It’s Not Easy Being Fair

Promoting Sustainable Consumption as a Fairtrade City – the Case of Malmö

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This thesis is written for the one-year Master programme Sustainable Urban Management at Malmö University, Sweden. Upon completion of this education students receive a Master of Science with a Major in Built Environment. Through analyzing acute development and planning challenges faced by different urban environments, students develop the knowledge and skills to independently and critically investigate environmental, economic and social developments from a sustainability point of view, as well as gain an understanding of the complexities involved in project and process management of sustainable development.

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Summary

Sustainable consumption should be one of the important prerequisites for a sustainable society. The aggregated results of a vast number of individual purchase decisions could form a force strong enough to impact environmental, economic and social developments.

There is a strong link between sustainable development and Fair Trade which strive to promote social justice, sound environmental practices and economic security for producers in the South. The success of Fair Trade depends strongly on consumers’ willingness to take concrete actions. But it is not enough that Fair Trade goods are stocked on the shelves in shops if potential consumers are unaware of them and have no intention to buy them. Consumers need to understand and believe in Fair Trade’s objectives before they will translate the Fair Trade principles into consumer behaviours. Effective communication and strategies are needed to mobilize the wider population to carry out sustainable consumption.

This qualitative single case study sets out to gain an understanding of the complexities involved in promoting sustainable consumption by looking at Malmö Fairtrade City’s communication approach and the challenges it faces. Empirical data have been collected from in-depth interview and archival documentation. These data are then analyzed using three communication concepts: the Multi-step approach, the Network approach and the Social Marketing approach. The results show that Malmö Fairtrade City uses a mix of Multi-step and Network approaches in its communication. Although its way of promoting Fairtrade consumption displays many features of Social Marketing, it is not yet an ideal premise for the approach unless it aims explicitly at changing consumer behaviour. Despite having the municipality as a powerful and credible sender, it still has to overcome hurdles such as getting people interested in Fairtrade and operating with little resources.

It is hoped that results of this study could provide insights for communities interested in becoming Fairtrade Cities and programmes that aim at promoting sustainable consumption.

Key words: communication, sustainable consumption, Fair Trade, Fairtrade City, social marketing
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1. Sustainable Consumption and Sustainable Development

Consumption, especially in the developed economies, plays a vital role in sustainable development. While it is important to consider sustainable consumption in terms of minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants, consequences of consumption are not limited to environmental impacts. Acts of consumption have many economic and social impacts as well. As a result of globalization, consumption has long ceased to be a local matter. A bar of chocolate, despite being produced and consumed in Sweden, can have direct environmental, economic and social impacts in Ethiopia, where the cocoa beans are grown.

Sustainable consumption is an important progress to be made in achieving long-term sustainability and should be one of the important prerequisites for a sustainable society. Consumption is an action in which virtually all members of a society, regardless of age, income and class differences, take part. The aggregated result of a vast number of individual purchase decisions could form a force strong enough to impact environmental, economic and social developments. Because sustainable consumption is something that involves almost every one, its triumph depends on extensive participation on a societal level. While it is crucial that goods contributing to sustainable consumption are available in the market, equally important is that people are convinced to consume in sustainable ways. Effective communication and strategies are needed to change the behaviour of the wider population (UNEP 2005).

There is a strong link between consumption of Fair Trade\(^1\) goods and sustainable development, since Fair Trade strives to promote social justice, sound environment practices and economic security for producers in the developing world (Moore 2004). Compared to green consumption, which focuses on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development, Fair Trade directs consumers to look at the social and economic aspects of the sustainability agenda as well. It advocates a new outlook in consumption by asking consumers to consider the well-being of the producers.

The success of Fair Trade depends strongly on consumers’ willingness to take concrete actions. Its ambition is to lead consumers from passive consumerism to active engagement for a sustainable world (Golding and Peattie 2005). Consumption of Fair Trade goods is a demonstration that there is such a thing as sustainable consumption (Strong 1997b). But as mentioned above, it is not enough that Fair Trade goods are stocked on the shelves in shops if potential consumers are unaware of them and have no intention to buy them. Fair Trade goods, like most commodities in a market, need to be promoted and marketed. Translating Fair Trade principles

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\(^1\) See Chapter 2 for more detailed presentation of Fair Trade.
into consumer behaviour requires that the objectives of Fair Trade are understood and believed (Strong 1997b).

