equity among Quebecers and solidarity with future generations in Quebec, as if the province were completely isolated from the rest of the world. That element of Quebec's policy framing is particularly surprising, since the government traditionally claims a participating role in the global sustainable development debate, where the North-South dimension has arguably been the most prominent element in the discourse since the policy concept appeared on the agenda.

5.3 Policy goals

I now turn to the analysis of the goals of Quebec's sustainable development policy. The discussion is limited to the current sustainable development policy, as it has gradually been put in place by the government since 2004.

5.3.1 Strategic policy goals

As I put forward in the analysis on policy framing, since the 1990s sustainable development is commonly identified with the three pillar model. The pillars are not only framed as the content of sustainable development, they are frequently presented as Quebec's strategic policy goals. For instance, a recent document mentions the three following priorities of Quebec's sustainable development policy: maintaining environmental integrity and preserving the ecosystems, ensuring social equity, and aiming at economic efficiency (Gouvernement du Québec 2010: 3). Moreover, the strategic goals of Quebec's policy approach are most evidently manifested in the Sustainable Development Act. According to the Act, the ultimate goals of the policy are to install a new management framework that achieves policy coherence and that integrates sustainable development in all governmental policy and decision-making. That should allow Quebec society to take the 'bend' that is needed (Assemblée Nationale 2006). Strategic policy goals, furthermore, can display the intended end result of a policy. Quebec's intended end result is reflected in the vision formulated in the Strategy (cf 5.2.3). The vision again stresses the three pillars of sustainable development. It does not explicitly mention future generations, but it is assumed that the vision is precisely addressed at them. It is also interesting that the vision presents the leadership of the government as a goal. With regard to sustainable development and related issues such as climate change, Quebec is increasingly profiling itself as a leader in North America and as an example to learn from (e.g. Gouvernement du Québec 2004: 6; 2006: 1). That leadership discourse with regard to sustainable development has been prominent since the return to power of the Liberals in 2003, and it is a recurrent theme in the PLQ's political language (e.g. Assemblée Nationale 2007; PLQ 2007: 5, 61). It is also fanatically displayed in the government's external policy (e.g. Québec International 2009).

Quebec's sixteen sustainable development principles constitute a final element of its strategic policy goals. Indeed, strategic goals do not always have to be explicitly formulated as

goals but can also be expressed in values and norms, and that is what the principles defined in the Act basically are. The principles have to be taken into account in all actions taken by the administration. They can be regrouped into economic, social, environmental and governance principles (Gendron et al. 2005: 33), therefore reflecting the interpretation that sustainable development contains four dimensions (an institutional dimensions besides the three traditional dimensions). While the list of principles and their definition reflect an effort and an ambition that are rather remarkable compared to many other sustainable development laws, Gendron et al. (2005: 34, 40) suggest that the principles imply a subordination of the environmental and social dimension to the goal of economic growth. That judgment is justified when the principles are juxtaposed with the 27 Rio principles, from which they are said to be derived. I already noted that some principles are added by Quebec (such as subsidiarity or the protection of cultural heritage). Even more interesting are the Rio principles that were not included in the Act. Indeed, some of the most compelling Rio principles regarding the environmental dimension, such as environmental legislation (UNCED 1992b: §11) or environmental impact assessment (UNCED 1992b: §17), were not withheld. Moreover, Quebec does not repeat the principles that refer to the North-South dimension of sustainable development, such as the eradication of poverty (UNCED 1992b: §5) or the special needs of developing countries (UNCED 1992b: §6), although it is laudable that the rest of the world is, for the first and only time, mentioned in the principle on intergovernmental partnership and cooperation. That principle states, very vaguely, that actions taken in a territory must take into consideration the impact outside that territory (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §6.h). The government did not clarify why some Rio principles were not withheld and why new ones were added. While the influence of international texts is undeniable, the way in which the influence was anchored is obscure.

5.3.2 Operational policy goals

While the strategic policy goals are mostly laid out by the Act, the government's Strategy was intended to concretize the ambitions. The most striking aspect of the Strategy and the subsequent departmental action plans, is the stratification of goals, which makes the whole framework a rather complex puzzle. The Strategy defines three fundamental issues, nine orientations (of which three are priority orientations) and 29 objectives (Gouvernement du Québec 2007b). Those objectives are further translated into 1184 actions by the departments and public organisms in their action plans (MDDEP 2009d: iii).

The three main issues are to "develop knowledge", to "promote responsible action", and to "foster commitment" (Gouvernement du Québec 2007b). Those goals are in the first place aimed at the Quebec administration, and at the Quebec society by extension. The issues imply a rather noncommittal policy. They depict an image in which the government, represented by the coordinating Environment Ministry, is responsible for capacity-building, for sensitization and for stimulating initiatives, while relying mostly on other entities for real action. That image is confirmed by interviews. It is a typical characteristic of the holistic governance model for sustainable development. If the three main issues defined in the Strategy are to be considered as the operational policy goals, that would mean that the government's strong ambitions for the future (reflected in the strategic goals) are translated into a rather weak concretization for the first years (2008-2013), focusing mostly on capacity-building and on the hope that the government's departments and public organisms will take action.

The nine orientations and the 29 objectives have a more operational character than the three issues. However, they show no strong link to the strategic policy goals and it is unclear how they were defined. Some interviewees suggest that the orientations do not constitute new goals, but reflect an inventory of existing governmental priorities that could be considered as elements of sustainable development. That could explain the disconnection between them and the strategic policy goals. The

fact that the orientations and objectives offer no clear vision on how the government intends to achieve sustainable development in Quebec, is one of the most common critiques on the Strategy (Gendron et al. 2007). In the next section, some of the characteristics of Quebec's policy goals are analyzed in more detail.

5.3.3 Goal characteristics

5.3.3.1 Thematic areas

The nine orientations, in which the 29 objectives are enclosed, broadly cover these thematic areas: research and education, health, consumption and production, economy, demography, spatial planning, culture, participation and social integration.[16] While the logic behind the definition of the themes is said to be opaque (Gendron et al. 2007: 42), they all relate to issues that were discussed in Rio, with the exception of culture. At the same time, many of the themes developed in global documents such as Agenda 21 have not been withheld in the Strategy. Some of the most pressing environmental issues (e.g. water) are notably absent. In fact, one of the most recurrent critiques uttered by stakeholders during the public consultation, was that they were looking for the environment in the Strategy (Audet and Gendron 2010). A reason could be that the Strategy is an amalgam of existing governmental priorities rather than a formulation of new goals. Additionally, my hypothesis is that the Strategy's silence with regard to environmental themes is, paradoxically, due to the leading and coordinating role of the Environment Ministry. The Act indeed changed the mandate of

---

[16] The exact themes are: inform, make aware, educate, innovate; reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment; produce and consume responsibly; increase economic efficiency; address demographic changes; practice integrated, sustainable land use and development; preserve and share the collective heritage; promote social involvement; and prevent and reduce social and economic inequality. The three priority orientations are inform, make aware, educate, innovate; produce and consume responsibly; and practice integrated, sustainable land use and development.

the Ministry, previously only responsible for environmental protection, to include the coordination of the new sustainable development policy. That means that in theory the Act has given the Environment Ministry—which is not perceived as a powerful department in Quebec (Gendron 2005: 25)—some form of supervision over the other departments (although it has no say over the content of departmental action plans). If the Strategy would have given the priority to environmental issues, its interface with other departments would have been limited. That could explain, according to my hypothesis, why the Environment Ministry emphasized non-environmental themes in the Strategy. The hypothesis is confirmed by some of my interviewees, and it is corroborated by the discourse of the Ministry, which in its communications is generally swift to stress that environmental concerns are only one part of sustainable development (e.g. MDDEP 2008). In line with the nine orientations, the 29 objectives refer very little to the environmental domain. The operational policy goals are thus not only a weak translation of the more ambitious strategic policy goals. They are also an incomplete concretization of them, since the strategic goals stressed environmental integrity and the preservation of the ecosystems.

Even if the orientations and objectives defined in the Strategy are delineated, in the broader political discourse other themes are frequently associated with sustainable development. I already mentioned the Prime Minister's introduction to the Strategy which mentioned wealth creation and energy security. Another example is the press release that accompanied the Strategy, which evoked themes such as climate change and transport, that are not reflected in the Strategy itself (Gouvernement du Québec 2007a). The government of Quebec has a climate change action plan that is not strongly linked to the sustainable development policy. However, following an increasing global trend, in the government's discourse the issue of sustainable development is often narrowed to climate change. The same trend was noticeable in my interviews with political officials in Quebec. In recent years, sustainable development is

increasingly framed as an application of climate change. It is due to the fact that climate change is a top priority on the global political agenda, and the government of Quebec, notably proud of its reputation in hydroelectricity (cf supra), misses no occasion to put its climate change policy in the spotlight (e.g. Québec International 2009).[17] That shows the power of sustainable development as a legitimating concept.

5.3.3.2 Specificity

The strategic policy goals and the intended outcome (expressed in the vision) of the government's sustainable development policy are very vague and abstract, which is rather typical for strategic goals. With regard to the operational policy goals, the specificity of the 29 objectives varies. They range from extremely abstract statements (e.g. enhancing the demographic balance of Quebec), over relatively clear but abstract ambitions (e.g. periodically drawing the portrait of sustainable development in Quebec) to concrete objectives (e.g. increasing schooling and the number of graduates). Yet in general the operational goals are not specific. It appears that the Strategy intentionally has a high degree of abstraction, so that the departments and public organisms have the maximum opportunity to relate to the Strategy's goals in their action plans. Interviews reveal that among the 1184 actions proposed in the action plans, some are new while others are just 'recycled' actions that had been initiated before. The departments and public organisms are also free to choose which indicators accompany their actions.[18] The Strategy merely contained 'sample indicators', to be used as examples. The choice of providing a noncommittal coordination and granting a large degree of freedom to the other departments

---

[17] In addition, the government's international activities in the name of sustainable development mostly concern climate change. Most notable are the Prime Minister's activeness in The Climate Group, and the recent accession of Quebec to nrg4SD (see footnote 3), which focuses on climate change in recent years (Happaerts et al. 2010c).

[18] The action plans contain a total of 1585 indicators (MDDEP 2010: 5).

and organisms is a minimalistic interpretation of the holistic governance model. The final list of sustainable development indicators has only been developed when the Strategy and the departmental action plans were already issued.

5.3.3.3 Timeframe and analysis of current situation

for the strategic policy goals, the government remains silent on the question when they should be attained, but it is rather clear that they are thought of as very long-term goals. Also with regard to the operational goals it is hard to establish their target date, because it is not made explicit. But since the Strategy, due to be revised in 2013, is aimed at the achievement of the objectives (Gouvernement du Québec 2007b: 20), we can assume that 2013 is the target date. With regard to the timeframes of the sustainable development policy, it is also important to point out that the government did not comply with the deadlines it set for itself in the Act. For instance, the indicators were released almost a year after the government was legally required to do so.

The government has developed sustainable development indicators on three levels. A first level is constituted by the 1585 follow-up indicators defined by all departments and public organisms in their action plans. A second list is meant to measure the achievement of the 29 objectives of the Strategy. Third, a set of indicators has been developed to measure the progress of the Quebec society as a whole with regard to sustainable development. That third set is built on the 'capital approach'. That approach is criticized for supporting a 'weak' representation of sustainable development, in which the different kinds of capital are substitutable (for instance, a loss of natural capital can be compensated by an increase of financial capital) (Gendron et al. 2009: 23). Furthermore, the approach is completely disconnected from the existing elements of the policy. Not only does it frame sustainable development in a different way, it bears no link to the strategic or operational policy goals.

The indicators will be used as an evaluation tool when the Strategy is revised in 2013. Ideally, the goals of the next strategy

will thus be based on an analysis of the current situation. That cannot be said of the Strategy's current goals, which adds to the perception that they were 'randomly' formulated based on existing departmental actions and priorities. It is also striking that the first document outlining the government's sustainable development policy, the 2004 sustainable development plan, contained no analysis whatsoever of the problems that are related to sustainable development. The plan contents itself with an overview of how sustainable development emerged on the international agenda, before turning to the proposed content of the policy.[19]

5.3.3.4 Backing

With regard to the legitimacy and authority of the policy goals, both the political and societal backing raise some questions. First, it is important to point out that the Act, which contains most of the strategic policy goals, was unanimously approved in Parliament. That manifests a large political backing among all parties, and is promising for the continuity of the sustainable development policy in case of a change of government. Within the government, although the different stages of the policy are led by the Environment Ministry, the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development should assure the political backing. Yet the political backing of the government's sustainable development policy is overshadowed both by certain actions of the government that oppose sustainable development in practice as well as by the statements of certain Ministers with regard to the sustainable development policy (cf supra).

Second, as for the societal backing of the policy, the different elements that were put in place since 2004 have been subject to a varying degree of public participation. First of all, the sustainable development plan has known a consultation phase that was exceptional in Quebec. On the one hand, Environment

---

[19] In the absence of an analysis of the current situation, the first Sustainable Development Commissioner decided to calculate Quebec's Ecological Footprint (cf 5.4.1.4).

Minister Mulcair travelled all around the province in 2005 to personally consult with stakeholders on the content of the plan. On the other hand, the plan was heavily discussed within a parliamentary commission, for which input was given from many interested parties, including NGOs, local authorities, indigenous peoples, unions, employers' organizations and academics. Subsequently, two similar parliamentary commissions were held to discuss a draft of the Strategy in 2007 and the first list of indicators in 2009. While the consultation on the plan in 2005 was broadly applauded, critique has been uttered on the subsequent parliamentary commissions. Those are said to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to take into account the preoccupations of all citizens, environments and conditions of life, as is suggested by the Act (Gendron et al. 2009: 8). In any case, based on the public consultation through the different parliamentary commissions, the government generally states that its sustainable development policy has a broad societal backing. The question remains whether the input given during the consultation phases has also been taken into account by the government. In that regard, Gendron et al. (2007: 70-77) show that near to none of the 21 recommendations made by the Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Research Chair on the draft Act has been followed by the government.

5.3.4 Concluding remarks

Similar to the conclusions made with regard to Quebec's policy framing, the analysis of policy goals shows a continuing variation. For instance, the distance between the strategic and the operational policy goals is remarkable. The strategic policy goals, especially as they are reflected by the Act, are quite strong and express the political will to make some ambitious changes to orient policy-making towards sustainable development in the long term. The operational policy goals, especially how they are presented in the Strategy, express a much weaker ambition and are an incomplete concretization of the strategic goals. Furthermore, most goals are very vague, the indicators designed for their measurability are disconnected from the rest of the

policy, and their political and societal backing leaves much to be desired.

5.4 Policy instruments

5.4.1 Institutional instruments

5.4.1.1 Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development

As I showed before, the creation of the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development in 1991 was one of the first steps taken by the government of Quebec towards the institutionalization of sustainable development. Interviews reveal that the initiative was meant to build a network of administrative officials throughout different departments that were important to sustainable development, thus broadening the scope of the issue beyond the environmental domain. In 1992, the government mandated the Committee to coordinate the follow-up of Agenda 21. The Committee then took the initiative to take stock of all governmental initiatives that were in line with the outcomes of the Rio Summit (Gouvernement du Québec 1996). The Committee is now the main mechanism for information exchange, coordination and promotion with regard to the government's sustainable development policy (MDDEP 2009a). Gathering a few times a year, it gives orientation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Act. The Committee assembles the main governmental departments at the level of assistant deputy minister, and is chaired by the assistant deputy minister for Sustainable Development of the Environment Ministry. After the development of the Sustainable Development Strategy, the membership of the Committee was extended to the public organisms that are subject to the Act (Gouvernement du Québec 1996). In addition to the governmental departments, 32 organisms are now represented on the Committee.

Although the Committee is one of the most important instruments of the sustainable development policy, it has never been made permanent by the government and it is not one of the official ministerial committees in Quebec. Also, considering the

importance of its tasks, it is surprising that the Committee was not mentioned at all in the Sustainable Development Act.

5.4.1.2 New management framework

The Sustainable Development Act calls for "a new management framework within the Administration to ensure that powers and responsibilities are exercised in the pursuit of sustainable development" (Assemblée Nationale 2006).[20] The new framework intends "to better integrate the pursuit of sustainable development into the policies, programs and actions of the Administration" and to make sure "that government actions in this area are coherent" (Assemblée Nationale 2006). The most important elements in the architecture of that new management framework are the governmental Sustainable Development Strategy and the Action Plans of the departments and public organisms (Audet and Gendron 2010).

The Strategy has already been analyzed in previous sections. It is the government's first strategy document, and is valid until 2013, when it will be revised. With regard to the other ministries and public organisms (governmental agencies and public enterprises), a total of 146 entities are compelled by the Act to issue a Sustainable Development Action Plan (MDDEP 2009c: 8). In that action plan, they have to publicize which actions they intend to pursue to contribute to the Strategy (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §15). In addition, they have to refer to those actions in their yearly activity reports (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §17). The public organisms subject to the Act are very diverse actors, ranging from museums to public enterprises such as Hydro-Québec. In total, the Act's stipulations cover the entirety of the provincial public administration, with the exception of the judiciary, health institutions, educational facilities and local authorities.[21]

---

[20] According to Mead (2009: 145-146), only two previous laws set out the management framework of the public administration in Quebec, which gives high importance to the Sustainable Development Act.

[21] However, the Sustainable Development Act states that at any given time the government can decide that local authorities, health institutions

In my interviews, government officials express an optimistic view on the new management framework, convinced that in time it will engender a significant change in the decision-making processes of all departments and public organisms. It is indeed laudable that Quebec has chosen to include all governmental agencies and public enterprises in its approach, while most other governments traditionally only target their own ministries and departments. Yet it remains to be seen which impact the new management framework really has, considering that the government applies no enforcement mechanisms on the public organisms. There is no governmental oversight on the content of the actions included in the action plans or on their implementation, so entities can basically say whatever they want in them and do whatever they want with it. As it turns out, not all organisms have actually issued their action plan before the deadline put forward by the Act (MDDEP 2009c: 3). Several of the Strategy's objectives are met by less than a handful actions (MDDEP 2009d: 8). Moreover, interviews with non-governmental stakeholders suggest that many of the actions concern decisions that were taken anyway. It thus seems that the political weight of the new management framework still leaves much to be desired.

5.4.1.3 Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau

In accordance with how the concept of sustainable development historically evolved in Quebec, the Act gives a central role to the Environment Ministry in the new management framework. The Ministry has the tasks to promote and coordinate the sustainable development policy, to improve the knowledge of it and to provide expertise in order to advance the integration of the objectives and principles of the Act (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §13). Yet the Act does not assign any new resources to the Ministry to accompany those additional tasks. The assignment of the lead role to the Environment Ministry without new financial means is one of the most ardent criticisms on the policy (cf infra). The Ministry's mandate under the Sustainable

---

and/or educational facilities also need to comply with it (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §4).

Development Act is executed by the Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau.[22] The Bureau finds its origin in the division that was created in 1989 (cf supra). The Bureau, a team of sixteen officials, concentrates on coordination, expertise, sensitization and capacity-building.

To coordinate the new management framework, the Bureau has built a network of so-called 'sustainable development officers' within the public administration. Each of the 146 entities targeted by the Act was asked to design an official as its main contact point with regard to sustainable development. In most cases the officer is also responsible for the development of the entity's Action Plan. The network of sustainable development officers is the lower-level equivalent of the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development. The Bureau organizes events where all the officers can meet, and it has developed an internal website for information-exchange. In many entities, the function of sustainable development officer was just one more supplementary task for a certain official. Yet in others, the initiative has really made an impact. The Ministry of International Relations, for instance, has created a new, relatively high-level function to manage all transversal policy issues, including sustainable development.

The Bureau also undertakes studies to accumulate expertise with regard to governance for sustainable development, for instance on sustainable development indicators (MDDEP 2007a). In addition, it monitors the progress of the government's sustainable development policy (e.g. MDDEP 2009c) and reports on the implementation of the Strategy (MDDEP 2009d). It wants to improve the knowledge on sustainable development within the public administration, and is preparing a plan on sensitization and formation on sustainable development. Interviews indicate that a large part of the Bureau's energy is dedicated to explaining what the sustainable development policy consists of.

---

[22] The Bureau is one of the three divisions under the supervision of the deputy assistant minister for Sustainable Development.