1.1. Previous Research

Fair Trade is “an innovative market-based approach” to tackle inequalities resulting from the conventional market mechanism (Young and Utting 2005: 139). There have been discussions on how to broaden the impact of Fair Trade, i.e. how Fair Trade goods can find their ways into mainstream consumption premises.

Strong (1997b) believes that it is important to communicate the human element of sustainability in order to promote Fair Trade, but achieving that could be a tough undertaking. While consumers may buy organic carrots and dolphin-friendly tuna because they feel that everyone is partly responsible for a healthy environment, it may be harder to convince them that the well-being of workers in another country are their responsibilities and not that of the country’s government.

Mainstreaming Fair Trade involves making Fair Trade goods recognizable and available in mainstream retail channels. Studies seem to agree on the importance of brand building and information dissemination (Littrell and Dickson 1998, and Nicholls 2002; cited in Moore 2004). Strong (1997b) also notes the importance of media support, saying that the mass media would trigger public, political and business interest. She also believes in the importance of getting the objectives of Fair Trade across to consumers so that they understand their roles to play in the big picture. Moore (2004) holds a similar view that branding by information is a way to mainstream Fair Trade. Information about Fair Trade goods should differentiate them from non-Fair Trade goods.

However, the challenge remains whether or not information or the ethical discourse is enough to affect existing consumption patterns (Moore et al 2006). Fair Trade carries with it a complex message that can be hard to convey – even when consumers recognize the Fairtrade Mark they may not understand the meaning behind the logo (ibid). In Carrigan and Attalla’s (2001) study about ethical consumption, the authors note that even with information, the most important purchasing criteria remain price, followed by value, quality and brand familiarity. They also believe that too much information could be too much for the consumer to deal with. One must find an effective communicative form that can break through the cluster of information and reach the consumer. Is it enough to convince consumers to buy Fair Trade goods by emphasizing the ethics of the purchase and the stories behind the goods (Moore 2004)?

The information approach is regarded by some researchers as not effective enough; instead they have called for more attention to a social psychological approach (McKenzie-Mohr 1994; Barr 2003; Peattie and Peattie 2009). Golding and Peattie
(2005) point out the potential of social marketing\(^2\) to promote Fair Trade coffee. They believe Fair Trade and social marketing form a good match. While the strength of social marketing lies in understanding and overcoming barriers to behavioural change, the Fair Trade concept essentially is proposing consumers to adopt new purchase behaviours. By tapping into individuals’ emotions and communities’ cultural values, the social marketing approach has succeeded in calls for consumption reduction (Peattie and Peattie 2009) and energy conservation (McKenzie-Mohr 1994). The same approach may well work for Fair Trade too.

If Fair Trade is “a mechanism to help achieve sustainable development” (Strong 1997a: 6), then Fairtrade City is an attempt to pump up the impact of this mechanism. By adding the Fairtrade aspect to its identity, a city is suggesting to its citizens that Fair Trade is the preferred mode of consumption. The Fairtrade City concept is also an excellent example to show the important role of communication in promoting sustainable development and in particular sustainable consumption. After all, a Fairtrade City does not have any specific goods to sell; it is not a shop. Instead a Fairtrade City tries to sell a proposition that one’s consumption should take into consideration the well-being of others, and it is doing so via different forms of communication alone.

Despite the close connection between Fairtrade City and sustainable consumption, I have not come across any elaborated discussion on Fairtrade City as a means to promote Fair Trade consumption. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) wonder if there are more stakeholders besides the consumer that should be influenced to achieve ethical consumption. Hira and Ferrie (2006) believe that the public sector can be a powerful tool to promote Fair Trade in the sense that the public sector can set standards and certification that the private sector must follow. Fairtrade City seems to be somewhere in between – the public sector’s involvement is one of the criteria that has to be fulfilled for any city to obtain the Fairtrade City status, but there is nothing legally binding to enforce Fairtrade consumption. As the number of Fairtrade Cities continues to grow, this approach should warrant an in-depth examination.

1.2. Problem Statement and Research Questions

Malmö has the ambitious goal to become the most sustainably developed city in the world by 2020 and sustainable consumption is listed as one of the key paths to achieve a sustainable lifestyle (City of Malmö 2009). In May 2006, the City of Malmö made a public commitment to sustainable consumption by becoming Sweden’s first Fairtrade City. In its information brochure Malmö Fairtrade City claims that it has an ambitious goal and a structured education and information strategy (Malmö

\(^2\) See Chapter 4, section 4.4 for a detailed discussion of social marketing.
Fairtrade City 2010b); but as we can see from previous studies on issues about promoting Fair Trade, this is by no means an easy task.

This study aims to understand the complexities of promoting sustainable consumption, using Malmö Fairtrade City as an exemplary case. The specific research questions are:

- What communication approach is Malmö Fairtrade City using to promote Fairtrade consumption?
- Does Malmö Fairtrade City provide a suitable premise to practice social marketing?
- What challenges does Malmö Fairtrade City face in its work?

1.3. Disposition

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents background information on Fair Trade, the Fairtrade Town concept and Malmö Fairtrade City. Research design and data collection methods are explained in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 introduces the key notions and concepts used for analysis. Chapter 5 identifies Malmö Fairtrade City’s current communication approaches, discusses its potential for social marketing and the challenges it faces. The whole study is summarized in Chapter 6, where I also reflect on the analysis and give suggestions for future research in the study field.
2. Fair Trade, Fairtrade Towns and Malmö Fairtrade City

2.1. Fair Trade and the Fairtrade Mark

Fair Trade, as defined by FINE\(^3\), is a trading partnership that seeks greater equity in international trade. Its goals are to improve the well-being of producers, promote development opportunities, raise consumer awareness to exercise their purchasing power positively and change the practices of conventional international trade (FLO 2011a).

Fair Trade goods are mostly produced in the developing economies (the South) and consumed in the developed economies (the North). Started as isolated examples of voluntary organizations in the North beginning to trade with producers in the South, Fair Trade developed into a small but international "movement" in the 1960s and 1970s (Moore et al 2006). Fair Trade is an economic practice that embodies the principle of sustainable development by integrating social and environmental principles into trade models and consumer decision-making (see Hira and Ferrie 2006 and Golding and Peattie 2005). As it aims to give producers better prices for their work and to improve their work and social conditions, Fair Trade goods are backed by a set of principles including guaranteed minimum wages, adequate housing, minimum health and safety standards, environmental standards, guaranteed minimum price, credit terms and long-term trading commitment (Strong 1997a).

![The Fairtrade Mark](Source: FLO)

While the term “Fair Trade” describes the movement as a whole and the organizations that abide to the principles of Fair Trade, the term “Fairtrade” describes the certification and labelling system governed by Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO). The Fairtrade Mark (Fig. 1), created in 2002, certifies that goods bearing the label have met the international Fairtrade standards in regards to minimum price, labour rights, environmental protection, democracy and a Fairtrade premium for development projects (FLO 2011b). At present food items (e.g. bananas, cocoa, coffee, honey, sugar and tea) contribute to the majority of

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\(^3\) FINE is an informal association formed by four main fair trade networks, namely Fairtrade Labelling Organization International, International Fair Trade Organization, Network of European Worldshops, and European Fair Trade Association
world-wide Fairtrade sales, with coffee being the largest product by value (Moore et al 2006). According to FLO’s statistics, sales of Fairtrade goods have experienced remarkable increases in the past decade: During the years 2002-2009, sales of Fairtrade bananas increased from 36,641 to 311,465 metric tonnes; sales of Fairtrade coffee increased from 15,779 to 73,781 metric tonnes; sales of Fairtrade cocoa increased from 1,656 to 13,898 metric tonnes (FLO 2004 and 2010).

2.2. Fairtrade Towns

A Fairtrade Town is a community “that has made a commitment to supporting Fairtrade and using products with the Fairtrade Mark” (Fairtrade Foundation 2011). To be certified as a Fairtrade Town, a community needs to meet the five goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation:

1. The local council’s commitment to support Fairtrade and to serve Fairtrade goods.
2. Availability of Fairtrade goods in the community.
3. Schools, workplaces, places of worship and community organizations support and use Fairtrade goods.
4. Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community.
5. A Fairtrade steering group is formed to co-ordinate actions around the goals and to develop them over the years.

A certified Fairtrade Town has to continuously work on these goals to be re-certified of its Fairtrade Town status. Renewals are required one year after the status is achieved and following that, once every two years (ibid).