The Bureau has developed several tools to advance the capacity-building with regard to sustainable development within other departments and organisms. It has developed guidelines on the development of the sustainable development actions plans (MDDEP 2007b). Although a government decision stipulates that all entities must take the guidelines into account, they leave extensive freedom of movement with regard to the content of the action plans. Another tool developed by the Bureau is meant as to assist entities to take into account the sustainable development principles defined by the Act (MDDEP 2009b). That guide ultimately wants to improve decision-making. Yet, surprisingly, it does not call for the consideration of the principles into all actions and decisions. In a first instance, it merely invites entities to consider the effects of the sustainable development principles in the decisions that they take (MDDEP 2009b: 7). In order to do so, entities are encouraged to select certain actions that can be relevant in light of the principles and to reflect on how those actions can be improved when the principles are taken into account. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Quebec Action Fund for Sustainable Development, the Bureau has developed a similar guide, with a similar method, for the integration of sustainable development preoccupations into procedures to grant subsidies or finances (MDDEP and FAQDD 2009).

While the Environment Ministry is not considered as a powerful department in Quebec (cf supra), the Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau itself is said to have a weak position within the Ministry. Interviews confirm that the Bureau's cooperation with other partners is many times easier than with other divisions of the same Ministry. Furthermore, it is clear that the huge tasks put aside for the Bureau are not in proportion with the resources it has at its disposal. It has not prevented the Bureau from developing useful and interesting tools for coordination and capacity-building. Yet it is unfortunate that, in the tools that it develops, the Bureau takes a very weak stance vis-à-vis the other departments and public organisms. In contradiction with the Act, the tools only 'invite' or 'encourage' to

take action on sustainable development, but they never compelled the entities to take sustainable development into account. The Bureau's noncommittal attitude might be a consequence of its weak position within the administration. The effect is that the theoretically strong character of the Act is worn down by the weak approach promoted by the Environment Ministry in practice. There is no instance that guarantees the compliance of the other entities. The sustainable development policy of the government thus relies completely on their political (good)will.

5.4.1.4 Sustainable Development Commissioner

The Act creates the position of a Sustainable Development Commissioner within the office of the Auditor General of Quebec. The Auditor General is a typical institution of the democratic systems of the Westminster model. It is dedicated to auditing the government and reports directly to Parliament. The Sustainable Development Commissioner is nominated by the Auditor General and serves as his deputy. He has to report on a yearly basis on the implementation of the Act and on the general progress of the government with regard to the pursuit of sustainable development (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §31-34). The position was copied from the federal level—where the position of Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development was created within the office of the Auditor General of Canada in 1995—despite the common critique on the weak position and low impact of the federal Commissioner (Tarasofsky 2007: 8; Toner and Meadowcroft 2009: 85). In contrast to the federal architecture, many actors wanted the Commissioner in Quebec to be a truly independent institution, accountable only to Parliament and not to the Auditor General, but that approach was not withheld.

The Auditor General nominated Harvey Mead as the first Sustainable Development Commissioner of Quebec in 2007. Mead had previously been the first Assistant Deputy Minister for Sustainable Development in the Environment Ministry and is a prominent member of the environmental movement in Quebec. Mead's first report to Parliament was given great visibility and

media coverage, because it included the calculation of the Ecological Footprint of Quebec. In absence of an analysis of the situation in Quebec with regard to sustainable development (cf 5.3.3.3), the Commissioner wanted to establish the extent of the needed '*virage*' foreseen in the Act (Vérificateur général du Québec 2007: 20). The report concluded that Quebec's Ecological Footprint is 6 global hectares (gha) per capita. It is smaller than the average Canadian Footprint (7.6 gha/capita)—due to the fact that Quebec's electricity consumption emanates to a large degree from hydropower (cf supra)—, but still much larger than the Footprint of the average world citizen (2.2 gha/capita), and more than three times larges than the world's biocapacity allows (1.8 gha/capita) (Vérificateur général du Québec 2007: 8).[23] Mead also announced that in his next report he would calculate the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) for Quebec (Vérificateur général du Québec 2007: 20), as an alternative to GDP. Yet an end was put to his mandate before his second report was completed. Many interviewees invoke the announcement of the calculation of the GPI as the reason for Mead's discharge and they qualify it as a political move. In my analysis, Mead's approach inspired by ecological economics was probably perceived as problematic by the government. Indeed, Quebec's high Ecological Footprint does not match with the government's preferred image of Quebec as a sustainable development leader. Moreover, the Footprint emphasizes the external dimension of sustainable development, and the repercussions of Quebec's modes of production and consumption on the rest of the world. That does not correspond with the framing Quebec's sustainable development policy, in which the North-South dimension is largely ignored.

Because of what happened with the mandate of the first Commissioner and because of the fact that the position is still relatively recent, it is hard to establish its impact. What is certain, is that the Commissioner's reports are an excellent source of

---

[23] The Ecological Footprint is also used in other subnational sustainable development policies (Happaerts 2009: 11-14).

information, and that they can help broaden the support for sustainable development, in the first place among Members of Parliament. Besides an analysis of the progress of the implementation of the Act, the reports contain broader analyses on sustainable development in Quebec. The first Commissioner's report contained an analysis of Quebec's agricultural production and on sustainable production and consumption, in addition to the calculation of the Footprint (Vérificateur général du Québec 2007). The second report—presented by the Auditor General himself in the absence of a Commissioner—scrutinized Quebec's mining sector, transport in Montreal, and housing policy (Vérificateur général du Québec 2009). The third report, written by newly appointed Commissioner Jean Cinq-Mars, focused on demographic changes and biodiversity (Vérificateur général du Québec 2010).

5.4.2 Legal instruments

The legal instruments of the Quebec sustainable development policy are quite strong. The Sustainable Development Act is the cornerstone, and at the same time the strongest tool, of the entire sustainable development policy. Furthermore, a new right was inscribed in Quebec's Charter of human rights and freedoms.

5.4.2.1 Sustainable Development Act

The Sustainable Development Act has resurged many times in this analysis, because it really is the principal element of Quebec's sustainable development policy. As I have repeatedly shown, the majority of the instruments and the strategic policy goals is enshrined in it. Most importantly, the voluminous Act defines the sixteen sustainable development principles that need to be taken into account by the entire public administration. The Act should thus be considered as the most important instrument of the sustainable development policy. It can be invoked by citizens and by courts, in order to compel the government to respect the spirit and commitments of sustainable development.

5.4.2.2 The right to a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved

In 1975, the Parliament of Quebec adopted the Charter of human rights and freedoms, a so-called 'quasi-constitutional' or fundamental law that contains the basic rights of Quebecers (Assemblée Nationale 2010). The Sustainable Development Act inscribes the following new right in the Charter: "Every person has a right to live in a healthful environment in which biodiversity is preserved, to the extent and according to the standards provided by law" (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §19; 2010: §46.1). The right to a qualitative environment was already enshrined in another law, but the inclusion in the Charter is stronger (although it was not withheld as a fundamental right, but as an economic and social right). Because of the superiority of the Charter vis-à-vis other laws, Halley (2005: 70, 76) considers the inclusion of this right as one of the most important elements of the sustainable development policy.

5.4.3 Economic instruments

In contrast to the legal instruments, the economic instruments put in place by the government of Quebec are quite weak.[24] No specific budget is allocated to the sustainable development policy, and besides the Green Fund no new resources were designated by the Sustainable Development Act.

---

[24] The Quebec Action Fund for Sustainable Development deserves some mention here. It is an association without lucrative purpose that promotes behavioural change for sustainable development by funding projects of cooperatives and of associations without lucrative purpose. It evolved out of one of several funds created by the PQ government in 2000 as a result of a budget surplus. It is thus an economic instrument, with sensitization as its main aim, that was created by the government but that has become independent of it. In accordance with the political priorities of the current government, the Action Fund recently focuses above all on climate change. Several interviewees believe that the Action Fund has positively contributed to the growing awareness for sustainable development in Quebec. The scope of its means is, however, relatively small and certainly not sufficient to achieve the goals of the sustainable development policy.

That means that the Environment Ministry received no additional means to support its new tasks. Moreover, the sustainable development actions undertaken by the departments and public organisms rely completely on their existing resources. The government thus invests very few financial resources in the sustainable development policy.

Through the Green Fund, the Environment Ministry can financially support environmental projects initiated by local authorities or by associations without lucrative purpose (Assemblée Nationale 2006: §26). It is the only element of the Act that directly involves local authorities. Critics denounce the creation of such a Fund by the same government that cancelled many subsidies to environmental groups. In addition, according to Gendron et al. (2005: 48-49), the financial sources of the Green Fund do not emanate from governmental sources, but originate mainly from some existing environmental taxes (e.g. on packaging and waste).

5.4.4 Information instruments

Governments can apply instruments that rely on not much more than information to attain their policy goals. In the case of Quebec, many of the institutional instruments previously discussed also serve as information instruments. The reports of the Commissioner, some of the tools developed by the Coordination Bureau, and the outputs of the new management framework (the Act, the Strategy and the action plans) are all partly intended as information instruments. They supply the governmental departments, the public organisms and the broader public with information on the sustainable development policy, to stimulate initiatives that will help to make the necessary change. Besides the ones already mentioned, the eco-responsibility policy and the sustainable development indicators serve as information instruments.

5.4.4.1 Policy for an eco-responsible government

The administrative policy for an eco-responsible government, issued in 2009, defines guidelines to promote the exemplary role of the government as a buyer and a consumer (Gouvernement

du Québec 2009b). In line with the sustainable development policy, it contributes to one of the orientations of the Strategy, i.e. produce and consume responsibly. The guidelines are not enforceable, the policy merely 'invites' the departments and public organisms to adopt them (Gouvernement du Québec 2009b: 1).

5.4.4.2 Sustainable development indicators

The sustainable development indicators that were mentioned before (cf 5.3.3.3) also serve as information instruments. In combination with the Commissioner's reports, they should thus provide an assessment of the condition of sustainable development in Quebec. First, a series of indicators was developed to measure the achievement of the 29 objectives of the strategy (ISQ 2010b). Second, the list of indicators using the capital approach intends to measure the general progress of the Quebec society as a whole towards sustainable development. The Environment Ministry defends the choice of the capital approach, as opposed to a more traditional 'objective approach', by stating that it was inspired by the publications of international organizations (the UN, the OECD and the EU) and by the experiences of other governments (such as Belgium, Norway and Switzerland) (ISQ and MDDEP 2010a: 20; MDDEP 2010: 7). Yet the indicators are much criticized because of their discontinuity with regard to the other elements of the policy and the fact that they support a weak interpretation of sustainable development. For instance, observers denounce that they promote a very economically-oriented vision of the environment (RNCREQ 2009: 12-14). In addition, as shown by Gendron et al. (2009: 19-22), Belgium, Norway and Switzerland indeed use indicators according to the capital approach, but those are not the main indicators used by those governments.

5.4.5 Concluding remarks

The sustainable development policy of Quebec accords an important place to institutional policy instruments, that employ organizational structures and planning activities. But also other types of instruments are applied. The most important tool is the extensive Sustainable Development Act, which obliges the

entirety of the public administration to take into account sixteen principles of sustainable development, and which installs a new management framework intended to generate a fundamental change with regard to non-viable modes of development. Yet in general, many instruments that were put in place *de facto* weaken the strong character of the Act. In addition, no enforcement mechanisms are created to oversee the implementation of the Act by the departments and public organisms.

6. The sustainable development policy of Flanders

This section analyzes the case of Flanders. First, the Flemish context is described and a brief historical overview is given (6.1). Subsequently, the analysis turns to the policy framing (6.2), the policy goals (6.3) and the policy instruments (6.4) of the Flemish sustainable development policy.

6.1 Historical overview

After the Rio Summit, the concept of sustainable development gradually introduced itself in several policy areas in Flanders, which was at that time still getting used to its new powers and competences as a young federated entity of Belgium. Sustainable development surfaced in domains such as environment, economy, agriculture, transport and development cooperation. Yet the degree and manner in which it was integrated in policies differed starkly in each domain and from minister to minister. For instance, sustainable development became one of the principal leitmotivs of environmental policy, but was considered only as an external trend to be reckoned with (in the same way as globalization) by the Economy department (Bachus et al. 2005: 122-123). In many cases, the integration of sustainable development meant not much more than the addition of the word 'sustainable' in the policy discourse.

In 1999, sustainable development was prominently included in the coalition agreement of the new government of Liberals, Socialists and Greens. That happened especially under the impulse of the Green Party, which was in office for the first time in Belgium and which delivered the Environment Minister. The Greens attached a particular importance to the sustainable development agenda and invested many political capital in the preparation of the Johannesburg Summit (between 2002 and 2004 they also delivered the Minister for Development Cooperation). One of the main objectives of the new government was to reorganize the Flemish administration. It initiated the process called Better Administrative Policy (*Beter Bestuurlijk Beleid*), a restructuring of the entire public administration that

would take several years to be finalized. In 2001, the government decided that in the new structure, sustainable development should be anchored as a horizontal issue. It also decided to attach particular attention to sustainable development in its long-term policy project Colourful Flanders (*Kleurrijk Vlaanderen*) (Vlaamse Overheid 2001b). That decision was provoked by the commotion that arose when Belgium was ranked at an astonishingly bad 79th position in the second Environmental Sustainability Index (see Happaerts 2009: 15). The Colourful Flanders project resulted in the Vilvoorde Pact, a convention between the Flemish government and its main socio-economic partners. The Pact, which formulated 21 goals for the 21st century, had sustainable development as its point of departure (Vlaamse Overheid 2001a).

During the same period, some policy domains started to experiment with transition management. Transition management refers to governance processes that attempt to influence radical changes of societal systems (e.g. energy, transport, food) with the aim of solving persistent problems (Paredis 2010: 7). Flanders thus became the first testing ground for those innovative governance processes outside the Netherlands, where they originated (Paredis 2008: 5). Transition processes were set up in two areas, sustainable housing and living, and sustainable material use. The processes operated for several years without any reference to the sustainable development agenda (Paredis 2008: 13). It was only recently that they were included in the Flemish sustainable development policy.

The single most significant event triggering the institutionalization of the Flemish sustainable development policy was the Johannesburg Summit. Because of the fact that Belgium presided the EU in the second half of 2001, and because of the large constitutional access to multilateral decision-making that Flanders enjoyed since 1993, Flanders was closely involved in the preparation of the Johannesburg Summit and in the negotiations of the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy that was drafted at the time (Happaerts and Van den Brande 2010: 21). A large Flemish delegation was also present at the

Johannesburg Summit itself, where the Environment Minister negotiated and signed the Gauteng Declaration, in which subnational governments pledged to issue sustainable development strategies (Happaerts et al. 2010b: 136). In the aftermath of the Johannesburg Summit, administrative officials from within the Environment department took the initiative of creating an interdepartmental working group to consult with officials from other policy domains on sustainable development issues. In 2004, the Flemish government, in part stimulated by the administrative working group, started to reflect on a future Flemish sustainable development strategy, to comply with its international commitments. Several studies were commissioned and different recommendations were issued. In the same year, the government prepared the final phase of the reorganization process Better Administrative Policy. In that context, it was decided that the coordinating responsibility of sustainable development should reside with the prime minister.[25] The decision was put into practice by the new government of Christian democrats, Socialists and Liberals that took office in the summer of 2004.

New Prime Minister Leterme thus became the first Flemish head of government with 'sustainable development' in his official portfolio. He immediately took some steps to pursue his new responsibility. A very small coordination cell was created in 2005 within the Prime Minister's administration. The cell took over the lead of the interdepartmental working group, which was refurbished. The cell and the Prime Minister's cabinet drafted a Flemish Sustainable Development Strategy, which was presented for consultation and adopted by the Flemish government in 2006. The Strategy is above all a framework text laying out strategic objectives. A series of twelve operational projects was subsequently approved to concretize the Strategy. Since 2006, the Flemish government has also inscribed a new

---

[25] Although I prefer to use this general term, the term used in Belgium to refer to the heads of government of the Communities and Regions is 'minister-president'.

post on 'sustainable development' in its annual budget. Two years after the adoption of the Strategy, a Sustainable Development Act was passed in the Flemish Parliament. It obliges every Flemish government to issue a new sustainable development strategy. In 2010, after the Flemish elections that installed a government of Christian Democrats, Socialists and Nationalists, the government proceeded towards a revision of the Strategy[26].

6.2 Policy framing

This section tracks how sustainable development was framed by the Flemish government before 2004, and how the policy framing progressively evolved since the government in 2004 institutionalized the concept. I also assess how sustainable development is framed in sectoral policy areas and in the government's horizontal policies. Finally, the governance model applied by Flanders is analyzed in this section.

6.2.1 Before 2004

In the period before 2004, Flanders had no established policy or agreed vision on sustainable development. It is a period in which the international developments on sustainable development were followed-up by the Environment department and in which the concept started to appear in other policy domains. Most importantly, it was included as a basic principle in the 1999 coalition agreement. That stated that the government would pay attention to sustainable development in all policy areas, in order to govern in a future-oriented and innovative way. Sustainable development was defined as

---

[26] It is the government's intention to endow the revised Strategy with a long-term vision on sustainable development in Flanders. Furthermore, the revised Strategy will put a major emphasis on transition management. However, since the revision of the Strategy is not yet finalized nor approved by the Flemish government at the time of writing, it is not taken into account in this analysis.

"meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the possibilities of future generations. Sustainable development occurs within the ecological limits, and pays attention to the less fortunate in our society" (Vlaamse Regering 1999: 4, personal translation).

It is a clear reference to the Brundtland definition, including to the focus on needs and on limitations that is also present in the Brundtland Report. In other texts, sustainable development is rather identified with the three pillar model. In a speech opening the 2000-2001 parliamentary session, Prime Minister Dewael interpreted sustainable development as an attempt "to bring together economic welfare, environmentally sound quality and social justice in a win-win-win approach" (Dewael 2000: 7, personal translation). In other documents, the win-win-win approach is replaced by a mere equilibrium between the pillars. The Vilvoorde Pact prescribes that "there is a balance in the attention to and distribution over economic, social and ecological goals" (Vlaamse Overheid 2001a: personal translation).

Before the institutionalization of sustainable development in Flanders, the concept was interpreted in different ways across policy domains. That was the conclusion of a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The report studied the use of the term 'sustainable' in the Flemish administration, and affirmed that it was incorrectly employed in three main senses: 'renewable', 'qualitative' or 'lasting' (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007: 138-139). Similarly, Bachus et al. (2005: 145-152) found that sustainable development was interpreted in various ways in different policy domains. For instance, it was understood as a long-term investment for future generations by the Spatial Planning department, as corporate social responsibility by the Employment department and as the coherence between environment and socioeconomic developments by the Environment department. The reason for the diverging interpretations, besides the lack of a transversal governmental vision, might be the discrepancy of knowledge of sustainable development within the different policy

areas, as suggested by an inventory by the interdepartmental working group (WGDO 2004).

6.2.2 2004 to 2009

In the institutionalization phase of the Flemish sustainable development policy, most documents define sustainable development by referring to the Brundtland definition, to the three pillar vision, to the long term horizon and to the North-South dimension. The first political formulation of the concept was given by the Prime Minister's first policy note[27] on sustainable development in 2004. The note talks about the "amalgamation of economic growth, social progress and ecological balance" (Leterme 2004: 5, personal translation). It says that solidarity with future generations and with deprived regions in the world are essential, and that sustainable development strives for the quality of life "not only in Flanders but also in the rest of the world" (Leterme 2004: 5, personal translation). The definition given in the Sustainable Development Strategy repeats the same elements (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 11), supplemented by the view that sustainable development adds a fourth pillar, i.e. the institutional dimension, to the three traditional pillars (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 26). The most authoritative definition was subsequently given by the Sustainable Development Act, which defines sustainable development as:

> "a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the possibilities of future generations to meet their own needs, through which attention is given to the integration of and the synergy between the social, the ecological and the economic dimension, and the realization of which demands a process of change in which the use of resources, the destination of investments, the

---

[27] In Flanders, a policy note expresses a minister's plans within a certain policy domain for the political term ahead. Typically, the policy notes of each policy domain are presented to Parliament during the first months of the parliamentary session that follows the elections.

direction of technological development and institutional changes are adapted to future as well as to present needs" (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §2.1, personal translation).

The North-South dimension was included only in the memorandum that accompanied the Act (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 7). In short, the main texts that lay down the Flemish sustainable development policy present a rather complete definition of it. Yet it is not clear how the relation between the three pillars is to be understood exactly. The early texts talk simultaneously of a 'balance', of an 'amalgamation' and of 'win-win-win situations' (Leterme 2004: 5; Vlaamse Regering 2006: 10, 34; 2007: 11). The original text of the Strategy mentions 'synergy and integration' (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 38), which was removed from the published version. In the published brochure of Strategy, the relation between the pillars is understood as follows: "Whenever measures are taken in one of the pillars, the other pillars must be taken into account. For instance, for an economic measure, the ecological and social consequences must also be estimated" (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 11, personal translation). That is a very weak relation, since it does not oblige anything other than an estimation of consequences. Moreover, the Strategy stresses that the fourth, institutional pillar is put in place to guarantee the 'balance' between the other three pillars (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 11). However, the Act in 2008 reiterated the wording of 'synergy and integration'. Moreover, the government's memorandum that accompanied the Act emphasizes that the integration between the three pillars should be more than a balance, without further specification (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 9).

Despite the relatively strong definitions in the texts, the interpretation of sustainable development appears much weaker in the discourse of the main political actors. In general, they interpret sustainable development narrowly as the balance between the three pillars (e.g. Vlaams Parlement 2006). Moreover, as soon as they discuss issues that transcend the

sustainable development policy as such, the framing changes. For instance, in his speech opening the 2005-2006 parliamentary session, Prime Minister Leterme—only a year after he presented his first policy note on sustainable development—interpreted sustainable development narrowly as "the sustainability of our economic development" and associated it only with environment, energy and transport (Leterme 2005: 8). He did not mention the transversal or integrative character of sustainable development.

Policy framing assumes the identification of a certain problem that justifies the policy in question. In the context of the sustainable development policy, the framing of the problem at hand by the Flemish government refers to four main issues: the ageing of society, the scarcity of natural resources, climate change and globalization. According to the government, those are the global trends that demand a sustainable development policy in Flanders (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 5, 11). Yet besides those trends, the argument that is most invoked to legitimize the Flemish sustainable development policy consists of the international commitments of Flanders, either through the Belgian state or on its own. Most importantly, the Rio and Johannesburg Summits, the EU's sustainable development policy and the Gauteng Declaration are cited (Leterme 2004: 6; Vlaamse Regering 2006: 14-17, 31; 2008: 2-4). Flanders's policy framing makes a very strong link between the sustainable development policy and the international involvement of Flanders.

What is also striking in the policy framing between 2004 and 2009, is the fact that the leading political actors stress the low ambitions of their sustainable development policy. In the parliamentary debate on the Prime Minister's first policy note, he stated that he did not want to promise any miracles, and that his policy options were not groundbreaking[28] (Vlaams Parlement 2005: 4, 6). In 2006, he said that with regard to sustainable

---

[28] Surprisingly, the title of the Flemish Sustainable Development Strategy is *Samen grenzen ver-leggen*, which can mean both 'breaking new grounds together' or 'raising the bar high together'.

development, he wants to "govern soberly" (Vlaams Parlement 2006: 4, personal translation). That gives the impression that the ambition of the sustainable development policy is merely to comply with international engagements, and nothing more. After a reshuffle of the government in 2007 (due to upcoming elections at the federal level), the lack of ambition became less straightforward in the policy discourse. New Prime Minister Peeters put more emphasis on the fact that Flanders wants to belong to the top regions in Europe, mostly with regard to economic indicators, but also in other domains such as environmental issues (e.g. Peeters 2009: 25).

6.2.3 Sustainable development in other policy areas

Since there were large differences across policy domains in the interpretation of sustainable development before its institutionalization, it is interesting to assess the situation after a common governmental vision was developed. First, it is noted that 'sustainability' is one of the three main elements of the future vision of Pact 2020. That Pact, the broadly publicized outcome of the Flemish socioeconomic strategy Flanders in Action and the successor of the Vilvoorde Pact, is an agreement between the Flemish government, its main socioeconomic partners and major civil society organizations. It expresses the government's strategy to make Flanders one of the economic top regions in Europe by 2020 (Vlaamse Regering 2009b). The Pact is important as it will inform the objectives of several more specific policy plans. The framing of sustainable development in the discourse surrounding the Pact is completely disconnected from the sustainable development policy and bears close resemblance to the incorrect use of the term 'sustainable' in the period before 2004. The Pact states that "*sustainability* means that our economy and our society develop in a way that lasts on a longer term" (Vlaamse Regering 2009b: 6, personal translation). The Pact expresses the ambition of reducing the use of resources and space in the economy and limiting its impact on the environment and on the rest of the world. In the rest of the Pact and in the discourse surrounding Flanders in Action, the emphasis lies on a 'sustainable economy', associated with smart

choices regarding energy, material use, transport and spatial planning. Furthermore, the term 'sustainable' arises in front of many words in the Pact ('sustainable logistics', 'sustainable cities', 'sustainable solutions', etc.). While references to the concept of sustainable development are thus multiple, it is very striking that no mention is made to the Flemish sustainable development policy, despite the fact that the same Prime Minister leads both processes.

Furthermore, the inconsistencies that were found across policy domains before the institutionalization have not disappeared. As I explain in the next section, the governance model installed by Flanders rests on the idea that each minister decides how he applies sustainable development in his policy domain. In reality, the opposite happens. In stead of translating sustainable development to their policy domains, the ministers translate their policy domains to sustainable development. What I mean by that is that, since they are all expected to do their part in the implementation of sustainable development, they are quick to stress that what they are already doing actually is sustainable development. For instance, when asked what she would do to contribute to the sustainable development policy, the Minister of Wellbeing, Health and Family replied: "within my policy domain I try to give more visibility to the social pillar of sustainable development" (Vervotte cited in Leterme 2006b, personal translation), after which she went on to display all policy initiatives that she had taken in her domains. In that way, the integration of the concept of sustainable development has no added value whatsoever. Furthermore, it is striking that sustainable development becomes the décor of certain turf wars between ministers or political parties. For instance, the main initiative of Employment Minister Vandenbroucke (of the Socialist party) in the area of sustainable development was his programme called 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (*Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen*). At the same time, Economy, Business and Foreign Trade Minister Moerman (of the Liberal party) took many initiatives under the denominator of 'sustainable business', such as the programme 'Sustainable and

Ethical International Business' (*Duurzaam en Ethisch Internationaal Ondernemen*). The two programmes were not associated with each other (see Leterme 2006b). In stead of coordinating, it seems that both ministers preferred to use a personal frame of reference for 'their' initiatives. The impact of the Prime Minister's coordinating role in the area of sustainable development seemed minimal in that case.

In an in-depth study of the integration of sustainable development in a single policy domain in Flanders, i.e. development cooperation, Renglé (2009) shows that the framing of sustainable development changes frequently according to the priorities of subsequent ministers. The institutionalization of the sustainable development policy as from 2004 has not triggered a uniform vision on the concept in the area of development cooperation. On the contrary, the interpretation of the concept before 2004 was more true to its real meaning than afterwards. In the 1999 policy note, the emphasis is put on the three pillars of sustainable development, while the 2004 policy note concentrates on the economic dimension of sustainable development, for instance on fair trade, 'sustainable business' and microfinance (Renglé 2009: 82-90).

6.2.4 Governance model

The Flemish government proclaims that its sustainable development policy applies the holistic governance model (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 6). The major characteristics of the holistic model can indeed be recognized. Flanders adopted a horizontal definition of sustainable development with equal consideration of the three pillars. It approaches the concept as an overarching principle with implications in all policy sectors. In its policy translation, sustainable development is conceived as a horizontal policy line with its own policy instruments, notably an overarching strategy which demands concrete actions in different policy domains. As evidence of its support for a holistic interpretation, the Flemish government placed the overall responsibility of sustainable development with the prime minister. The government calls its application of the holistic model an 'inclusive policy' (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §4). That term had

been used before to denote the incorporation by all departments of a measure related to a certain individual department (Bachus and Spillemaeckers 2010). In the Sustainable Development Act, 'inclusive policy' is defined as "a policy in which a transversal policy line agreed by the Flemish government is translated by each Flemish minister in his/her own way in his/her policy domain" (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §2.2, personal translation). In practice, the government promotes the idea that every department is in charge of integrating sustainable development in its domain, and that the prime minister provides only minimal coordination. That means that the degree of freedom accorded to individual ministers and departments is very large. In the strategy they were merely "encouraged" to take initiatives for sustainable development (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 17, personal translation). The government mentions the Open Method of Coordination as an example of how departments can cooperate (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 10). Furthermore, the government relies as much as possible on existing structures and procedures, and does not want to create new planning duties (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 6; Vlaamse Regering 2006: 37).

In short, Flanders choose to frame its sustainable development policy in a holistic governance model, but its application of the model is rather weak. It prefers to make as little changes as possible to existing policy-making practices, which is in contradiction with the spirit of the holistic governance model (Bachus and Spillemaeckers 2010).

6.2.5 Concluding remarks

Before the institutionalization of the Flemish sustainable development policy, many different interpretations of the concept are used, some of them having not much in common with what sustainable development is really about. Now, the Flemish sustainable development policy promotes a relatively strong definition of sustainable development, which echoes the Brundtland formulation, stresses the synergy of the three pillars and emphasizes the attention for the rest of the world and for future generations. Yet in specific policy domains and in the policy discourse of political officials, the institutionalization has

not produced many effects up to now. Different, often incomplete and sometimes incorrect interpretations are still used. The situation is not put right by the government's weak application of the holistic governance model, which implies minimal coordination by the prime minister and maximum freedom of movement (and of policy framing) by the individual ministers.

6.3 Policy goals

In what follows, the strategic and operational goals of the Flemish sustainable development policy are analyzed. The main source for those goals are the Strategy, complemented by other policy documents and by the discourse of the government.

6.3.1 Strategic policy goals

Ever since the mention of sustainable development in the 1999 coalition agreement, the policy concept has repeatedly been framed as an overarching goal of the Flemish government. It is said that sustainable development must become an added value for environmental protection, economic activity and social (re)distribution (Leterme 2004: 5; Vlaamse Regering 2007: 12). The government's sustainable development policy presented first the 'balance', and later the 'integration and synergy' between the three pillars as its main strategic policy goal. In the Strategy, the three pillars are formulated as three fundamental goals. 'Quality of life' presents the environmental dimension. It states that Flanders must contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, to the respect of the carrying capacity of natural resources, and to environmental protection and quality. 'A caring society' refers to human rights, cultural diversity, equal opportunities, etc. The economic pillar, 'entrepreneurship and activity', aims at a high activity rate and standard of living, and is presented as the foundation of the other two pillars (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 32). The Strategy also states that the 27 Rio principles lie at the basis of its sustainable development policy. Five principles in particular are highlighted: equity (understood as intra and intergenerational solidarity), common but differentiated responsibilities, participation, the precautionary principle, and horizontal policy integration (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 35). The latter is not a

principle that was mentioned as such in the Rio Declaration, but it is commonly considered as one of the main policy principles of sustainable development (Bruyninckx 2006: 268-269). The government, however, does not give any indication on how those principles should be integrated in policy-making.

Besides the three fundamental goals and the five priority principles, three other strategic policy goals are commonly formulated. First, the sustainable development policy aims at correcting historically rooted non viable practices, for instance with regard to spatial planning, social injustice or certain forms of pollution (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 29). The definition of the Act specifies that sustainable development demands a change with regard to resource use, investments, technological development and institutions (cf supra). The government further stresses that it requires a change in attitudes, behaviour and practices of everyone, and by 'everyone' it means policy-makers, business and consumers (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 11; 2010b). Second, the Flemish sustainable development policy refers to a double goal with regard to international developments. On the one hand, in order to maintain and strengthen its welfare and wellbeing, Flanders should adapt to global trends such as climate change, the ageing society or globalization (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 11). That adaptation should happen in the fields of economy, energy, environment, spatial planning, transport, education, etc. (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 28). It also means that Flanders must comply with its international commitments regarding sustainable development (Vlaamse Regering 2004: 81; 2007: 12). On the other hand, the Flemish government wants to actively participate in the decisions that govern those global trends (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 28). In line with its ambition for an active foreign policy (Vlaamse Regering 2004: 80; 2009a: 91), Flanders aims at a greater visibility and presence in the global and European sustainable development debate (Leterme 2004: 16; Peeters 2009: 28). On some aspects—although it is never specified on which ones—Flanders must play a leading role and export 'best practices', products and processes to other countries (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 8, 32; 2007: 12), "since the leaders are the ones

that help to determine the path" (Vlaamse Regering 2007: 12, personal translation). Third, the Flemish government itself must set a good example. That means that the government will take initiatives to promote sustainable development in its roles as legislator, employer, consumer, investor and international decision-maker (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 44-45).

6.3.2 Operational policy goals

Initially, the operational goals that were formulated in the sustainable development policy were of an institutional rather than a substantive character. While Prime Minister Leterme's ambition with regard to sustainable development was modest (cf supra), the main goals of the policy for the political term 2004-2009 were to issue a Flemish sustainable development strategy, to propose a law to parliament, to create administrative support for sustainable development, and to initiate talks with the other governments in Belgium on institutionalized cooperation, among other things (Leterme 2004: 14-17; Vlaams Parlement 2005: 5-6). Furthermore, the policy has the objective to realize synergies with regard to sustainable development in the Flemish administration (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §3). The Prime Minister's initial priorities did not include any reference to the substance of sustainable development. After the initial phase and with the reshuffle of government, Prime Minister Peeters displayed more discursive ambition and placed greater emphasis on action in a few priority areas. The reason is that many of the goals with regard to the institutional dimension had been achieved, and increased attention could now be given to the more substantive goals. The greater ambition is also in line with the aspiration to belong to the 'top regions' in Europe.

Turning now to content-related goals, the Strategy translates the strategic policy goals into seven priority themes: poverty and social exclusion; ageing society; climate change and clean energy; transport; land-use management; management of natural resources; and public health. As the government indicates, the themes are copied from the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the only difference being that it decided to treat transport and land-use management as two separate themes,

which the EU Strategy does not (European Commission 2002; Vlaamse Regering 2006: 9). The government also specified that the North-South dimension—absent from the first EU Strategy but included as the seventh theme of the second EU Strategy (Council of the European Union 2006: 20)—would be integrated within each theme (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 43). In line with the principle of equity, the government recognizes its share in the responsibility to contribute to the quality of life of everyone, both within and outside of Flanders (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 32). In each of the seven themes, the Strategy formulates a long-term vision, one or more long-term goals and a total of 47 short-term objectives. The long-term vision and goals are derived from the various international commitments by which Flanders is bound (Vlaams Parlement 2005: 9). The short-term goals are recuperated from existing plans and strategies, such as the Vilvoorde Pact or sectoral plans, for instance in the area of transport or spatial planning (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 9). In some occasions the short term goals also refer to international commitments resulting from hard law, such as the Kyoto Protocol.[29] The government invokes OECD guidelines to justify its decision to not formulate new or additional goals, but rather to use the Strategy as a means to streamline existing goals and find synergies between them (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 43). Yet as a consequence, the seven themes of the Strategy read as a collection of previously made choices, written by the sectoral departments.

6.3.3 Goal characteristics

6.3.3.1 Thematic areas

Flanders's policy framing advances sustainable development as a challenge having four pillars, i.e. an institutional pillar in addition to the three traditional pillars. The goals of the sustainable development policy can be subdivided into two groups: institutional or governance-related goals on the one

---

[29] This finding shows that in the analysis of international factors, an exclusive focus on transnational communication processes is too narrow. It thus needs to be adapted in future research.

hand, and goals with regard to substantive policy areas on the other hand. The governance-related goals concern the administrative, legal and budgetary institutionalization of sustainable development and the nuts-and-bolts regarding decision-making and participation. Those goals received the lion's share of the government's attention between 2004 and 2008. The goals with regard to substantive policy areas, as I explain above, are formulated according to the themes of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Those themes reflect a relatively broad range of social issues, environmental problems, and issues that touch upon all pillars of sustainable development. The choice of the themes is impacted by the strong normative power of the EU on Belgian policy-making (Happaerts and Van den Brande 2010: 23). Moreover, the fact that the themes cover a broad range logically follows from the holistic governance model that Flanders seeks to apply. A characteristic of that model is the equal consideration of all dimensions of sustainable development. Furthermore, it is clear that all seven themes represent domains in which Flanders has many competences. Yet, in the case of the theme 'ageing society', the Strategy emphasizes that the federal government controls some of the central competences of that issue (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 55).

While the seven themes defined in the Strategy are clearly recognized as important areas for sustainable development, it is remarkable that they do not seem to play a major role in the actual sustainable development policy. The operational projects that are defined in the context of the Strategy (cf infra) do not refer to the themes and some do not fit in either of them. The themes are not reflected in recent policy choices either. At the start of the 2009-2014 term, the Prime Minister made clear his intention to prioritize. Two main projects are highlighted: sustainable housing and living and sustainable public procurement (Peeters 2009).

6.3.3.2 Specificity and timeframe
Although it is implicit, the expected timeframe for the operational goals with regard to institutional output was the end of the political term 2004-2009. Within that first term, the Prime

Minister wanted to have completed the major steps towards the institutionalization of the sustainable development policy. Regarding the content-related policy goals, the Strategy defines both long-term and short-term goals. The timeframe of the long-term goals is not specified. They have a rather vague character, e.g. 'anticipating the economic, budgetary, social and health consequences of an ageing society' or 'achieving a decarbonized and energy-efficient society' (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 56, 58). The timeframe of most short-term operational goals is 2010, because that was the target year of the Vilvoorde Pact from which most were copied. 2010 is also the year in which the second sustainable development strategy should be approved. The specificity of the short-term goals varies. Some are just as vague as the long-term goals, e.g. 'Flanders approaches the problem of poverty in a more integrated way' (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 53), while others are very specific, e.g. 'at least 12,5% of inhabitants between 25 en 64 participates at permanent formation in 2010' (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 54). Furthermore, many of the 47 short-term goals are rather weak. They do not aim at more than the execution of existing laws, or they just want to see a relative improvement of the Flemish performance vis-à-vis neighbouring countries. In short, the Strategy presents a messy collection of goals of a diverging nature.

The policy goals displayed in the Strategy are not linked to indicators. The Flemish administration originally had the intention to issue two series of sustainable development indicator, including a set to monitor the progress of the Strategy. Yet those indicators have never been developed (cf 6.4.4.1).

6.3.3.3 Analysis of the current situation

The goals that are formulated in the Strategy are based to some extent on an analysis of the current situation. In order to contextualize the government's policy, the Strategy develops an extensive description both of global challenges and of specific characteristics of Flanders. The global challenges concern socioeconomic trends (globalization, poverty, social exclusion, increased mobility and the ageing society), some environmental

problems (climate change, biodiversity and depletion of natural resources) and the global and European governance response with regard to those challenges (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 10-25). The specific characteristics of Flanders that the Strategy describes, are its limited space, its high population density, its central location in Europe, its economic focus on services albeit with an important industrial activity, the decreasing family size, and the high tax burden in Belgium (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 25-27). Those characteristics are not presented for the benefits that some of them might bring about (e.g. with regard to mobility, energy distribution or economic revenues), but rather as 'limits' or 'preconditions' for a Flemish sustainable development policy.

Besides the description in the Strategy, it is common that the government's policy notes present an analysis of current trends before formulating policy goals (Leterme 2004: 6-11; Peeters 2009: 22-24).

6.3.3.4 Backing

A reproduction of the genesis of the Strategy shows that the ministerial cabinet of the Prime Minister took the lead in the process, but was supported by scientific studies, by input from the administration and by recommendations from civil society. The reflection on a Flemish sustainable development strategy started within the working group in 2003 and 2004, and was fuelled by calls from two of the main advisory councils in Flanders[30], the Flemish Strategic Advisory Council for Environment and Nature (*Minaraad*) and the Social and Economic Council of Flanders (*SERV*). After the 2004 elections, the cabinet of the Prime Minister took over the lead and established an informal group to prepare the Strategy. Subsequently, the process was impacted by the results of an

---

[30] Since 2008, three advisory councils are explicitly mandated to advise on the Flemish sustainable development policy (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §5.3). The third one is the Flemish Foreign Affairs Council (SARiV), created in 2007, which is asked to especially oversee the North-South dimension. Other advisory councils can always advise at their own initiative.

academic study by Bachus et al. (2005), commissioned by the Environment department, and by a joint recommendation of the two advisory councils (Minaraad and SERV 2005). The cabinet then drafted a text, with some input by the Environment department and several civil society actors. The Strategy was adopted by the government in 2006 after final recommendations by the advisory councils (Minaraad 2005; SERV 2005). While it is clearly inspired by different recommendations (e.g. with regard to the responsibility of the prime minister, or the fact to focus on a set of priority themes), the Strategy did not respond to many of the more fundamental requests. With regard to policy goals, Bachus et al. (2005: 38-39) stressed that at least two thirds of the proposed actions needed to be new. Also the advisory councils deplored the fact that the draft version of the Strategy contained 'recycled' goals only (SERV 2005: 2). They also suggested that regarding the institutional dimension, the government should focus not only on adding new institutions, but also on the reform of existing institutions and decision-making procedures and to reorient them towards the principles of sustainable development (Minaraad and SERV 2005; SERV 2005: 2). Since the start of the policy, the two advisory councils have defended the vision that sustainable development in Flanders is strongly associated with better public governance (Van Humbeeck 2010: 13).