Garstang in Lancashire, England became the world’s first Fairtrade Town in 2001. At the time of writing, there are over 900 Fairtrade Towns in 20 countries, with over 500 in the United Kingdom (Fairtrade Sverige 2011). Initiative to becoming a Fairtrade Town/City could come either top-down or bottom up. In the case of the United Kingdom, many Fairtrade Towns/Cities originated from self-organized initiatives by NGOs such as the local Oxfam. In the case of Sweden, it is often the municipalities that took on the initiative to get their towns and cities the Fairtrade status.

2.3. Malmö Fairtrade City

The concept of Fairtrade City was introduced to Sweden in 2006 by the Swedish Fairtrade organization Fairtrade Sverige. Currently (as at May 2011) there are 41 certified Fairtrade Cities in Sweden (Fairtrade Sverige 2011). Malmö became

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4 1 metric tonne = 1000 kilograms
5 Depending on the size, a community with the Fairtrade status can also be called a Fairtrade City, Village, County, Zone, Island or Borough (Fairtrade Foundation 2011).
Sweden’s first Fairtrade City in May 2006 as a result of a political decision (Malmö Fairtrade City 2011a). Malmö Fairtrade City is regarded as part of the municipality’s effort for sustainable development. As Malmö’s Fairtrade City Coordinator Karin Wallin explained, “It is because this is part of our sustainability work. In Malmö we want to be more sustainable, and therefore we are a Fairtrade City” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April).

Malmö Fairtrade City is a unit within the division of Consumption and Lifestyle in the Environment Department of the City of Malmö. At present there are four staff members (two full-time and two part-time) working on the initiative. The steering group currently comprises of 13 members representing the municipality, business and voluntary organizations. Malmö Fairtrade City operates on an annual budget of one million Swedish kronor (SEK) and works to reach the following goals (Malmö Fairtrade City 2010b):

1. Purchase of Fair Trade goods by the municipal organizations must increase every year.
2. There is a Fairtrade City steering group that represents the different sectors and co-ordinates action around the goals and develops them over the years.
3. More hotels, restaurants and shops offer Fairtrade goods.
4. More workplaces offer their employees coffee that is Fairtrade.
5. Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade goods across the city.

The main target groups of Malmö Fairtrade City are the municipal organizations (collectively called the City of Malmö), private companies and Malmö citizens. Since becoming a Fairtrade City, total spending on Fairtrade goods by all municipal organizations has increased from 1,563,000 SEK in 2007 to 4,107,950 SEK in 2010 (Malmö Fairtrade City 2011b). As at 2010, 58.3% of all coffee served by the City of Malmö are Fairtrade; the figure was 22.6% in 2008 (ibid).
3. Research Design and Methods

3.1. One Case to Exemplify More

I have chosen case study as the research design to answer my enquiry on promotion of sustainable consumption. Yin (2009: 26) defines research design as “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions”. As an empirical enquiry, case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life contexts (Yin 2009) and entails a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, for example a community, an organization, a single person or a single event (Bryman 2008). Although one can use a case study to explain, describe, illustrate or enlighten, Yin (2009) argues that this approach is more suited when a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control. Bryman (2008) believes that case study as a research design is validated only when the case itself (not the sample it generates) is the object of research interests, and that the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of the case.

The City of Malmö regards sustainable consumption as an important component to achieve overall sustainable development. The duty of promoting sustainable consumption lies with the division of Consumption and Lifestyle in the Environment Department. Malmö Fairtrade City is run by the Division of Consumption and Lifestyle with a designated team of staff. To find out about Malmö’s communication work for sustainable consumption, I had the option to study the whole of Environmental Department, the Division of Consumption and Lifestyle or the Malmö Fairtrade City team. I decided to focus on Malmö Fairtrade City because of the significant role communication plays in its work, which would be the closest fit to the research interest.

Malmö Fairtrade City is chosen to be a typical case because I believe that as the first among Sweden’s 41 Fairtrade Cities its experience can be used to exemplify “the experience of the average person or institution” (ibid: 48), i.e. other Fairtrade City initiatives in Sweden or even other municipal initiatives aimed at sustainable consumption. Since my aim is “to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (ibid), Malmö Fairtrade City as a single case provides a suitable context for my research questions to be answered. It allows me, the researcher, to examine a social process and to examine the implications of some theoretical deliberations in a particular research site (ibid).