Concerning the political backing of the policy goals, the Flemish Parliament (and by extension the political parties that are not represented in the government) was only involved in the formulation process of the sustainable development policy in 2008, when the Act was debated. At that time the Strategy was already approved and made public by the government. During the parliamentary discussions, the Prime Minister stated that the political backing of the Act was important to him, as it would help Flanders to adopt strong positions with regard to sustainable development in international forums (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 4). The Act was passed after a short debate in a parliamentary committee. All parties voted in favour, except the Green party. The Greens judged the Act too little ambitious and they deplored that the government refused to include their amendments with

regard to stronger institutional instruments, such as a sustainability impact assessment. Given that the Green party had only 6 out of 124 seats, the political backing was still very broad. But since the Act does not include any content-related policy goals, that backing only refers to the continuity of the sustainable development policy as such, but not to any of its substantive goals.

6.3.4 Concluding remarks

The strategic goals of the Flemish sustainable development policy are ambitious but have a very vague character. Many of the operational policy goals are purely focused on the institutional dimension and do not refer to the content of sustainable development. Those that do are completely copied from previously existing plans and strategic, and it is not clear how they decline the strategic policy goals. In general, the goals are unspecific, not accompanied by indicators, and their backing leaves much to be desired for. Furthermore, the thematic areas of the operational policy goals seem rather disconnected from the other elements of the policy and from the discourse of the main political actors.

6.4 Policy instruments

6.4.1 Institutional instruments

6.4.1.1 Team Sustainable Development

The creation of the Sustainable Development Coordination Cell in 2005 was one of the first initiatives of Prime Minister Leterme in his quality as Minister for Sustainable Development. It followed from the decision, made in the context of the 'Better Administrative Policy' process, to anchor sustainable development, along with some other horizontal policy issues, within the administration of the Prime Minister (cf supra). Two officials started working in the coordination cell in 2006. It has been extended to three people in 2008 and to five people in 2009. Since 2010, it goes by the name 'Team Sustainable Development'.

The Team Sustainable Development is a section of the Department of the Services for the General Government Policy. The latter supports the Flemish government, in particular the Prime Minister, in the preparation and execution of several transversal policy issues (e.g. equal opportunities). The Team oversees the follow-up, the evaluation and the revision of the Sustainable Development Strategy. More generally, the principal task of the team is to coordinate the sustainable development policy of the Flemish government. In accordance with the 'inclusive' governance model, it is not the Prime Minister who imposes a policy upon the other ministers and departments. The Flemish approach rather relies on the personal initiatives, and thus on the goodwill, of individual ministers. The Team provides capacity-building and sensitization. Its aim is to divulge a common view on sustainable development within the Flemish administration. The Team is at the disposition of other departments who have questions regarding how they can better integrate sustainable development into their sectors. The Team functions as the main contact point for actors within and outside of the Flemish administration. In its coordination task, the Team is also responsible for the formulation of Flemish positions for global, European and national negotiations on sustainable development (Van den Brande 2010).[31] One of the major tools that the Team uses for its tasks is the working group (cf infra).

The Team Sustainable Development is criticized for being too small and for not having enough weight in the Flemish administration. Although the Flemish government strives for minimal coordination only, the tasks that the Team needs to perform are not in proportion with the size of the team. While the government has extended the personnel of the team gradually,

---

[31] Recently, officials of the Team have been representing Flanders in international forums (Van den Brande 2010). In the early years after the creation of the Team, an informal agreement was made that the international developments of sustainable development remained the responsibility of the Environment department, which has a historical expertise in the follow-up of global and European sustainable development forums.

five officials are not enough for the effective follow-up of the policy and for the needed capacity-building in the Flemish administration. Interviews confirm that the Team lacks the time (and according to some, the expertise) to respond to the capacity-building needs of the different departments. It is the minimalistic interpretation of the holistic governance model that prevents the government from investing more in the team, and that limits the team itself in taking a more proactive stance. Furthermore, according to Bachus and Spillemaeckers (2010), the team is heavily controlled by the ministerial cabinet of the Prime Minister, which applies the 'primacy of politics' and takes most of the major decisions.

6.4.1.2 Interdepartmental working group

As explained before, the interdepartmental working group was created bottom-up by some highly motivated civil servants in the aftermath of the Johannesburg Summit. At the time it was mainly meant to support the Environment department in its increasing demands to supply input for national, European and global forums on sustainable development and for the newly created network nrg4SD[32], and in its follow-up of the negotiations at all those levels. The creation of the working group also signalled a turning point in the Flemish administration. While in the past sustainable development was considered relevant only for the Environment department, after Johannesburg almost every department assigned someone to at least keep track of the sustainable development debate (Bachus et al. 2005: 120).

After the 2004 elections, the working group was formally re-established by the Prime Minister (Leterme 2004: 14). That meant that the coordination of the group moved from the

---

[32] At Johannesburg, Flanders was among the initiators of the Gauteng event, which laid the foundation for nrg4SD (see footnote 3). Subsequently, the Flemish participation in that new network took up a significant part of the initial activities of the interdepartmental working group. The attention for nrg4SD faded after a few years (Happaerts et al. 2010c), but between 2003 and 2006 it was an important stimulating factor for a sustainable development policy in Flanders.

Environment department to the Team Sustainable Development.[33] The working group is in principle composed by one representative from each 'policy area'.[34] That representative is at the same time his or her department's main contact for sustainable development. In reality, some departments mandate more than one representative. Although the membership of the group often changes, it is in general composed by around 15 people. Interviews point out that most members are junior officials.

The working group is the only institution that deals on a regular basis with the horizontal coordination of sustainable development issues in the Flemish administration. Its main task is to coordinate between the Team Sustainable Development and each individual department on the one hand, and between different policy areas on the other hand. It is explicitly not a decision-making body. Regarding the coordination, interviews point out that the aim is not only to search for existing synergies, but also to verify whether initiatives of the Team are not in conflict with existing sectoral policies. That endeavour is in flagrant disagreement with the strategic policy goal that states that sustainable development requires a change in attitudes, behaviour and practices (cf 6.3.1). The working group is also charged with conciliating possibly diverging views with regard to sustainable development. During the meetings of the working group, most time is spent on the execution of the operational

---

[33] Previously, the working group was co-presided by an official from the Environment department and by an official from the Foreign Policy department. According to Bachus et al. (2005: 141), the co-presidency was installed to increase the support of non-environmental departments for the working group.

[34] The thirteen policy areas of the Flemish administration are services for the general government policy; public governance; finance and budget; foreign affairs; economy, science and innovation; education and formation; wellbeing, public health and family; culture, youth, sports and media; employment and social economy; agriculture and fisheries; environment, nature and energy; transport and public works; and spatial planning, housing and heritage.

projects (cf 6.4.1.4) and on the allocation of the subsidies (cf 6.4.3.2). Other agenda points are less important items, for instance regarding the preparation of the website or of reports to Parliament.

Since the working group is the only institution that deals with the issue, all critique regarding horizontal coordination on sustainable development is targeted at it. First, interviews suggest that initially, the group was the scene of many a turf war between the Environment department and the Team Sustainable Development, but those disagreements soon faded into the background. Second, it appears that its dynamism is rather low and that in reality only four or five meetings take place a year, while the intention was to meet monthly. Third, a former member states that very little is actually coordinated by the group, and that it mostly deals with unimportant issues (Debruyne and Calcoen 2008: 26). Fourth, interviews denounce the fact that very little of what is discussed by the group is actually put into practice.

6.4.1.3 Sustainable Development Strategy and policy briefs

I discussed the Strategy extensively in the section on policy goals. It is important to point out here that the Strategy as such is put into place as a new planning instrument. Starting in 2009, each newly elected government has to issue a new or revised Strategy within the ten months after its swearing-in (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §5.4). Moreover, it was decided in 2006 that each Flemish minister has to report on his or her sustainable development activities in his or her yearly policy briefs[35] to Parliament (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 76). However, a scan of the policy notes of 2007 points out that virtually none actually did this, even not those by the Prime Minister himself. In 2008, only a handful complied with the decision (e.g. Environment, Development Cooperation and Social Economy).

---

[35] In Flanders, the policy briefs presented to Parliament report on a minister's achievements within a certain policy domain during the previous year.

It has to be emphasized that the Strategy, as it was approved in 2006, was presented as the 'first phase' of the Flemish sustainable development strategy. The strategy was completed by a series of operational projects, which were presented as the 'second phase' (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 77).

6.4.1.4 Operational projects

The 'second phase' of the strategy consists of a series of projects for which twelve themes were decided at the moment of the adoption of the strategy document. Surprisingly, the themes of the projects do not correspond with the seven themes of the Strategy.[36] The philosophy behind the projects was to stimulate synergies and transversal cooperation, in order to concretize some of the strategic goals of the policy. Moreover, the projects were intended to stimulate cooperation with lower levels of governance (mostly provinces and municipalities) and with non-governmental stakeholders, so as to extend the scope of the sustainable development policy beyond the Flemish administration (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 77-78; 2010a). A good example is the project 'sustainable housing and living', associated with the transition arena that exists since 2002. The project contains several actions that link a large variety of actors (departments and public agencies of the Flemish government, municipalities, provinces, the federal government, the construction sector, energy companies, NGOs, research institutes, etc.). Also in most other cases, the projects refer to initiatives that already existed. For instance, the project on HIV/Aids was already a priority of the Flemish policy on development cooperation before 2004 (Renglé 2009: 92).

The implementation of the projects happens by the involved departments. The Team Sustainable Development offers minimal

---

[36] The themes are sustainable housing and living, corporate social responsibility, education for sustainable development, sustainable agriculture, environment and health, sustainable transport, sustainable water use, sustainable production and consumption, scientific research and innovation policy, sustainable spatial planning, gender, and HIV/Aids (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 79; 2010a).

support only, which is interpreted in interviews as making sure that the projects do not overlap or encroach upon one another (e.g. sustainable agriculture versus sustainable water use). While synergy is promoted within the projects themselves, it is not encouraged between them. After the definition of the twelve themes in 2006, the leading departments were asked to develop a concrete proposal for each project. However, for years nothing happened. In fact, the final project proposals—a description of each project containing goals and action—were only approved by the government three weeks before the 2009 elections.

The operational projects are heavily criticized. First, observers denounce that they mostly concern existing initiatives (Debruyne and Calcoen 2008: 26), and thus do not contribute to the strategic policy goal of realizing a change in practices and behaviour. Second, the fact that they were approved only weeks before the end of the political term—despite the fact that most initiatives were already ongoing—has caused major dismissal (Minaraad 2009: 4; SARiV 2009: 2). The Social and Economic Council of Flanders even refused to formulate a substantive advice because of that reason (SERV 2009: 3). The late adoption of the operational projects could partly be due to the fact that up to 2008, the scarce resources of the Flemish sustainable development policy were mainly directed towards the 'governance-related' goals (cf supra). But it is certainly a manifestation of the low political weight that the government attaches to its sustainable development policy. Third, it is denounced that the projects are presented as 'budget neutral' and that no financial means are attached to them (SARiV 2009: 2). Fourth—despite the fact that the administration had years to prepare them—several of the approved projects are poorly designed. Some project descriptions read as preliminary and incomplete proposals, with very low ambitions, and there is no coherence between them (Minaraad 2009: 4; SERV 2009: 5; SARiV 2009: 3). Moreover, although much reference is made to global and European goals, most projects lack a North-South dimension (Minaraad 2009: 4), although that was a specific constraint of the Strategy. Throughout all that criticism, two

projects are notable exceptions: sustainable housing and living, and education for sustainable development. Those projects concern initiatives that have been initiated by the Environment department outside the context of the sustainable development policy. They have been running for years, and are only loosely connected to the Strategy. The above-mentioned criticisms are thus no negative judgments of several concrete sustainable development initiatives that are ongoing, and lead by individual departments in cooperation with other partners. The critique is mostly directed towards the government's coordinated sustainable development policy, which fails in creating the necessary support and synergies for those initiatives.

6.4.2 Legal instruments

6.4.2.1 Decree for the promotion of sustainable development

The only real legal instrument for the Flemish sustainable development policy is the Act adopted in 2008 (called the *Decree for the promotion of sustainable development*). I already mentioned above that the Act defines what sustainable development means for the Flemish government, and that it obliges each government to revise the Strategy. The Act also gives a legal character to some of the characteristics of the Flemish sustainable development policy, stating that it is inclusive, coordinated and participative and that it has an important European and global dimension (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §4-5). Finally, it obliges the government to reserve a post on sustainable development in its budget (Vlaams Parlement 2008: §7). The Act's main merit is the legal institutionalization of the continuity of the sustainable development policy, but besides the definition it has no content-related stipulations. Most of the policy instruments (e.g. the working group) are not mentioned in the Act. The Prime Minister argued that, since according to him the concretization of sustainable development is evolving, he did not want to enshrine in law the instruments that are used to govern it (Vlaams Parlement 2008: 8). In contrast, the Act does enshrine the inclusive character of the Flemish sustainable development policy. While the scope of the Act is already very limited, one can even question the legal enforceability of the

obligations that it does have. The failure of the government to respect the deadline for the first revision of the Strategy is not a good signal.

6.4.2.2 Belgian Constitution

In 2007, an article on sustainable development was added to the Belgian Constitution under the title 'general policy goals of federal Belgium, the Communities and the Regions'. Although it is not specifically a Flemish instrument, it needs to be mentioned here, because the Flemish government is also bound by it and can be obliged by judges to take it into account. The article reads:

"During the execution of their respective competences, the federal State, the Communities and the Regions pursue the goals of a sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental aspects, taking into account the solidarity between the generations" (Belgische Senaat 2010: §7bis, personal translation).

In 2008, the article was invoked by the provincial authorities of Antwerp to refuse a licence for an power plant. It judged that the plant, which would work on palm oil originating from Malaysia and Indonesia where it is a factor of deforestation, was not in agreement with the general policy goal of sustainable development (De Morgen 2008).

6.4.3 Economic instruments

6.4.3.1 Budget

The Prime Minister announced from the start that there would be a specific budget post for the sustainable development policy, mostly to be used for the administrative support, for the formulation and follow-up of the Strategy, and for the Flemish presence in European and global forums (Leterme 2004: 15). Since 2005, the budget indeed contains a post on sustainable

development, of around € 1 million. About half of that amount goes to subsidies.

6.4.3.2 Subsidies

Since the adoption of the Strategy in 2006, the Team Sustainable Development allocates a certain amount of subsidies to projects submitted by civil society and by local or provincial authorities. The subsidies represent a very small amount of money, but are only meant to initiate good initiatives, and not to offer permanent funding. The projects must fit within one of the seven themes of the Strategy, or be aimed at education, sensitization or communication for sustainable development. Moreover, private companies can be granted subsidies for 'exemplary projects' (Leterme 2006a: 5). An additional condition is that the projects are associated with more than one department of the Flemish administration, because each department already has its own subsidy policy for sectoral issues (Vlaamse Overheid 2009: 4). Through the working group, departments guard against the fact that the interdepartmental subsidies do not interfere with their own subsidy policies.

6.4.3.3 Sustainable procurement policy

A few days before the 2009 elections, the government approved an action plan on sustainable procurement. It is an answer to the strategic policy goal of the government's example function with regard to sustainable consumption. The action plan was prepared by an interdepartmental task force in cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders. The goal set by the government is to achieve 100% of sustainable procurement by 2020. That means that by then all public organisms must have included environmental, social and economic criteria in their purchases of constructions, supplies and services, so as to promote products and services that are environmentally, socially and ethically responsible (Vlaamse Regering 2009c: 8). In order to achieve that goal, four consecutive three-year action plans will be issued. The first action plan, covering the years 2009 to 2011, is mainly aimed at setting the stage and at taking the necessary steps to find the right indicators and reporting mechanisms for sustainable products and services. It also provides a clear

overview of existing sustainable procurement policies at the federal and at the EU level. As a pilot project, the government made the commitment to make the Flemish part of the 2010 Belgian Presidency of the EU completely 'sustainable'. The new sustainable procurement policy is definitely an interesting instrument, but because it is so recent its impact and relevance can not yet be assessed.

6.4.4 Information instruments

Some of the previously mentioned instruments, although information is not their principal resource, are also applied as information instruments (e.g. the Strategy, the policy briefs, the operational projects, or the action plan on sustainable procurement). Obviously, they are not repeated in this section.

6.4.4.1 Sustainable development indicators

In 2006, the Flemish administration wanted to develop sustainable development indicators for Flanders, after the examples of many other governments and international organizations. The initial idea was to develop two sets of indicators, a first one to evaluate the Strategy, and a second one to track Flanders's progress towards sustainable development more generally. Eventually, only the second set has been developed. The Research Centre of the Flemish government has published three reports so far of the so-called 'sustainability barometer' (Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering 2006, 2008, 2009). The reports consist of a few dozen indicators borrowed mostly from Eurostat[37], on which Flanders is compared with Belgium and with the EU as a whole. The indicators make no clear reference to the Strategy. The barometer is not meant as an evaluation instrument, but only to track Flanders's progress in time and in comparison to others. The instrument is thus not used for policy preparation or evaluation. It is not even explicitly used for broader information purposes, as the publication of it is

---

[37] The first version of the indicators was also inspired by a policy paper on indicators by nrg4SD (see Happaerts et al. 2010b: 138), but those indicators were not withheld in subsequent versions, because they were deemed little relevant or easily replaceable by Eurostat indicators.

not publicized and very few people actually seem to know it, even within the Flemish administration. It rather seems that, after the publication of the first report, the annual revision of the barometer has become a obligated procedure without any resonance.

6.4.4.2 Policy Research Centre for Sustainable Development

In 2001, the government created the programme of policy research centres for policy-relevant research (*steunpunten voor beleidsrelevant onderzoek*). Those policy research centres are consortiums of different Flemish universities that conduct research together over a period of five years on a certain topic. The themes are considered as priorities for the Flemish policy, but in need of relevant scientific research to support the government. At the same time, the programme was intended to give structural government support to academic research in Flanders. The 'second generation' of policy research centres was established in 2007. Sustainable development was among the fourteen new selected themes. The Policy Research Centre for Sustainable Development is a collaboration of four research groups: the Research Institute for Work and Society (KULeuven), the Institute for International and European Policy (KULeuven), the Centre for Sustainable Development (UGent) and the Human Ecology Department (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). Although the establishment of the Policy Research Centre manifests the recognition of the Flemish government for sustainable development, it is the smallest of all fourteen centres, with only 4.5 full-time equivalents fulfilled by 8 different researchers.

The research conducted by the Policy Research Centre has three main axes. The first axe, 'governance for sustainable development', focuses on the Flemish governance model, studies the interaction of Flanders with other levels of governance, and keeps track of the sustainable development policies of other subnational governments (of which this research forms part). The axe 'system innovation and transition management' explores how those two innovative policy approaches can be applied by Flanders. The third axe, 'instruments for sustainable development', studies the

possibilities of three specific policy instruments for the Flemish sustainable development policy: sustainable fiscal policy, sustainability assessment and sustainable management systems. Nine long-term projects are conducted within those axes. Furthermore, the Policy Research Centre fulfils short-term projects at the request of the Prime Minister. The research is closely follow-up by the administration and by civil society. The projects have advisory committees composed by officials from different departments, by federal and EU civil servants, and by non-governmental stakeholders. The Policy Research Centre has a yearly budget of about € 450,000. Two thirds of that are taken from the budget of the Economy, Science and Innovation department, one third is derived from the sustainable development budget.

6.4.4.3 Sensitization and communication

The Strategy labels sensitization, education and communication as important transversal tools (Vlaamse Regering 2006: 45). The website of the Team Sustainable Development[38] functions as the government's main portal for all information on its sustainable development initiatives. Furthermore, the Team organizes occasional activities for sensitization purposes, such as the 'Sustainable Development Day' for civil servants.

6.4.5 Concluding remarks

Although the policy instruments used by Flanders represent a varied mix of instrument types, the institutional instruments dominate. The explanation for that is that since the end of the 1990s, the government has associated sustainable development policy with an institutional reform of the administration, and it is still strongly linked to the discourse on 'better governance'. That is why a large part of the operational policy goals during the 2004-2009 were 'governance-related'. The institutional embedding of the sustainable development policy also needs to be seen as the Flemish answer to its international commitments. The dominance of the institutional dimension makes that few instruments are actually aimed at fulfilling the content-related

---

[38] http://do.vlaanderen.be

policy goals. For instance, no instrument has been developed to take into account the five priority principles in daily policy and decision-making. At the same time, with regard to most operational policy goals, it is not surprising that few instruments of the sustainable development policy are directed at them, since those goals have been copied from other strategies and policies. Furthermore, some of the instruments are only weakly linked to other elements of the policy (for instance the sustainability barometer).

While the sustainable development policy has been given legal continuity in 2008, most policy instruments are not mentioned in the Act. As a consequence, they are hardly enforceable, they do not have a permanent character, and their political weight is reduced. That is manifested, for instance, in the non-compliance by most ministers to report on their sustainable development initiatives in their yearly policy briefs, or in the low profile and dynamism of the working group. Most of the instruments are in fact very weak. Exceptions include the inclusion of sustainable development in the Belgian Constitution, and some of the operational projects which, although their link to the sustainable development policy is weak, realize concrete results on the ground.

Despite the ambitious strategic policy goals, my analysis puts forward that many policy instruments are in practice used to demarcate and to keep things as they are. The holistic governance model is reduced to a minimum. It thus realizes the opposite of what it should, in that the search for synergies is interpreted as making sure that no one trespasses on each other's initiatives.

7. Quebec and Flanders: two policies cast in the same mould?

After the detailed analyses of both cases, the results can now be compared and explained. In this section, comparative results of the within-case analyses are presented. In keeping with the requisites of a structured and focused comparison (cf supra), the presentation of the results follow the three policy dimensions: policy framing (7.1), policy goals (7.2) and policy instruments (7.3). The comparison shows that the sustainable development policies of Quebec and Flanders are to a large extent similar. Yet some important differences can be noted, some of which point towards a more pronounced ambition and a greater effort made in Quebec. Both cases, however, show disconnections between different policy dimensions.

7.1 Policy framing: leadership versus frugality

The policy framings of Quebec and Flanders are very similar. They are both principally based on the Brundtland definition and on the three-pillar vision that was popularized by the Rio Summit. The idea that sustainable development aims simultaneously at environmental quality, social equity and economic prosperity, is particularly emphasized. Those policy framings seem to reflect a universal trend of governments all over the world who interpret sustainable development in such a way that economic growth is not compromised.

A difference in framing is the complete absence in Quebec of the North-South dimension. In Flanders, that dimension of sustainable development has always been an integral part of the policy framing (although it is not systematically extended to all actions). Several factors lie at the basis of it. First, the Foreign Policy department has been closely involved in the Flemish sustainable development policy from the start (e.g. by co-chairing the informal working group in 2003 and 2004). In that department, the link between sustainable development and international development cooperation has always been

emphasized (Renglé 2009). It is one of the policy areas in Flanders where sustainable development receives constant attention. Second, the North-South dimension is one of the most crucial elements of all global negotiations on sustainable development, and Flanders is often at the front row of those negotiations (for instance in the run-up to the Johannesburg Summit). Third, the link between environment and international development cooperation was an important issue for the Greens, whose Environment minister played a large role in Johannesburg and who also controlled the Development Cooperation portfolio between 2002 and 2003. In the case of Quebec, similar inducements were not present. In Quebec, sustainable development has mostly been interpreted as a problem for Quebec. Intra and intergenerational solidarity are chiefly understood as solidarity with other Quebecers or with future generations of Quebecers. The political will to move sustainable development beyond the borders of the province seems minimal.[39]

A slighter difference between the two framings is the level of ambition displayed in the policy discourse. In Flanders, especially in the initial period, the political leaders expressed modesty with regard to their sustainable development policy. Flanders wanted to govern soberly and it did not want to promise any miracles. Yet still, the Strategy stated that Flanders should be an international leader with regard to certain products and policies. Afterwards, the policy discourse put more emphasis on the fact that Flanders wants to pertain to the 'top regions' in Europe, in line with the ambition of the Pact 2020. In Quebec, a strong leadership discourse has continuously been prominent since the return to power of the Liberals in 2003.

The governance models put in place by Quebec and Flanders are similar to a certain extent. Quebec applies a mix of

---

[39] Very similarly, the North-South dimension is absent in the Canadian sustainable development policy. Gale (1997: 101) shows that the 'equity' dimension was dropped very early In the policy framing of sustainable development at the federal level.

the holistic and the policy principles model, while Flanders puts the holistic model into practice. Possibly as a consequence of the different level of ambition, Quebec's model is innovative with regard to the important role accorded to the sixteen principles (which is one the most interesting elements of the entire policy approach). Flanders's application of the holistic model is more modest. Yet both policies are in practice based on a minimalistic interpretation of the governance models. Although both Quebec and Flanders passed an Act which impose certain procedures, their policies *de facto* enforce very little, and leave a considerable freedom of movement to individual departments and organisms. They thus rely to a large degree on the goodwill of other actors.

7.2 Policy goals: aim for change, but leave everything the way it was

Some of the strategic policy goals are very similar at both sides of the Atlantic. The Flemish policy intends to achieve a change in behaviour and attitudes and to correct historically rooted unsustainable practices. Similarly, Quebec wants to realize a '*virage*' in the non-viable development of its society. In both cases, the strategic policy goals are ambitious and reflect the messages put forward in international declarations. Most of those ambitious goals, however, are relegated on a long-term horizon and have a very vague character. The operational policy goals are not always conform with the ambitions of the strategic goals. They are to a large extent recycled from existing sectoral policies. The concrete objectives of the policies are thus not measured up to the challenges of sustainable development. Especially in Flanders, the aim is to work largely with existing tools and planning mechanisms instead of creating new structures. In both cases, the policies that are put in place cannot live up to the ambitions of the strategic goals. The governments want change, while leaving everything the way it was.

A comparison of the thematic areas covered by the policy goals shows that the policies of Quebec and Flanders both extend to a broad range of social, environmental and economic issues. While the selection of themes is opaque in Quebec (and

contains some strange topics such as cultural heritage), in Flanders it is a faithful copy of the themes proposed by the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. In the Flemish case, however, the seven selected themes are not extrapolated in the rest of the policy and thus have little significance.

One of the recurrent elements in the policy goals of Flanders is the international dimension. In contrast to Quebec, an explicit goal of the Flemish policy is to weigh on the international debate on sustainable development. The government of Flanders—which has unrivalled access to national and EU decision-making—want to achieve high visibility at the international scene, and it wants to influence global and European negotiations. Quebec is also very active in the international arena on issues such as climate change, but it does not have the high degree of access to decision-making that Flanders has. Its sustainable development policy does not express such a strong aim to influence international policies.

There are some other differences regarding goal characteristics. The goals in Flanders seem based on a stronger analysis of the current situation, while in Quebec their definition is less transparent. Yet in the future, Quebec's goals will potentially have a stronger analysis behind them, since the government has by now developed different sets of indicators. The government in Flanders has been unable to do so. Furthermore, Quebec's policy was supported by a much broader public participation than in the Flemish case. The question remains, however, whether the actual societal backing is broader, since it is not clear to which extent the different stakeholders' recommendations have been taken into account.

7.3 Policy instruments: institutions without enforcement

Both Quebec and Flanders use a varied mix of instruments in their sustainable development policy, with a certain preference for institutional instruments. The analysis shows that several instruments are remarkably stronger in Quebec than they are in Flanders. Four examples stand out. Quebec's Sustainable Development Act is far more comprehensive than the limited one

in Flanders. The Act in the Quebec case is an example of how elaborate such a legal instrument for sustainable development can be (although it is never a guarantee for a successful policy). Furthermore, the indicators that were developed by the government of Quebec, although they raise much criticism, outshine the failed effort in Flanders. Third, Quebec has managed to develop several tools aimed at capacity-building (such as the guides developed by the Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau), while such output is not produced in Flanders. Finally, Quebec has a potentially strong evaluation instrument with the Sustainable Development Commissioner, which Flanders has not. The reason behind those stronger instruments seems a more pronounced political will put forward at the time of the institutionalization, especially by Environment Minister Mulcair (who stepped down after the development of the law). Moreover, Quebec's ambition to emerge as a leader has pushed the government to develop stronger tools.

The coordination units that are responsible for the administrative follow-up of the sustainable development policies in Quebec and Flanders display an important formal difference. In Quebec, it is housed by the Environment Ministry, as a consequence of the early structures that were put in place in that department after the publication of the Brundtland Report. In Flanders, the unit falls under the authority of the prime minister. That is the result of the administrative reorganization that took place when sustainable development was institutionalized, and of a large consensus among academics and civil society actors that the leadership should come from the prime minister. Yet the role of both units is very similar and in practice they both have a low political weight. The minimalistic interpretation of the applied governance model reduces the actual authority of the units. In addition, the unit in Flanders is strongly limited by the control exercised by the Prime Minister's cabinet. Yet in Flanders the situation can easily change, depending on the political commitment of future prime ministers. Until now, however, the unit in Flanders is still much smaller than the one in Quebec, and it produces less capacity-building and coordination tools.

Another point where Quebec scores significantly better than Flanders, is on the scope of its policy instruments. In Flanders, horizontal coordination is limited to the departments of the Flemish government. Only some of the operational projects reach external actors, such as local authorities, civil society or the private sector. In Quebec, the entire public administration, including almost 150 ministries and public organisms, is targeted by the Act. They all have to issue sustainable development action plans, and several of them are represented on the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development. In general, the sustainable development policy of Quebec reaches a larger number of people. That is a consequence of the goal of installing a new management framework for the public administration.

Regarding some other instruments, both cases are equally weak. The Strategies of Quebec and Flanders represent not much more than reference documents containing a large number of recycled goals on a variety of themes, without having much impact. In addition, both governments have designed only very humble economic instruments, which are not measured up to the challenges of sustainable development. Yet Flanders did manage to enshrine a separate sustainable development budget in its Act, so those financial resources can easily be increased in the future, depending on the government's political will.

A final point that Quebec and Flanders have in common, is the low enforcing character of their policy instruments. The design of their governance models leaves much leeway to individual departments and organisms regarding how they interpret sustainable development and translate it into their actions. But even the leading political actors do not always respect the definition and principles of sustainable development when other policies are at stake. Furthermore, in both cases the government itself does not fully respect its own sustainable development act. In Quebec, the indicators were issued almost a year after the legal deadline. Similarly, in Flanders the government failed to revise its Strategy before the deadline imposed by the Act.

8. Explaining the sustainable development policies of Quebec and Flanders

In this section, the comparative results are explained with the factors that were withheld in the analytical framework: international factors (8.1), degree of autonomy (8.2), political context (8.3) and socioeconomic conditions (8.4).

8.1 International factors: triggering the institutionalization

In both cases, international developments were the initial trigger of the institutionalization of sustainable development. In Quebec, the first foundations for a sustainable development policy (e.g. the Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development) were laid as a direct consequence of the activities of the Brundtland Commission. Moreover, the administration built up expertise by preparing reports for important multilateral summits. Those foundations were decisive when the return to power of the Liberals in 2003 signified the start of the current sustainable development policy. In Flanders, the trigger of international policy developments was more direct. The considerable Flemish involvement in the Johannesburg Summit resulted in the creation of an administrative working group, which played a decisive role in the institutionalization of the sustainable development policy shortly afterwards. The analysis shows that the triggering function of international developments is subject to two conditions. First, subnational governments are only influenced to a significant degree by those developments that they participated in. That is why the government of Quebec was already impacted by the activities of the Brundtland Commission, to which it actively contributed (e.g. by financing the French version of the Brundtland Report). Flanders was only majorly affected by the Johannesburg Summit, because it did not have a major access to international decision-making before the state reform of 1993. Second, while in both cases the first steps were taken at the personal initiative of committed civil servants, the political will of leading political actors is needed for the international influence to materialize. In Quebec, that political

actor was the PLQ, who promised action on sustainable development in its 2003 election campaign, and whose new Prime Minister was previously responsible for the implementation of the Green Plan at the Canadian federal level. In Flanders, the first (and only) participation of the Green party in the coalition between 1999 and 2004 explains why attention was given to sustainable development in the coalition agreement, why much resources were invested in the Flemish presence at the Johannesburg Summit, and why sustainable development was anchored as a horizontal policy issue in the context of the reorganization of the Flemish administration.

While in Quebec and especially in Flanders references to international policy documents on sustainable development are omnipresent, their influence on policy content is less straightforward. International organizations, through the promotion of policy models, have had a clear impact on the policy framing of the two cases, on their choice of a sustainable development definition and on the selection of leading principles. In the case of Quebec, moreover, international influence played a role in shaping some of the policy instruments. That happened also through policy copying. The government has been inspired by work of the UN, the OECD and even the EU[40] in designing some of its instruments. It also studied several other subnational and national governments, to learn from their experiences. Seeing that international factors strongly explain several elements of the sustainable development policy of Quebec, it is all the more surprising that that policy remains silent on the North-South dimension.

In Flanders the international influence on concrete policy instruments is less strong. However, the policies of international

---

[40] That finding shows the value of applying a qualitative research method in the study of transnational communication processes. In quantitative studies, in contrast, the membership of an international organization is often used as a leading variable. That masks learning processes such as the one where the government of Quebec is influenced by EU policy (Happaerts and Van den Brande 2010: 17).

organizations, and especially the EU, play an important role in framing the Flemish policy. That is for instance reflected in the EU's influence on the choice of thematic areas in Flanders's Strategy. The EU traditionally has a strong normative power in Belgium (i.e. what the EU says or does is rarely criticized or even questioned by Belgian politicians—unlike in many other EU member states). That is because in many cases it is easier to agree on external requirements than to rely on intra-Belgian negotiations (cf Happaerts et al. 2010a). Among the subnational governments, especially Flanders is very receptive for EU policies. The constitutional access to multilateral decision-making that Flanders enjoys, and extensively applies, brings along a positive and open attitude towards international developments. Yet in the case of the Flemish sustainable development policy, the international influence has until now been limited to policy framing and strategic policy goals. It seems that, in the case of sustainable development, the Flemish government applied a 'no gold plating'[41] strategy, meaning that Flanders must comply with all the formal international commitments, and nothing more.

Finally, despite Quebec's investment in policy copying, and despite Flanders's open attitude to international policy-making, it is remarkable that in both cases most operational policy goals are motivated by their domestic policy context.

8.2 Degree of autonomy: enabling quasi-national policies

Both Quebec and Flanders have a high degree of self-rule. According to the index developed by Hooghe et al., Flanders scores 13/15 while the Canadian provinces with 15/15 have the highest degree of self-rule of all subnational governments worldwide (see Hooghe et al. 2008c). The high autonomy of both cases is reflected in the thematic areas of their policy goals and in the variety of their policy instruments. Since they both have

---

[41] This term refers to the strategy applied by Environment Minister Peeters (the current Prime Minister) between 2004 and 2007, meaning that with regard to environmental policy, Flanders must not do more than merely complying with European directives.

important competences in many of the most fundamental areas of sustainable development, their policies cover a broad range of areas. In the case of Quebec, the high degree of self-rule has even made it possible that the environmental dimension is almost lost between the other areas that the policy covers.[42] With regard to policy instruments, neither is strongly limited by their degree of autonomy. Both their policies use a mix of institutional, legal, economic and information instruments. Yet in the Flemish discourse, references are sometimes made to the competences that are (still) detained by the federal government. In any case, compared to other subnational governments, the policies of Quebec and Flanders mostly resemble 'national' policies. To some extent, Quebec and Flanders act like nation-states too. They respond to international commitments (e.g. to the call for national sustainable development strategies) and display the ambition to be involved in multilateral decision-making.

While it is thus clear that the degree of self-rule is an important factor determining the content of sustainable development policies of subnational governments, I found only minor differences as a consequence of the difference in self-rule between Quebec and Flanders. Flanders's score is two points lower than the one of Quebec. The first point is related to 'policy scope', and refers to the fact that, although both have a broad and deep range of competences, Quebec additionally has authority over immigration (Hooghe et al. 2008a: 126). That explains the relative emphasis on immigration challenges within the theme 'address demographic changes' in Quebec's Strategy. Flanders also has a demographic theme in its Strategy ('ageing society'), but that does not address immigration issues. Moreover, it is the only theme where Flanders indicates that part of the answer lies at the federal level in Belgium. The second point where Flanders scores lower than Quebec is on 'fiscal

---

[42] In contrast, the sustainable development policy of the Canadian federal government has a much more limited scope, focused on environmental issues. It is an area where competences are not always clearly divided in Canada (Happaerts 2010a: 24).

autonomy'. The difference is related to the fact that Quebec can set the base and rate for certain taxes, while Flanders can only set the rate (Hooghe et al. 2008a: 129). It is a difference that can potentially materialize in the sustainable development policies, but until now it did not, because both governments chose only weak economic instruments for their policies.

As a consequence of the characteristics of Canadian and Belgian federalism, the policies of the federal government in principle do not impact the subnational level. In both cases, each level of governance conducts a sustainable development policy within the framework of its own competences, and without many references to one another.[43] Yet also in both cases, the federal government had a sustainable development policy in place before the subnational governments did. In Quebec, that did push the government to learn from the (good and bad) federal experiences. In Quebec's lesson-drawing efforts, several characteristics of the federal sustainable development policy were copied, while the government also learned from some of the weaknesses of the federal model (Happaerts 2010a: 24). In Flanders, the existence of a federal sustainable development policy did not lead to lesson-drawing, as interviews point out that the federal policy is mainly perceived as a failure in Flanders.[44] But Flanders does give regular input for the federal policy, through the various intergovernmental coordination mechanisms that characterize Belgian federalism (Happaerts 2010a: 20).

8.3 Political context: lack of political will favours weak policy

Political will, party politics and identity politics were withheld as important factors under the umbrella of 'political context'. In the case of Quebec, the institutionalization of sustainable development was a consequence of the return to power of the Liberals in 2003, whose election programme promised to take

---

[43] That poses several problems with regard to vertical policy integration (Happaerts 2010a).
[44] The reluctance of the Belgian subnational governments to accept a federal model probably also plays a role here.

action on sustainable development (PLQ 2002: 24). The PLQ promised the 're-engineering' of the state, including the environmental reorientation of governmental activities (Audet and Gendron 2010). It is reflected in the government's recurrent leadership discourse, which has also impregnated the sustainable development policy. Quebec's will to emerge as a leader in North America has made that certain elements of its policy display more ambition, as the analysis puts forward. Although the leadership is to a large part limited to policy framing and policy goals, several policy instruments are remarkably stronger than in Flanders. Moreover, the general scope of the policy in Quebec is broader. Wanting to be seen as a leading 'state' in North America is a definite outing of identity politics. In the absence of Canadian leadership on issues such as climate change, Quebec eagerly uses its 'green' policies to promote itself and its assets to the international community. While the initial dose of political will of the PLQ, and its Environment Minister at the time, was indispensable for the institutionalization of sustainable development, it is noted that the government lacks the commitment to move beyond the administrative framework towards the genuine integration of sustainable development in socioeconomic policies (Audet and Gendron 2010). Moreover, the failure to include the North-South dimension should be seen as a lack of political will to move the policy framing beyond the closed context of Quebec. Seen from that perspective, the ambition to emerge as a leader in North America with regard to sustainable development might be not much more than skilful public relations.

In Flanders, the Green party played a large role in putting sustainable development on the agenda between 1999 and 2004, when the decision was taken that the responsibility for sustainable development after 2004 would reside with the prime minister. The Greens did not form part of the coalition after 2004, when the actual sustainable development policy was designed. The two subsequent prime ministers (of the Christian Democrats) showed very little leadership on sustainable development. That is the conclusion of earlier research (Bachus and Spillemaeckers

2010; Happaerts et al. 2010b: 144; Spillemaeckers 2009: 22) and it is confirmed by my interviews. Identity politics in the Flemish case are strongly observed in the international dimension of the sustainable development policy (Happaerts et al. 2010b: 137; 2010c: 14), but much less with regard to other elements. Flanders's ambition to be present and visible in global and European decision-making is the reason why those international goals have such a strong emphasis in its sustainable development policy.

In both cases, the lack of political will is responsible for a limited investment of means, for a poor concretization of strategic policy goals (through the use of largely recycled operational goals), and for a policy with a very weak enforcing character. It also translates in a minimalistic interpretation of the holistic governance model. In theory, it depicts a governance model where sustainable development is integrated into all policy domains. In practice, it presents the sustainable development policy as a loose collection of existing sectoral goals.