3.2. Data Collection

A case study inquiry copes with a technically distinctive situation in which there will be many sources to collect data from (Yin 2009). In the case of Malmö Fairtrade City, since it is run by the municipality it was fairly clear from the start where the data for analysis could be obtained. Once contact was made with the source, it also became clear what kinds of data were available for analysis.
Empirical data for this study, mostly qualitative, were collected from one in-depth interview with three interviewees and different types of documentation. Even though the unit of analysis is collective, namely Malmö Fairtrade City, some data collection sources are individual. This is a frequent design when an organization, a community or a social group is the object of research because individual data sources help the researcher to understand how the organization works (Yin 2009).

3.2.1. Primary Data from In-Depth Interview

Primary data for this study was collected through one in-depth interview with three staff members of Malmö Fairtrade City.

Interview is one of the six sources of evidence Yin (2009) identifies for case study research. A qualitative interview aims for rich, detailed answers. There is a much greater interest in the interviewee’s point of view. Usually more flexible, qualitative interviews allow the interviewer to ask new questions to follow up an answer and the research emphasis can be adjusted “as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of interviews” (Bryman 2008: 437).

For this study, the interview adopted a semi-structured approach, i.e. an interview guide listing specific topics and question prompts was prepared in advance (see Appendix). This approach was chosen in response to the fact that my investigation had a fairly clear focus, thus I was able to outline the specific issues I wanted to address and seek answers to (Bryman 2008). The respondents were selected by purposive sampling, i.e. I contacted Project Officer Emma Börjesson once I decided that Malmö Fairtrade City would be the focus of the study. Out of the four staff members, three managed to attend the interview: Fairtrade City Coordinator Karin Wallin, Fairtrade City Project Officer Emma Börjesson and Environment Department Communication Officer Malin Sarvik. The person that was not interviewed works for Malmö Fairtrade City on a part-time basis (a few hours per week). I judge this has posed minimal impact to data quality, since the richest information has come from Karin Wallin who is the team’s first full-time employee and who has worked on Fairtrade City for the longest time.

A week before the interview, I informed the team about the estimated time needed for the interview, obtained their consent for recording and sent them the interview guide. On the day of interview, I explained briefly the aim of study (which I did once before when I sent the request for interview) and promised to send them the transcript for review afterwards.

The interview was conducted on 18th April 2011 at Malmö’s Environment Department’s office and lasted for approximately 75 minutes. With the interview

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6 The other five sources are: documentation, archival records, direct observations, participant-observation and physical artifacts.
guide as reminder, I asked questions bearing in mind the advices of Bryman (ibid), Kvale (1996) and Trost (1997), i.e. ask direct, concrete and open-ended questions; inquire about one issue in one question; avoid provoking, hypothetical questions; avoid statements and suggestions; avoid jargons. Karin Wallin stayed for one hour, while Emma Börjesson and Malin Sarvik stayed for the whole interview. Transcription was done within 24 hours after the interview. A copy was sent to the interviewees for review. Clarification on several points was sent back to me within a week. The transcript was then reviewed and coded by themes such as “strategy – inform and educate” and “challenge – resources” which corresponded to the research questions and inspired the structure for the analysis.

3.2.2. Secondary Data from Documents and Archival Records

Documents and archival records obtained from the Malmö Fairtrade City website (www.malmo.se/fairtradecity) and the Malmö Fairtrade City team provided this study with a large amount of secondary data. Although they were not produced for the purpose of this research, they were nevertheless important and much needed data because they provided the concrete and specific information that enabled me to understand the communication approach of Malmö Fairtrade City.

Among all the documents, Malmö Fairtrade City’s annual reports to the national Fairtrade organization Fairtrade Sverige provide the most information about its activities and strategies. Full reports were available for the years 2007, 2009 and 2010. There was no report written for 2006. Only a short version was written for 2008. The 2010 report was downloaded from the Malmö Fairtrade City website, the rest were obtained by request via email. Since an email address is provided on Malmö Fairtrade City’s website for any interested person to contact the team for a copy of older reports, all annual reports should be considered as data available for public access. Malmö Fairtrade City’s information materials (the Malmö Fairtrade City brochure, the Organic/Fairtrade Guide, the Platform 2011-2014 document) and news articles about Malmö Fairtrade City from Environment Department’s paper Grön stad were also downloaded from the Malmö Fairtrade City’s website and Malmö’s Environment Department’s website. All produced by the City of Malmö and Malmö Fairtrade City, these documents are authentic and credible.