8.4 Socioeconomic conditions: enabling policies, but preventing change

The theoretical framework shows that a government must have the necessary economic strength to put sustainable development on the agenda and to invest means in dealing with it. Both Quebec and Flanders knew relative economic prosperity when they decided to conduct their own sustainable development policies.[45] Yet, as a consequence of the lack of political will, the means invested in it are rather low in both cases. Furthermore, socioeconomic conditions are important in the context of sustainable development, since in theory sustainable development presupposes a structural adaptation of economic

---

[45] The importance of this factor becomes apparent in the comparison between Flanders and Wallonia. In Wallonia, which has been struggling with economic revival for decades, several initiatives to mount a sustainable development policy have failed as a consequence of the exclusive political investment in plans for economic recovery (Happaerts 2010b).

institutions, among other things. In their strategic policy goals, both Quebec and Flanders call for a 'change' of existing development patterns. Yet in their actual policies, dominant economic practices are not questioned. Moreover, when leading political actors talk about day-to-day policy-making, sustainable development is still mostly understood as 'sustainable economic growth'.

In many respects, the socioeconomic conditions are very different. Quebec, for instance, occupies an extremely large territory at the edge of the American continent, rich in natural resources which represent strategic economic assets. Flanders, in contrast, is a very small and urbanized entity at the heart of Western Europe, with an economy focused mostly (but not exclusively) on services. A large difference is population density, which is advanced by the theoretical framework as an important factor in the context of sustainable development. Quebec has little over 5 inhabitants/km², while Flanders has about 450. In Flanders, the high population density is often invoked among the factors that pose limits or preconditions to a sustainable development policy. In contrast, in the case of Quebec, interviews stress how difficult it is to sensitize a population for sustainable development issues, in a province with such a low population density where there is no feeling of limits to the carrying capacity of the environment. Population density is thus a welcome excuse, and it does not really matter whether it is very high or extremely low.

9. Conclusions and policy recommendations

Subnational governments have an important role to play in the multi-level governance of sustainable development. Quebec and Flanders both pertain to the club of subnational governments that address that challenge, and that have taken serious steps towards the institutionalization of sustainable development. The comparative analysis shows important resemblances between their approaches. The similarity is manifested, for instance, in the policy framing, in the applied governance model, in certain strategic policy goals and in their instrument mix. Important differences include the fact that the Flemish government applies a more complete interpretation of sustainable development (including the emphasis on the North-South dimension), or that the policy of Quebec has some notably stronger elements than the Flemish policy (such as the sixteen principles or the Commissioner).

The explanatory factors that were withheld for the analysis have appeared very significant. The influence of international factors is apparent, as in both cases the institutionalization of sustainable development—as an 'outside-in' policy—was triggered by international developments. That is facilitated by the fact that both Quebec and Flanders are subnational governments with a strong international identity and an open, receiving attitude for international policy-making. Yet, the international influence is mostly limited to policy framing and to the strategic policy goals, especially in the Flemish case. The operational policy goals and the policy instruments of Quebec and Flanders are principally determined by domestic factors, mostly by their political context and their socioeconomic conditions. As for the degree of autonomy of Quebec and Flanders, their high degree of self-rule imposes few limitations on policy-making with regard to sustainable development. Finally, in both cases it is clear that there is a lack of political will, which prevents the investment of a sufficient amount of political capital in sustainable development.

Although both governments have taken the necessary, and laudable, first steps towards the institutionalization of the policy concept, they seem to lack the will to push through for real reforms and innovations in favour of sustainable development.

Indeed, the analysis of the policy content, by means of the three policy dimensions, has allowed the identification of several disconnections in both policies. With regard to policy framing, even after the institutionalization of sustainable development there is no uniformity in the interpretation of the concept, and certain attempts to operationalize it (e.g. the principles in Quebec) are not always respected. Furthermore, ambitious strategic policy goals are not declined into fitting operational goals, and the instruments that were designed are until now insufficient to reach most policy goals. Both Quebec and Flanders have opted for governance models inspired by the holistic governance model, meaning that sustainable development—and additionally, in the Quebec case, a series of sustainable development principles—should be integrated into all governmental policy-making. Yet their operationalization of that governance model relies on a minimalistic interpretation. The horizontal coordination by the sustainable development teams is either limited to procedures and not content-related, or relies on minimum interference. Although serious efforts for capacity-building are made (more so in Quebec than in Flanders), it is in both cases insufficient compared to the challenges of sustainable development or even to the ambitions of the proper governments. Although other departments or actors are, appropriately, called upon to join forces in the government's pursuit of sustainable development, they are given maximum freedom in their commitment to and application of sustainable development. The governments have not put in place any control mechanisms or enforceable instruments. As a result of that minimalistic interpretation of the governance model, Quebec does not move beyond the bureaucratization of sustainable development, and Flanders has a sustainable development policy that is conducted in the margins of day-to-day policy-making.

Based on the comparative analysis presented in this *cahier*, and following my research stay at the *Chaire de responsabilité sociale et développement durable*, I formulate a series of policy recommendations addressed to the government of Quebec. Considering that the government is preparing for the revision of its Strategy, and subsequently of the Sustainable Development Act, these recommendations and the comparative results put forward in this *cahier* can prove insightful.

Recommendation 1 – The government of Quebec should apply a maximum interpretation of the chosen governance model, and it should move beyond the strict view that the pursuit of sustainable development only involves the public administration.

The government has opted for a governance model which relies on the horizontal integration of sustainable development and of a series of policy principles into all sectors of policy-making. As a consequence, it should provide the necessary capacity-building, horizontal coordination, enforcement and monitoring. Such an approach necessarily involves the definition of more ambitious operational policy goals, and the application of stronger policy instruments. For instance, the government should stress more explicitly that the entities bound by the Act must comply with all the principles of sustainable development. Moreover, the government should clarify that the pursuit of sustainable development transcends the strict framework of the public administration, and that all its policies and decisions must be in accordance with the sustainable development principles. The *virage* called for by the Act will not be achieved if the government does not steer its entire policy-making in the direction of sustainable development.

Recommendation 2 – The government of Quebec should grant more political weight to its sustainable development policy.

The sustainable development policy will not achieve the government's strategic policy goals if it remains limited to a 'bureaucratic' follow-up and if not more political weight is granted to the policy issue and the related policy measures. Yet the case of Flanders shows that it is insufficient to give the responsibility for sustainable development to the prime minister or another central political official. A sustainable development policy demands the political commitment of the responsible ministers and of the prime minister, who should see to it that all ministers, ministries and organisms fully integrate sustainable development and its principles into their policies. An increased political weight should result, for instance, in more political support for the coordinating Ministry, so that it has more clout to oversee the implementation of the Act.

Recommendation 3 – The government should apply and promote a uniform interpretation of sustainable development, and prevent contradictory interpretations in policy and decision-making.

The continuous shifts in the government's policy documents with regard to the interpretation of sustainable development gives the impression that the government itself does not support a uniform interpretation of the concept. The government should therefore make increased efforts to adopt a single definition of sustainable development and to promote that definition in all policy-making. The government should also prevent the misuse of the term in policy-making and in political discourse. In this regard, I recall the definition of sustainable development that is

promoted by the *Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable* (see footnote 2). It should also be emphasized that true sustainable development can only be achieved if the needs of other societies and of future generations worldwide are taken into account.

Recommendation 4 – The government should make sure that the environmental dimension is not lost among the other goals of the policy.

The analysis of the thematic areas of the policy goals revealed that the environmental dimension is weakly represented, for instance in the orientations and objectives of the Strategy. Environmental integrity, however, is one of the government's strategic policy goals. The government should clarify that the respect for environmental integrity is an absolute condition of its sustainable development policy, which should be translated in strong environmental policy goals.

Recommendation 5 – The government should provide clarity with regard to its follow-up of recommendations resulting from public consultations.

The goals of a sustainable development policy should have a broad political and societal backing. The government of Quebec is quick to stress that its policy was put in place after successive phases of extensive public and parliamentary consultations. But in order to ensure the backing, the government should provide more clarity on how the inputs from those consultations are taken into account, on why some recommendations are accommodated and on why others are not.

Recommendation 6 – The Strategy should be more than a compilation of existing intentions. It should offer an added value to the government's existing plans and strategies and orient them towards the attainment of sustainable development, and it should provide a long-term vision of societal development.

Sustainable development strategies are meant to harmonize a government's existing plans and policies and direct them towards the attainment of sustainable development. They should be more than a mere compilation of existing intentions or priorities, but should actually provide an added value for existing plans and strategies and reorient them towards sustainable development. The goals that are thus defined also need to be founded on a thorough analysis of current global and local trends, based on reliable information. The renewed Strategy should thus provide clarity on its added value for existing priorities and on how it reorients policy-making in Quebec towards sustainable development. Furthermore, the Strategy should contain not only a vague societal vision, but a real long-term vision for sustainable development. In doing so, the government can be inspired by the recent initiative of the Flemish government to develop a long-term vision in the framework of the renewed Flemish Sustainable Development Strategy (see footnote 26).

Recommendation 7 – The government should see to it that all Sustainable Development Action Plans are in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Act.

The government should not only provide capacity-building with regard to the development of the Action Plans, but it should also oversee the content of the Action Plans and see to it that

they are fully in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Act. For instance, the government should make sure that the Action Plans respect the sustainable development principles and that they contribute to the *virage* intended by the Act.

Recommendation 8 – The government of Quebec should apply stronger economic instruments in its sustainable development policy.

The economic instruments of the current sustainable development policy are weak, and the policy now relies completely on the existing funds of the coordinating Ministry. The government of Quebec could take an example after Flanders, which has legally enshrined the creation of a separate budget for its sustainable development policy. In any case, the amount of funds provided for sustainable development should be in accordance with the fact that the government declares sustainable development to be an important priority.

References

Adolino, Jessica R., and Charles H. Blake. 2001. *Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices in Six Industrialized Countries.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Agranoff, Robert, and Beryl A. Radin. 1991. The Comparative Case Study Approach in Public Administration. *Research in Public Administration* 1: 203-231.

Assemblée Nationale. 1989. Journal des débats (Le mardi 28 novembre 1989, vol. 31 - n° 1). Québec: Assemblée Nationale.

———. 1994. Journal des débats (Le mardi 29 novembre 1994). Québec: Assemblée Nationale.

———. 2006. Loi sur le développement durable (Projet de loi n° 118). Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec.

———. 2007. Journal des débats (Le mercredi 9 mai 2007, vol. 40 - n° 2). Québec: Assemblée Nationale.

———. 2010. *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne.* Éditeur officiel du Québec [cited 6 Oct 2010]. Available from http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C_12/C12.HTM.

Audet, René, and Corinne Gendron. 2010. The Social and Political Construction of Sustainable Development in Quebec. Paper read at the workshop 'Comparative Subnational Sustainable Development Politics', 23 June, at Leuven.

Bachus, Kris, Hans Bruyninckx, and Mayke Poesen-Vandeputte. 2005. Vlaams structureel overleg voor duurzame ontwikkeling (Eindrapport in het kader van het TWOL-onderzoeksproject 'Vlaams structureel overleg voor duurzame ontwikkeling'). Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven & Hoger instituut voor de arbeid. Available from http://www.hiva.be/docs/rapport/R960.pdf.

Bachus, Kris, and Sophie Spillemaeckers. 2010. Inclusive governance or incrementalism? The choice of a sustainable development governance model for Flanders. Paper read at

the workshop 'Comparative Subnational Sustainable Development Politics', 23 June, at Leuven.

Baker, Susan, and Katarina Eckerberg, eds. 2008. *In Pursuit of Sustainable Development. New governance practices at the sub-national level in Europe*. London & New York: Routledge.

Baril, Jean. 2006. *Le BAPE devant les citoyens. Pour une évaluation environnementale au service du développement durable*. Les Presses de l'Université Laval.

Belgische Senaat. 2010. *De Belgische Grondwet* [cited 5 May 2010]. Available from http://www.senate.be/doc/const_nl.html.

Bennett, Colin J. 1988. Different Processes, One Result: The Convergence of Data Protection Policy in Europe and the United States. *Governance* 1 (4): 415-441.

———. 1991. Review Article: What Is Policy Convergence and What Causes It? *British Journal of Political Science* 21 (4): 215-233.

Berger, Gerald, and Reinhard Steurer. 2008. National sustainable development strategies in EU member states. The regional dimension. In *In Pursuit of Sustainable Development. New governance practices at the sub-national level in Europe*, edited by S. Baker and K. Eckerberg. London & New York: Routledge.

Blühdorn, Ingolfur, and Ian Welsh. 2007. Eco-politics beyond the Paradigm of Sustainability: A Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda. *Environmental Politics* 16 (2): 185-205.

Boismenu, Gérard, Pascale Dufour, and Denis Saint-Martin. 2004. *Ambitions libérales et écueils politiques. Réalisations et promesses du gouvernement Charest*. Outremont: Athéna éditions.

Bouckaert, Geert, Wouter Van Dooren, and Miekatrien Sterck. 2003. Prestaties meten in de Vlaamse overheid: een verkennende studie (report). Leuven: Steunpunt Bestuurlijke Organisatie Vlaanderen.

Bruyninckx, Hans. 2006. Sustainable development: the institutionalization of a contested policy concept. In *Palgrave advances in international environmental politics*, edited by M.

M. Betsill, K. Hochstetler and D. Stevis. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cordonier Segger, Marie-Claire. 2004. Significant developments in sustainable law and governance: A proposal. *Natural Resources Forum* 28: 61-74.

Council of the European Union. 2006. Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) − Renewed Strategy. Brussels: Council of the European Union.

Daviter, Falk. 2007. Policy Framing in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy* 14 (4): 654-666.

De Morgen. 2008. Geen elektriciteitscentrale op palmolie in Antwerpse haven. *De Morgen* 21 maart 2008.

De Peuter, Bart, Joris De Smedt, and Geert Bouckaert. 2007a. Handleiding beleidsevaluatie. Deel 1: evaluatiedesign en -management (report). Leuven: Steunpunt Bestuurlijke Organisatie Vlaanderen.

De Peuter, Bart, Joris De Smedt, Wouter Van Dooren, and Geert Bouckaert. 2007b. Handleiding beleidsevaluatie. Deel 2: Monitoring van beleid (report). Leuven: Steunpunt Bestuurlijke Organisatie Vlaanderen.

Debruyne, Pascal, and Simon Calcoen. 2008. Tussen retoriek en regulier beleid: duurzame ontwikkeling in Vlaanderen. *Oikos* 47 (4): 24-37.

deLeon, Peter, and Phyllis Resnick-Terry. 1999. Comparative Policy Analysis: Déjà vu All Over Again? *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 1: 9-22.

Dewael, Patrick. 2000. Verklaring van de Vlaamse regering betreffende de algemeen maatschappelijke situatie en betreffende de krachtlijnen van de begroting 2001 (Septemberverklaring, 25 september 2000). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement.

Dryzek, John S. 1997. *The Politics of the Earth. Environmental Discourses.* New York: Oxford University Press.

European Commission. 2002. A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Gale, Robert J.P. 1997. Canada's Green Plan. In *Nationale Umweltpläne in ausgewählten Industrieländern (A Study of*

the Development of a National Environmental Plan with expert submissions to the Enquete Commission 'Protection of People and the Environment' for the Bundestag). Berlin: Springer Verlag.

Gendron, Corinne. 2005. Le Québec à l'ère du développement durable. *Options politiques / Policy Options* Jul-Aug 2005: 20-25.

———. 2006. *Le développement durable comme compromis. La modernisation écologique de l'économie à l'ère de la mondialisation*. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Gendron, Corinne, Richard Janda, Marie-Andrée Caron, Olga Navarro-Flores, Annie Rochette, Véronique Bisaillon, Philip Duguay, Sarah Gagnon-Turcotte, Chantal Hervieux, and Emilie White. 2009. Comprendre, évaluer, informer et décider : des indicateurs de développement durable pour le Québec (Mémoire de la Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable et du Centre de droit international du développement durable déposé à la Commission des transports et de l'environnement de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec). Montréal: Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable & Centre de droit international du développement durable. Available from http://www.crsdd.uqam.ca/Pages/cahiers.aspx.

Gendron, Corinne, and Jean-Pierre Revéret. 2000. Le développement durable. *Économies et Sociétés* 37: 111-124.

Gendron, Corinne, Jean-Pierre Revéret, Gisèle Belem, Véronique Bisaillon, Patrick Laprise, Chantal Hervieux, Alain Lapointe, Emmanuelle Champion, and Ana Isabel Otero. 2005. Mémoire de la Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable remis à la Commission des transports et de l'environnement dans le cadre des consultations particulières et des auditions publiques sur la Loi sur le développement durable (Les cahiers de la Chaire - collection recherche n° 10). Montréal: Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable. Available from http://www.crsdd.uqam.ca/Pages/cahiers.aspx.

Gendron, Corinne, Jean-Pierre Revéret, Annie Rochette, Véronique Bisaillon, François Croteau, François Décary-Gilardeau, Manal El Abboubi, and Chantal Hervieux. 2007. Inspirer et canaliser les actions pour un véritable virage vers le développement durable (Les cahiers de la CRSDD n° 17). Montréal: Chaire de responsabilité sociale et de développement durable. Available from http://www.crsdd.uqam.ca/Pages/cahiers.aspx.

Gendron, Corinne, and Jean-Guy Vaillancourt. 1998. L'avant et l'arrière-scène de la politique énergétique du Québec. In *L'énergie au Québec. Quels sont nos choix?*, edited by C. Gendron and J.-G. Vaillancourt. Montréal: Les Éditions Écosociété.

George, Alexander L. 1979. Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison. In *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy*, edited by P. G. Lauren. New York: Free Press.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press.

Gouvernement du Québec. 1988. CAP - A new environmental strategy. Conservation - Action - Progress. Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement.

———. 1992. Québec l'expérience du développement durable. Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement & Ministère des Affaires internationales.

———. 1996. Mise en oeuvre d'Action 21. Exemples d'initiatives du gouvernement du Québec en matière de développement durable. Québec: Direction de la promotion du développement durable, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/etat/action21.pdf.

———. 1998. Québec Objectif Emploi. Vers une économie d'avant-garde. Une stratégie de développement économique créatrice d'emplois. Québec: Ministère des Finances. Available from

http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/1998-1999/fr/PDF/stratfr.pdf.

———. 2001. Plans stratégiques du ministère et des organismes sous la responsabilité du ministre de l'Environnement. Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement.

———. 2002. Rapport du Québec sur le développement durable (Présenté au Sommet mondial sur le développement durable). Québec: Comité interministériel sur le développement durable. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/etat/rapportqc.pdf.

———. 2004. Plan de développement durable du Québec. Document de consultation. Québec: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/2004-2007/plan-consultation.pdf.

———. 2006. Plan d'action 2006-2012. Le Québec et les changements climatiques. Un défi pour l'avenir. Québec: Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/changements/plan_action/2006-2012_fr.pdf.

———. 2007a. Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable. Le gouvernement du Québec confirme son leadership et sa vision (Communiqué de presse). Québec: Ministère de Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/infuseur/communique.asp?no=1244.

———. 2007b. Un projet de société pour le Québec. Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable 2008-2013. Québec: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie_gouvernementale/strat_gouv.pdf.

———. 2009a. *À propos du développement durable* [cited 18 Dec 2009]. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/definition.htm.

———. 2009b. Politique administrative pour un gouvernement écoresponsable. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie_gouvernementale/politique-gvt-ecoresponsable.pdf.

———. 2010. Indicateurs québécois de développement durable (Document synthèse). Québec: Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, Bureau de coordination du développement durable. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/indicateurs/index.htm.

Halley, Paule. 2005. L'Avant-projet de loi sur le développement durable du Québec. *McGill International Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy - Revue international de droit et politique du développement durable de McGill* 1 (1): 59-80.

Halley, Paule, and Vincent Lemieux. 2009. La mise en oeuvre de la Loi québécoise sur le développement durable : un premier bilan. In *Conférence des juristes de l'État 2009. XVIIIe Conférence*, edited by Conférence des juristes de l'État. Cowansville: Éditions Yvon Blais.

Happaerts, Sander. 2009. The Use of Comparative Analyses for Sustainable Development (Working Paper n° 11). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

———. 2010a. Sustainable development and degrees of autonomy. The challenge of vertical policy integration from the perspective of North Holland, North Rhine-Westphalia, Flanders and Quebec (Working Paper n° 15). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

———. 2010b. Sustainable development in Wallonia: trial and error along two tracks of governance (Working Paper n° 20). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

Happaerts, Sander, Simon Schunz, and Hans Bruyninckx. 2010a. Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations: The Multi-Level Politics of Climate Change Policy in Belgium

(Working Paper). Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies. Available from http://www.ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/nieuw/pages/publications/working_papersS.html.

Happaerts, Sander, and Karoline Van den Brande. 2010. Sustainable Development between International and Domestic Forces. The Policy Experiences of Quebec, North Rhine-Westphalia and Flanders (Working Paper n° 18). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

Happaerts, Sander, Karoline Van den Brande, and Hans Bruyninckx. 2010b. Governance for Sustainable Development at the Inter-subnational Level: The Case of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD). *Regional & Federal Studies* 20 (1): 127-149.

―――. 2010c. Subnational governments in transnational networks for sustainable development. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* DOI 10.1007/s10784-010-9128-4.

Harrison, Neil E. 2000. *Constructing Sustainable Development*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Heichel, Stephan, Jessica Pape, and Thomas Sommerer. 2005. Is there convergence in convergence research? An overview of empirical studies on policy convergence. *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 817-840.

Hoberg, George, and Kathryn Harrison. 1994. It's Not Easy Being Green: The Politics of Canada's Green Plan. *Canadian Public Policy - Analyse de Politiques* XX (2): 119-137.

Holzinger, Katharina, and Christoph Knill. 2005. Causes and conditions of cross-national policy convergence. *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 775-796.

Holzinger, Katharina, Christoph Knill, and Thomas Sommerer. 2008. Environmental Policy Convergence: The Impact of International Harmonization, Transnational Communication, and Regulatory Competition. *International Organization* 62: 553-87.

Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Arjan H. Schakel. 2008a. Operationalizing Regional Authority: A Coding Scheme for 42 Countries, 1950-2006. *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (2-3): 123-142.

———. 2008b. Special Issue: Regional Authority in 42 Countries, 1950-2006: A Measure and Five Hypotheses. *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (2-3).

Hooghe, Liesbet, Arjan H. Schakel, and Gary Marks. 2008c. Appendix B: Country and Regional Scores. *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (2-3): 259-274.

Howlett, Michael, and M. Ramesh. 2003. *Studying Public Policy. Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Hydro-Québec. 2009. Rapport sur le développement durable 2009. Montréal: Hydro-Québec. Available from http://www.hydroquebec.com/developpementdurable/index.html.

Institut de la Statistique du Québec (ISQ). 2010a. *Indicateurs de développement durable*. Gouvernement du Québec [cited 24 Sep 2010]. Available from http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/donstat/dev_durable/indicateur1.htm.

———. 2010b. *Indicateurs de suivi des objectifs de la Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable 2008-2013*. Gouvernement du Québec [cited 14 Oct 2010]. Available from http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/donstat/dev_durable/indicateur2.htm.

International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). 1980. World Conservation Strategy. Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development. Gland: IUCN.

Jacobs, Michael. 1999. Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept. In *Fairness and Futurity. Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*, edited by A. Dobson. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jordan, Andrew. 2008. The governance of sustainable development: taking stock and looking forwards.

Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy 26: 17-33.

Jordan, Andrew, and Andrea Lenschow. 2008. Environmental policy integration: an innovation in environmental policy? In *Innovation in Environmental Policy? Integrating the Environment for Sustainability*, edited by A. J. Jordan and A. Lenschow. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.

Jordan, Andrew, Rüdiger K.W. Wurzel, and Anthony R. Zito. 2005. The Rise of 'New' Policy Instruments in Comparative Perspective: Has Governance Eclipsed Government? *Political Studies* 53: 477-496.

Joyce, Paul. 1999. *Strategic management for the public services*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Kaufmann-Hayoz, Ruth, Christoph Bättig, Susanne Bruppacher, Rico Defila, Antonietta Di Giulio, Peter Flury-Kleubler, Ueli Friederich, Myriam Garbely, Heinz Gutscher, Christian Jäggi, Maya Jegen, Hans-Joachim Mosler, André Müller, Nicole North, Silvia Ulli-Beer, and Jürg Wichtermann. 2001. A Typology of Tools for Building Sustainability Strategies. In *Changing Things – Moving People. Strategies for Promoting SD at the Local Level*, edited by R. Kaufmann-Hayoz and H. Gutscher. Basel - Boston - Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag.

Keating, Michael. 1999. Regions and International Affairs: Motives, Opportunities and Strategies. *Regional & Federal Studies* 9 (1): 1-16.

Keating, Michael, and Nicola McEwen. 2005. Introduction: Devolution and Public Policy in Comparative Perspective. *Regional & Federal Studies* 15 (4): 413-421.

Kern, Kristine. 2008. Sub-national sustainable development initiatives in federal states in Germany. In *In Pursuit of Sustainable Development. New governance practices at the sub-national level in Europe*, edited by S. Baker and K. Eckerberg. London & New York: Routledge.

Lafferty, William M. 2004a. Introduction: form and function in governance for sustainable development. In *Governance for Sustainable Development. The Challenge of Adapting Form to Function*, edited by W. M. Lafferty. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.

———, ed. 2001. *Sustainable Communities in Europe*. London: Earthscan.

———, ed. 2004b. *Governance for Sustainable Development. The Challenge of Adapting Form to Function*. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.

Lafferty, William M., and James Meadowcroft. 2000a. Concluding Perspectives. In *Implementing Sustainable Development. Strategies and Initiatives in High Consumption Societies*, edited by W. M. Lafferty and J. Meadowcroft. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2000b. Patterns of Governmental Engagement. In *Implementing Sustainable Development. Strategies and Initiatives in High Consumption Societies*, edited by W. M. Lafferty and J. Meadowcroft. New York: Oxford University Press.

———, eds. 2000c. *Implementing Sustainable Development. Strategies and Initiatives in High Consumption Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lenschow, Andrea, Duncan Liefferink, and Sietske Veenman. 2005. When the birds sing. A framework for analysing domestic factors behind policy convergence. *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 797-816.

Leterme, Yves. 2004. Vlaanderen, het Noorden én het Zuiden duurzaam ontwikkelen. Beleidsnota Duurzame Ontwikkeling 2004-2009. Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap. Available from http://www2.vlaanderen.be/duurzameontwikkeling/document en.htm.

———. 2005. Verklaring van de Vlaamse Regering betreffende de algemeen maatschappelijke situatie en betreffende de krachtlijnen van de begroting 2006 (Septemberverklaring, 26 september 2005). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement.

———. 2006a. Beleidsbrief Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Beleidsprioriteiten 2006-2007. Vlaams Parlement Stuk 991 (2006-2007) - Nr. 1. Available from http://www2.vlaanderen.be/duurzameontwikkeling/document en.htm.

———. 2006b. Gecoördineerd antwoord op vraag nr. 57 van 26 april 2006 van Joke Schauvliege. Brussel: Vlaams Parlement. Available from http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/bva/2005-2006/va9-01062006.pdf.

Lundqvist, Lennart J. 2004. Management by objectives and results: a comparison of Dutch, Swedish and EU strategies for realising sustainable development. In *Governance for Sustainable Development. The Challenge of Adapting Form to Function*, edited by W. M. Lafferty. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.

Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, and Arjan H. Schakel. 2008. Measuring Regional Authority. *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (2-3): 111-121.

Mead, Harvey. 2005. De l'environnement comme notion sectorielle au développement comme enjeu transversal: une vision canadienne. In *Le développement durable. Les termes du débat*, edited by M.-C. Smouts. Armand Colin.

———. 2009. La *Loi sur le développement durable* et les enjeux du développement. In *Conférence des juristes de l'État 2009. XVIIIe Conférence*, edited by Conférence des juristes de l'État. Cowansville: Éditions Yvon Blais.

Meadowcroft, James. 2007. National Sustainable Development Strategies: Features, Challenges and Reflexivity. *European Environment* 17: 152-163.

———. 2008. Who is in Charge here? Governance for Sustainable Development in a Complex World. In *Governance for Sustainable Development. Coping with ambivalence, uncertainty and distributed power*, edited by J. Newig, J.-P. Voß and J. Monstadt. London & New York: Routledge.

Milieu- en Natuurraad van Vlaanderen (Minaraad). 2005. Briefadvies van 22 november 2005 over het voorontwerp van Vlaamse Strategie Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Brussel: Minaraad. Available from http://www.minaraad.be/adviezen/adv_2005.

———. 2009. Vlaamse Strategienota Duurzame Ontwikkeling: invulling van de operationele projecten (Advies). Brussel:

Milieu- en Natuurraad van Vlaanderen. Available from http://www.minaraad.be/adviezen/2009.

Milieu- en Natuurraad van Vlaanderen (Minaraad), and Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen (SERV). 2005. Bestuurlijke aanbevelingen voor een effectieve Vlaamse Strategie Duurzame Ontwikkeling (Advies van 28 april 2005). Brussel: Milieu- en Natuurraad van Vlaanderen. Available from http://www.minaraad.be/adviezen/adv_2005.

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP). 2007a. Analyse comparative de systèmes d'indicateurs de développement durable. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/indicateurs/analyscomp.pdf.

———. 2007b. Guide d'élaboration d'un plan d'action de développement durable (Document interne pour l'administration publique). Québec: Bureau de coordination du développement durable. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/outils/guide-elabo-plandd.pdf.

———. 2008. *Le développement durable une mode, un mode de vie ou un virage collectif?* Gouvernement du Québec [cited 27 Sep 2010]. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie_gouvernementale/articles/aegq_nov2008.htm.

———. 2009a. *Comité interministériel du développement durable*. Gouvernement du Québec [cited 18 Dec 2009]. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/comite.htm.

———. 2009b. Guide pour la prise en compte des principes de développement durable. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/outils/guide-prinicipesdd.pdf.

———. 2009c. Les premiers plans d'action de développement durable de l'administration publique québécoise. Portrait synthèse. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available

from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/synthese-premier-plansdd.pdf.

———. 2009d. Rapport de mise en oeuvre de la Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable 2008-2013. Année 2008-2009. Québec: Bureau de coordination du développement durable. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/strategie_gouvernementale/rapport/2008-2009.pdf.

———. 2010. Indicateurs québécois de développement durable (Document synthèse). Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/indicateurs/index.htm.

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP), and Fonds d'action québécois pour le développement durable (FAQDD). 2009. Guide pour un financement responsable. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec. Available from http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/developpement/outils/guide-finance-responsable.pdf.

Nilsson, Måns, Katarina Eckerberg, and Göran Finnveden. 2009. Discussion: What Enabled EPI in Practice? In *Environmental policy integration in practice : shaping institutions for learning*, edited by M. Nilsson and K. Eckerberg. London: Earthscan.

Nørgaard, Asbjørn S. 2008. Political Science: Witchcraft or Craftmanship? Standards for Good Research. *World Political Science Review* 4 (1): 1-28.

O'Toole, Laurence J., Jr. 2004. Implementation theory and the challenge of sustainable development: the transformative role of learning. In *Governance for Sustainable Development. The Challenge of Adapting Form to Function*, edited by W. M. Lafferty. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.

OECD. 2001a. *The DAC Guidelines. Strategies for Sustainable Development: Guidance for Development Co-operation*. Paris: OECD Publications.

———. 2001b. *Sustainable Development. Critical Issues*. Paris: OECD Publications.

———. 2002. *Governance for Sustainable Development. Five OECD Case Studies*. Paris: OECD Publications.

Pallemaerts, Marc. 2003. International Law and Sustainable Development in and after Johannesburg. In *Making Globalistation Sustainable? The Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and Beyond*, edited by E. Nierynck, A. Vanoverschelde, T. Bauler, E. Zaccai, L. Hens and M. Pallemaerts. Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press.

Paquin, Stéphane. 2004. La paradiplomatie identitaire: le Québec, la Catalogne et la Flandre en relations internationales. *Politique et Sociétés* 23 (2-3): 203-237.

Paredis, Erik. 2008. Transition management in Flanders. Policy context, first results and surfacing tensions (Working Paper n° 6). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

———. 2010. Naar een verdere onderbouwing van het Vlaamse beleid voor duurzaamheidstransities (Working Paper n° 19). Gent: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ). 2002. Un gouvernement au service des Québécois. Ensemble, réinventons le Québec. Le plan d'action du prochain gouvernement libéral. Montréal: Parti libéral du Québec.

———. 2007. S'unir pour réussir le Québec de demain (Plan d'action 2007-2012. Deuxième mandat du gouvernement du Parti libéral du Québec). Montréal & Québec: Parti Libéral du Québec.

Parti Québécois (PQ). 1994. Programme électoral du Parti québécois. Centre de documentation du Parti québécois.

———. 1996. La volonté de réussir. Programme et statuts du Parti Québécois. Montréal: Parti Québécois. Available from http://pq.org/parti/publications.

Peeters, Kris. 2009. Beleidsnota 2009-2014 Algemeen Regeringsbeleid. Brussel: Vlaamse Regering. Available from http://www.vlaanderen.be/beleidsnotas.

Pierre, Jon, and B. Guy Peters. 2000. *Governance, Politics and the State*. Houndmills & London: Macmillan Press LTD.

PricewaterhouseCoopers. 2007. Duurzaamheidsaspecten binnen de werking van de Vlaamse overheid (Eindverslag deel II: Draaiboek DO maturiteitsmodel). Brussel: Vlaamse Overheid, Diensten voor het Algemeen Regeringsbeleid.

Québec International. 2009. *-20 % : la cible du Québec pour 2020* [cited 23 November 2009]. Available from http://www.mri.gouv.qc.ca/fr/_scripts/Actualites/ViewNew.asp?NewID=7159&lang=fr.

Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec (RNCREQ). 2009. Consultation publique sur les indicateurs de développement durable (Mémoire du Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec présenté à la Commission des transports et de l'environnement de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec). Montréal: RNCREQ. Available from http://www.rncreq.org/developpement-durable-t8.html.

Renglé, Hannes. 2009. Duurzame ontwikkeling in het Vlaamse ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsbeleid. Master's thesis, Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen, opleiding Vergelijkende en Internationale Politiek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven.

Schön, Donald A., and Martin Rein. 1994. *Frame Reflection. Toward the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies.* New York: Basic Books.

Sérandour, Barbara. 1998. Un public exclu des débats et des décisions sur l'énergie. In *L'énergie au Québec. Quels sont nos choix?*, edited by C. Gendron and J.-G. Vaillancourt. Montréal: Les Éditions Écosociété.

Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen (SERV). 2005. Briefadvies aan Minister Yves Leterme over de strategie duurzame ontwikkeling. Brussel: SERV. Available from http://www.serv.be/serv/publicatie/briefadvies-aan-minister-yves-leterme-over-de-strategie-duurzameontwikkeling.

———. 2009. Projecten Vlaamse strategie duurzame ontwikkeling (Advies). Brussel: Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen. Available from http://www.serv.be/serv/publicatie/advies-over-projecten-vlaamse-strategie-duurzameontwikkeling-vsdo.

Spangenberg, Joachim H. 2004. Sustainability beyond Environmentalism: The Missing Dimensions (GoSD Working Paper). Köln: Sustainable Europe Research Institute. Available from http://www.gosd.net/pdf/gosd-wp2.pdf.

Spillemaeckers, Sophie. 2009. Het Governancemodel van het Vlaamse Duurzameontwikkelingsbeleid (Working Paper n° 9). Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

Steurer, Reinhard. 2009. Sustainable development as governance reform agenda: An aggregation of distinguished challenges for policy-making (Discussion Paper 1-2009). Vienna: Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural Resource Policy, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences.

Steurer, Reinhard, and André Martinuzzi. 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: 455-472.

Strategische Adviesraad internationaal Vlaanderen (SARiV). 2009. Vlaamse strategienota Duurzame Ontwikkeling: invulling van de operationele projecten (Advies 2009/19). Brussel: Strategische Adviesraad internationaal Vlaanderen. Available from http://www.sariv.be/NL/adviezen/1/2009/0/.

Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering. 2006. Omgevingsindicatoren duurzame ontwikkeling (Eerste indicatorennota). Brussel: Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering.

———. 2008. Omgevingsindicatoren duurzame ontwikkeling in Vlaanderen 2008 (Tweede indicatorennota). Brussel: Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering.

———. 2009. Omgevingsindicatoren duurzame ontwikkeling in Vlaanderen 2009 (Derde indicatorennota). Brussel: Vlaamse overheid. Available from http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?id=93&order=.

Swanson, Darren, and Lásslo Pintér. 2007. Governance Structures for National Sustainable Development Strategies.

In *Institutionalising Sustainable Development*, edited by OECD. Paris: OECD Publications.

Tarasofsky, Richard. 2007. Canada's Progress in Addressing the Strategic Imperatives set out in "Our Common Future". Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development. Available from http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/facing_canada_progress.pdf.

Toner, Glen. 2000. Canada: From Early Frontrunner to Plodding Anchorman. In *Implementing Sustainable Development. Strategies and Initiatives in High Consumption Societies*, edited by W. M. Lafferty and J. Meadowcroft. New York: Oxford University Press.

Toner, Glen, and James Meadowcroft. 2009. The Struggle of the Canadian Federal Government to Institutionalize Sustainable Development. In *Canadian Environmental Policy and Politics. Prospects for Leadership and Innovation*, edited by D. L. VanNijnatten and R. Boardman. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). 1992a. *Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development*. United Nations Department of Public Information.

———. 1992b. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. New York: United Nations.

Van den Brande, Karoline. 2010. Flanders in the UN and OECD Discussions on Sustainable Development. An Assessment of Presence, Visibility and Policy Impact. Leuven: Steunpunt Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Available from http://www.steunpuntdo.be/E_SDO_publ_CoEfSD.htm.

Van Humbeeck, Peter. 2010. Anders en beter consulteren: een prioriteit voor het Vlaamse wetgevingsbeleid (ICW Working Paper). Interuniversitair Centrum voor Wetgeving. Available from http://www.centrumwetgeving.be/main.aspx?c=*ICW&n=52794.

Vérificateur général du Québec. 2007. Rapport du Vérificateur général du Québec à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'année 2007-2008. Tome II: Rapport du commissaire au

développement durable. Québec & Montréal: Vérificateur général du Québec. Available from http://www.vgq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/fr_publications/fr_rapport-annuel/fr_index.aspx.

———. 2009. Rapport du Vérificateur général du Québec à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'année 2008-2009. Tome II. Québec & Montréal: Vérificateur général du Québec. Available from http://www.vgq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/fr_publications/fr_rapport-annuel/fr_index.aspx.

———. 2010. Rapport du Vérificateur général du Québec à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'année 2009-2010. Rapport du commissaire au développement durable. Québec & Montréal: Vérificateur général du Québec. Available from http://www.vgq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/fr_publications/fr_rapport-annuel/fr_index.aspx.

Vlaams Parlement. 2005. Beleidsnota Duurzame Ontwikkeling 2004-2009 (Verslag namens de Commissie voor Leefmilieu en Natuur, Landbouw, Visserij en Plattelandsbeleid en Ruimtelijke Ordening en Onroerend Erfgoed uitgebracht door mevrouw Tinne Rombouts, 9 februari 2005). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement.

———. 2006. Beleidsbrief Duurzame Ontwikkeling. Beleidsprioriteiten 2006-2007 (Verslag namens de Commissie voor Algemeen Beleid, Financiën en Begroting uitgebracht door de heer Koen Van den Heuvel, 5 december 2006). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement.

———. 2008. Ontwerp van decreet ter bevordering van duurzame ontwikkeling (Tekst aangenomen door de plenaire vergadering, 9 juli 2008). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement. Available from http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2007-2008/g1629-4.pdf.

Vlaamse Overheid. 2001a. 21 doelstellingen voor de 21ste eeuw (Pact van Vilvoorde, 22 november 2001). Vilvoorde: Vlaamse Overheid.

———. 2001b. *Duurzame ontwikkeling wordt leidraad in Kleurennota*. Vera Dua, minister van Leefmilieu en

Landbouw [cited 19 Aug 2010]. Available from http://www.vlaanderen.be/servlet/Satellite?c=NB_Nieuwsbericht&cid=1140066012347&p=1106040582718&pagename=nieuwsberichten%2FNB_Nieuwsbericht%2FNieuwsbericht.

———. 2009. Subsidiegids 2009. Projectsubsidies Vlaamse overheid duurzame ontwikkeling. Brussel: Vlaamse overheid, Diensten voor het Algemeen Regeringsbeleid. Available from http://www2.vlaanderen.be/duurzameontwikkeling/subsidies.htm.

Vlaamse Regering. 1999. Een nieuw project voor Vlaanderen (Regeerakkoord 1999-2004). Brussel: Vlaams Parlement.

———. 2004. Regeerakkoord 2004. Vertrouwen geven, verantwoordelijkheid nemen. Brussel: Vlaamse Regering. Available from start.vlaanderen.be/documenten/vlaamsregeerakkoord2004.pdf.

———. 2006. Samen grenzen ver-leggen. Vlaamse strategie duurzame ontwikkeling (fase 1) (Ontwerptekst goedgekeurd door de Vlaamse Regering). Brussel: Vlaamse Regering. Available from http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/data/docattachments/VSDO_20060928_DEF.pdf.

———. 2007. Samen grenzen ver-leggen. Vlaamse Strategie Duurzame Ontwikkeling (fase 1). Brussel: Diensten voor het Algemeen Regeringsbeleid. Available from http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/data/docattachments/Samen_grenzen_verleggen_2007.pdf.

———. 2008. Memorie van toelichting bij Voorontwerp van decreet ter bevordering van duurzame ontwikkeling. Available from http://www2.vlaanderen.be/duurzameontwikkeling/downloads/documenten/MvTdecreet.pdf.

———. 2009a. Een daadkrachtig Vlaanderen in beslissende tijden. Voor een vernieuwende, duurzame en warme samenleving (regeerakkoord Vlaanderen 2009-2014). Brussel: Vlaamse Regering. Available from http://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/ebl-

web/do/publicatieSessionFacade/publicatieEenvoudigeDetail
Action/raadplegen?method=raadplegen&id=25114.

———. 2009b. Pact 2020: Een nieuw toekomstpact voor
Vlaanderen. 20 doelstellingen. Hasselt: Vlaamse Overheid.
Available   from
http://www.vlaandereninactie.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?fid=
179.

———. 2009c. Vlaams actieplan duurzame overheidsopdrachten
2009-2011. Brussel: Stafdienst van de Vlaamse Regering,
Departement   DAR.   Available   from
http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?fid=58.

———. 2010a. *Operationele Projecten VSDO*. Stafdienst van de
Vlaamse Regering, Departement DAR [cited 21 Oct 2010].
Available   from
http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?fid=71.

———. 2010b. *Wat is Duurzame Ontwikkeling (DO)?* Stafdienst
van de Vlaamse Regering, Departement DAR [cited 21
October   2010].   Available   from
http://do.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?fid=55.

Ward, Neil, Andrew Donaldson, and Philip Lowe. 2004. Policy
framing and learning the lessons from the UK's foot and
mouth disease crisis. *Environment and Planning C:
Government and Policy* 22: 291-306.

Werkgroep   Duurzame   Ontwikkeling   (WGDO).   2004.
*Inventarisoefening van bestaande Vlaamse initiatieven met
mogelijke relevantie voor een op te stellen Vlaamse strategie
duurzame ontwikkeling. Opgemaakt door de Vlaamse
Interdepartementale Ambtelijke Werkgroep Duurzame
Ontwikkeling (WGDO)* [cited 27 July 2007]. Available from
http://www.wgdo.be.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED).
1987. *Our Common Future*. New York and Oxford: Oxford
University Press.

Zaccaï, Edwin. 2002. *Le développement durable. Dynamique et
constitution d'un projet*. Bruxelles - Bern - Berlin - Frankfurt/M
- New York - Oxford - Wien: P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

Annex 1 – List of interviewees

Quebec

Boisclair, André	11 May 2009	Minister of the Environment and Municipal Affairs (Parti québécois) at Government of Quebec (between 2001 and 2003)
Bourke, Philippe	9 November 2010	director general at Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec
Cinq-Mars, Jean	11 November 2010	Sustainable Development Commissioner at Auditor General of Quebec
Désy, Geneviève	8 May 2009	sustainable development officer at Ministry of International Relations; Government of Quebec
Ferguson, Andrew	5 May 2009	principal at Office of the Auditor General of Canada
Fournier, Maryse	13 May 2009	director at Direction of the Sustainable Development Commissioner; Auditor General of Quebec
Giguère, Serge	13 May 2009 and 11 November 2010	principal director at Direction of the Sustainable Development Commissioner; Auditor General of Quebec
Jampierre, Véronique	12 May 2009	director general at Fonds d'action québécois pour le développement durable

Lacroix, Daniel	12 May 2009	director at International Organizations Division; Ministry of International Relations; Government of Quebec
Lambert, Janique	13 May 2009	director at Direction of the Sustainable Development Commissioner; Auditor General of Quebec
Lauzon, Robert	8 May 2009	director at Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau; Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks; Government of Quebec
Levert, France	9 November 2010	principal advisor on sustainable development at Hydro-Québec
McKay, Scott	7 May 2009	member of parliament (Parti québécois) at National Assembly of Quebec
Mead, Harvey	7 May 2009	Sustainable Development Commissioner at Auditor General of Quebec (between 2006 and 2007)
Mulcair, Thomas	5 May 2009	Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks (Parti libéral du Québec) at Government of Quebec (between 2003 and 2006)
Royer, Vincent	12 May 2009	climate change coordinator at International Organizations Division; Ministry of International Relations; Government of Quebec

Turgeon, Alexandre	13 May 2009	director general at Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable – Capitale nationale
Vachon, Martin	8 November 2010	advisor on sustainable development at Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau; Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks; Government of Quebec
Vézina, Luc	8 November 2010	director at Sustainable Development Coordination Bureau; Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks; Government of Quebec
Wilburn, Greg	4 May 2009	director Sustainable Development Strategies at Sustainable Development Policy; Strategic Policy Branch; Environment Canada; Government of Canada

Flanders

Bas, Luc	26 July 2007, 24 September 2008 and 12 January 2010	head of government relations Europe at The Climate Group adviser at cabinet of State Secretary for Sustainable Development and Social Economy; Belgian Federal Government (between 2006 and 2007) policy adviser at the Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government (between 2001 and 2006)
de Beer de Laer, Hadelin	19 August 2009	president at Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development; Belgian Federal Government (between 2002 and 2009)
De Mulder, Jan	25 May 2009	policy adviser at Public Governance Department; Flemish Government public governance attaché at Flemish Representation; Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU legal adviser at Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government (between 1994 and 2006)
De Smedt, Jan	29 August 2007	director at the secretariat of the Federal Council for Sustainable Development Belgium

De Smedt, Peter	5 October 2009	scientific officer at Sustainable Development Unit; Environment Directorate; DG Research; European Commission
		policy adviser at Research Centre of the Flemish Government (between 2003 and 2007)
Dua, Vera	27 November 2009	Minister of Environment and Agriculture (Agalev); Flemish Government (between 1999 and 2003)
Maenaut, David	18 June 2008	Representative of the Flemish Government to the multilateral institutions in Geneva
Merckx, Remy	31 July 2007	head of division at International Environmental Policy Division; Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government
Poppelier, Guido	12 October 2009	adviser at cabinet of State Secretary for Sustainable Development and Social Economy; Belgian Federal Government (between 2004 and 2007)
		environment attaché at Flemish Representation; Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU (between 2001 and 2002)

van de Walle, Cédric	25 August 2009	adviser at cabinet of Minister of Climate and Energy; Belgian Federal Government policy officer at Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development; Belgian Federal Government (between 2006 and 2007) policy officer at secretariat of Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development; Belgian Federal Government (between 2002 and 2006)
Vaneycken Sven	22 September 2009	adviser at cabinet of Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Service, Public Enterprises and Institutional Reforms; Belgian Federal Government policy officer at Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development; Belgian Federal Government (between 2003 and 2008)
Van Mierloo, Joris	4 June 2008	policy adviser at International Environmental Policy Division; Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government
Van Ongeval, Ludo	30 July 2008	policy adviser at Environmental, Nature and Energy Policy Division; Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government

Van Weert Els	9 September 2009	State Secretary for Sustainable Development and Social Economy (Spirit); Belgian Federal Government (between 2004 and 2007)
Verbeke, Griet	31 July 2007	policy adviser at International Environmental Policy Division; Environment, Nature and Energy Department; Flemish Government
Vergeynst, Thierry	2 September 2008	policy adviser at Research Centre of the Flemish Government
Verheeke, Jan	28 August 2009	secretary ad interim at Minaraad adviser at cabinet of Minister of Environment and Nature; Flemish Government (between 2004 and 2009)
Walpot, Oda	31 August 2007	task holder at Sustainable Development Team; General Governmental Policy Service; Flemish Government

Annex 2 – Comments by the discussants

Commentaires sur le travail de M. Sander Happaerts

Jacques Blanchet*
Écoconseiller,
Responsable développement durable et responsabilité sociétale

M. Happaerts a fait un travail intéressant et tout à fait pertinent en comparant les systèmes flamands et québécois. En effet, il est possible de trouver plusieurs ressemblances entre les deux communautés, notamment la volonté d'une reconnaissance officielle en nations autonomes. Son analyse qualitative, très à propos compte tenu du type de travail comparatif et du sujet de comparaison, fait de cette recherche exemplaire une source d'informations très appréciable.

J'aimerais apporter par ces commentaires quelques pistes de réflexion supplémentaires et peut être quelques tentatives d'explications à certaines conclusions du travail de M. Happaerts.

1. Contexte sociopolitique

Une des différences fondamentales entre les deux communautés est qu'une des deux est colonisatrice et l'autre est colonisée. Une deuxième différence réside dans la situation linguistique : même si les deux communautés luttent pour conserver leur culture et leur langue originale, la Flandre est entourée de pays ayant chacun leur langue spécifique au sein de l'Europe qui est organisée alors que le Québec est la seule enclave francophone dans une Amérique anglophone sans organisation.

Ces éléments sont, selon moi, des possibilités d'explications plausibles concernant certains éléments de conclusion du travail, par exemple, l'absence de la notion de relations nord-sud et la perception ethnocentriste, voire égocentrique, du développement durable de la politique québécoise.

2. Les stratégies

Les stratégies de développement durable des deux gouvernements sont aussi profondément différentes. Alors que la Flandre en a fait une vision jusqu'à 2050, et est appuyée par les stratégies belges et européennes, la stratégie québécoise vise son renouvèlement en 2013, et ne peut s'appuyer sur aucun document national ou extra national.

3. La communication comme signe d'engagement

Alors que le développement durable en Flandre est placé sous l'autorité la plus élevée (ministre-président), il est intéressant de constater que le site du gouvernement flamand (www.vlaanderen.be) ne mentionne nullement le développement durable comme un domaine d'expertise ou d'activité du gouvernement flamand, en fait, il n'y a aucune mention du développement durable sur le site.
De plus, lorsque l'on regarde attentivement les documents phares qui apportent une vision du développement flamand tel que *Pact 2020* et *Vlaanderen in actie,* il est intéressant de constater que le développement durable n'est pas mentionné, ni même effleuré.
Bien que le développement durable au Québec soit placé sous l'autorité d'un ministère, il est intéressant de constater que la communication est très présente. Autant le site internet du ministère consacre au développement durable un onglet sur sa page d'accueil, autant plusieurs documents gouvernementaux font mention du développement durable, notamment la stratégie énergétique, la politique de l'eau, la politique agricole et agroalimentaire, le Plan d'action sur les changements climatiques, le Plan Nord et bientôt le nouveau code du bâtiment.

Et ceci, sans compter les documents issus d'un ministère en particulier comme le plan stratégique du Ministère des Relations internationales (MRI) et les travaux du Bureau d'audience publique en environnement (BAPE).

Ainsi, il serait peut-être pertinent d'ajouter un élément quantitatif à l'étude en évaluant la communication faite sur le développement durable par les deux gouvernements régionaux.

4. Différence entre Loi et stratégie

M. Happaerts mentionne avec raison dans son travail que même si les Lois des deux gouvernements sont très visionnaires et restrictives, les stratégies, quant à elles, sont molles et sans réelles obligations. Plusieurs éléments, selon moi, expliquent cet état de fait, en voici quelques-uns :

- Une Loi se change plus difficilement qu'une stratégie, il est donc important de faire une Loi qui puisse amener des éléments à long terme. La stratégie quant à elle peut s'alimenter dans la Loi et s'adapter avec l'avancement et l'acceptation sociale.

- Une stratégie plus souple, surtout dans sa première version, permet aux individus et aux organisations de s'approprier le concept, de le manipuler, de trouver des pistes d'innovations et de mettre en valeur les talents et les initiatives locales.

5. Le suivi et les indicateurs

Les indicateurs sont un problème que rencontrent les organisations et surtout les gouvernements qui s'inscrivent dans une démarche de développement durable. À ce jour, peu d'indicateurs se révèlent peu couteux, faciles à alimenter en informations et qui rendent compte adéquatement de l'avancement d'un développement durable dans une société. Il est fort probable que des indicateurs seront élaborés à cet effet

dans les prochaines années et à partir de données actuellement ou facilement collectées.

6. Et après?

Sachant que le travail est une étude comparative sur ce qui a été fait en termes de politique de deux gouvernements régionaux, voici quelques pistes de réflexions sur des travaux à venir :

Puisque selon M. Happaerts, le mouvement des politiques dans les gouvernementaux régionaux est né suite aux rencontres de Rio en 1992, il serait intéressant d'estimer les retombées potentielles de Rio + 20 sur les gouvernements régionaux.

Considérant le processus inclusif et la publication de la norme ISO 26000 *Lignes directrices relatives à la responsabilité sociétale* en novembre 2010 et de la convergence évidente des organisations internationales vers ce document, mentionnons notamment la Global reporting initiative (GRI) qui a publié un papier sur la concordance entre ses indicateurs et les principes d'ISO 26000, le Pacte mondial des Nations Unies et Accountability pour son système AA1000 qui ont fait de même, il serait intéressant d'estimer l'influence de ce document sur l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des politiques des gouvernements nationaux et régionaux.

7. Conclusion

En terminant, je tiens à féliciter l'excellent travail de M. Happaerts, qui a su, par sa réflexion et sa connaissance des systèmes politiques, apporter un nouvel éclairage à ma compréhension du développement durable au Québec.

---

* Notes sur le commentateur

Jacques Blanchet est responsable des dossiers de développement durable au Bureau de normalisation du Québec. Il a été le coordonnateur de la norme 9700-253 *Gestion responsable d'évènements* et du guide BNQ 9700-021 Développement durable — *Guide pour l'application des principes de développement durable dans la gestion des entreprises et des autres organisations* (dit «BNQ 21000 »).

Au niveau canadien et international, il agit en tant qu'expert lors de l'élaboration de normes concernant le développement durable et la responsabilité sociétale.

Annex 3 – Comments by the discussants

Philippe Bourke

Philippe Bourke is Director General of the *Regroupement national des conseils régionaux du Québec* (RNCREQ), the provincial umbrella organization of Quebec's regional environmental councils. The sixteen regional environment councils are non-profit organizations that promote environmental protection, in a sustainable development perspective, at the scale of Quebec's administrative regions.

Mr Bourke's comments were fourfold. First, he would like to nuance the international influence on Quebec's sustainable development policy. It is true that certain institutions were put in place as a result of the publication of the Brundtland Report. Yet most of those institutions (e.g. the Round Table on Environment and Economy) have since then disappeared. He stressed that in his view, the current institutionalization of sustainable development in Quebec was above all the result of a political choice, facilitated by the international influence and the context of identity politics.

Second, he urges the researcher to take the economic foundations of Quebec more into account. Quebec is above all an economy based on the management of natural resources, and less on services. In his view, the abundance of natural resources (e.g. renewable energy sources) explains to a large degree Quebec's ambition for leadership.

Third, Quebec's continental context is also important. That context explains, for instance, the absence of the North-South dimension. Quebec compares itself primarily with the rest of Canada and with the United States (Canada's 'South'). In that context, some voices urge that Quebec is actually much poorer and needs to catch up. That is why Quebec is probably more concerned with dealing with poverty within its own territory first.

Fourth, Mr Bourke agrees that Quebec's low population density explains some of the government's choices with regard to

sustainable development. That factor is probably also responsible for the low sense of urgency with regard to the issue. But as for the operationalization, he suggests to consider the use of biocapacity as an indicator instead of (or in addition to) population density. The indicator of biocapacity would also take into account the abundance of natural resources in Quebec.

Annex 4 – Comments by the discussants

Le développement durable au Québec et en Flandre :

Analyse comparative des politiques

- Sander Happaerts –

Séminaire présenté le 10 novembre 2010

Commentaires de M. Luc Vézina

Directeur du Bureau de coordination du Développement durable

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs

L'approche d'analyse comparative des politiques retenues est rigoureuse et elle permet de faire des comparaisons intéressantes, malgré les contextes sociopolitiques très différents des deux états. Elle permet de bien mettre en relief des différences à partir d'un cadre ou un modèle analytique pertinent qui réfère aux :

1) facteurs internationaux ;
2) degré d'autonomie ;
3) contexte politique ;
4) conditions socio-économiques.

En ce qui concerne les deux premiers groupes de facteurs considérés (facteurs internationaux et degré d'autonomie), les informations présentées sont généralement exactes et

pertinentes. L'implication du Québec en terme de coopération avec des partenaires internationaux est présentée dans la Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable 2008-2013 qui vise à intensifier la coopération sur des projets intégrés de développement durable avec d'autres pays. Il est vrai cependant que la grande majorité des objectifs et actions concrètes qui découlent de la Stratégie du Québec visent d'abord à favoriser une bonne implantation du développement durable dans l'appareil gouvernemental, et ce faisant dans la société au sens large. La Stratégie québécoise traduit fort probablement les priorités de la population de travailler d'abord à bien implanter une démarche au Québec avant de vouloir transférer ou communiquer des façons de faire à d'autres états dans le monde. Il faut toutefois comprendre que les types d'indicateurs québécois ne constituent d'aucune façon des objectifs à atteindre, mais plutôt des moyens de suivre l'évolution des données et des résultats à l'échelle du Québec, concernant la Première liste d'indicateurs de développement durable et concernant le suivi de la Stratégie et des Plans d'action de développement (PADD) aux deux autres niveaux d'interventions. Des documents présents sur le site Internet du ministère pourraient à ce sujet être consultés, dont un document synthèse titré « Indicateurs québécois de développement durable ».

Certains aspects de la mise en œuvre des politiques peuvent difficilement être comparés. On a choisi au Québec de ne pas dédier un budget particulier au développement durable, mais de demander aux 140 ministères et organismes (MO) qui ont l'obligation de réaliser des PADD d'assumer cette responsabilité à partir de leur propre portefeuille.

La volonté politique du Gouvernement du Québec s'est donc manifestée par l'obligation pour chacun des MO de mettre de l'avant pour le 31 mars 2009 un PADD et d'en faire une reddition de comptes annuelle formelle dans leur rapport annuel de gestion, telle que le prévoit la Loi sur le développement durable.

Il s'agit d'exigences administratives importantes qui nécessitent des investissements en ressources non négligeables.

On mentionne peu ou pas de développement important en cours de réalisation de la prise en compte des principes de développement durable dans l'élaboration de politiques, programmes et de plans d'action gouvernementaux. Bien que la Loi sur le développement durable n'a pas pour objet de pénaliser les MO qui ne se livrent pas à cet exercice, elle les rend responsables de réaliser cette recherche du développement durable dans leurs choix administratifs et législatifs par cette prise en compte des principes de développement durable.

L'analyse socio-économique comparative des démarches respectives apparaît comme tout à fait pertinente. Le contexte de ralentissement économique observé au Québec suite à la crise des derniers mois et l'état des finances publiques difficiles du gouvernement du Québec ne se sont pas traduits par un fléchissement des efforts de l'appareil de l'État québécois à poursuivre sa démarche de développement durable. Au contraire, on perçoit de plus en plus cette approche comme un moyen de mieux rentabiliser à long terme les investissements.

Le critère de densité de la population utilisé comme moyen de comparaison entre la Flandre et le Québec peut être délicat à employer. Certes, la densité de la population est beaucoup moins grande au Québec qu'en Flandre, mais les disparités et différences entre les milieux concernés (grandes villes par rapport aux régions rurales et le sud de la province versus le nord du Québec) constituent des défis très importants à l'implantation de démarches locales et régionales de développement durable. Ce critère utilisé isolément sans approfondir davantage et expliquer d'une façon détaillée le

contexte géographique et sociopolitique des deux états me semble peut poser problème.

Somme toute, les mécanismes de mise en œuvre des politiques des deux États et des efforts consentis au sein de l'appareil administratif des deux gouvernements apparaissent comme étant bien différents à plusieurs égards. La mise en œuvre des politiques est également tributaire de l'identité de ces états sous-nationaux, selon qu'elle est associée à une présence internationale pour la Flandre et représente une façon de se positionner sur la scène internationale pour le Québec.

Luc Vézina, M.Sc.

Directeur

Bureau de coordination du développement durable

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs

675, boulevard René-Lévesque Est, 4e étage, boîte 23

Québec (Québec) G1R 5V7

Téléphone : 418-521-3848, poste 4493

Courriel: luc.vezina@mddep.gouv.qc.ca