While the intention of looking at secondary data is to be informed of the activities and events organized by Malmö Fairtrade City, I am aware that they do not represent reality per se. Instead they should be viewed as “a distinct level of ‘reality’ in their own right” (Bryman 2008: 527). The annual reports, information materials and articles in Grön stad are all produced for specific contexts with implied readerships, so they are “texts written with distinctive purposes in mind” to convey a certain impression (ibid).

I used a quantitative content analysis approach to analyze the secondary data i.e. the goal was to search for underlying themes in the empirical materials (Bryman 2008). The general strategy was to rely on my theoretical propositions and research
questions to focus the attention on certain data and to ignore other data (Yin 2009). I extracted information about different activities organized by Malmö Fairtrade City in order to interpret its communication approach and strategies.

3.3. Data Reliability, Validity and Ethical Concerns

The primary data do not have high external reliability since the interview cannot be replicated. The secondary data, on the other hand, have high external reliability since identical copies can be obtained from the same sources. As the sole researcher of this study, I did not have a research partner to ensure the internal reliability of the data. I compensated this shortcoming by reviewing the data multiple times and sending the interview transcript to the interviewees for comments.

I consider the data to score relatively high on internal validity, because they are suitable to be analyzed by the theoretical concepts I have chosen. As a single case, findings of this study are not meant to be generalized, which explains its low external validity. On the other hand, I believe that as an exemplary case, finding of this study should be considered to inspire starting points to study other Fairtrade Cities in Sweden.

I believe I have collected the data in a logical, responsible and ethical way. Both primary and secondary data were collected from credible sources. For the in-depth interview, I had presented to the interviewees the aim of the study, the purpose of the interview, the need for recording and the option for them to remain anonymous in clear, written form before the interview was conducted.
4. Communication for Sustainable Consumption

Not all problems are communication problems. Communication operates within complex contexts formed by social, political and economic factors (Windahl et al 1992). Sustainable consumption cannot be achieved by effective communication alone. When consumers are ready to act, governments and businesses have to supply the products, services and infrastructure so that it is possible for consumers to put their beliefs in actions (UNEP 2005).

Windahl et al (1992) compare the key role of communication to a loudspeaker that sends a message to a large number of receivers. Communication can also mobilize different sectors of society, help to maintain/reinforce change by repeating a message over time, and accelerate sender-receiver interactions through different communication channels. When sustainable consumption is a goal on a city’s development agenda, the city’s government has the responsibility to communicate this goal to its population. It also has the responsibility to make the vision understandable and approachable. The challenge lies not in what to communicate, but how to communicate it (UNEP 2005). The design of message, choice of approach and choice of media etc. all require careful planning.

In this chapter I begin by presenting several key components in planned communication. Following that are theoretical discussions of the three communication approaches I have chosen to use in my analysis of the works of Malmö Fairtrade City, namely the Multi-step approach, the Network approach and the Social Marketing approach.

4.1. Key Components in Planned Communication

4.1.1. The Communication Planner

The communication planner is, literally, the person tasked with planning communication strategies and activities (Windahl et al 1992). He/she can operate at national, local or even neighbourhood levels; he/she can be planning communication on a full-time or voluntary basis. Despite the variations, all communication planners should work for the same goal that is “the most effective use of the resources available to achieve the objectives of the participants in a communication situation” (ibid: 20). In a communication process, the communication planner can play the role of an advocate who strives to influence people or an intermediary who provides people with information, or both (Westley and MacLean 1975, cited in Windahl et al 1992).

4.1.2. Communication Campaigns

While not all communication planning result in campaigns, communication campaign is nonetheless a core component of communication work. A campaign is needed for various reasons, one of which being a means of social learning, education and mobilization, both in the short and long run (Windahl et al 1992)
A communication campaign can be evaluated in terms of its goal, sender and receiver, message, channels used and benefits. The following is an integrated presentation based on the theories of Rogers and Storey (1987), Nowak and Wärneryd (1968) and Mendelsohn (1973) (all cited in Windahl et al 1992):

- Whether it is to inform, persuade or to mobilize, a campaign's goal should be specific and realistic. For example, a campaign that aims at convincing people to buy organic food has a more specific goal than one which aims at convincing people to save the environment.
- A campaign is more likely to succeed if the message comes from a credible sender. A campaign also needs to have good knowledge of its target population so that they can be best reached.
- The message should be carefully defined. Organic food can be a health issue or an environmental issue, depending on what the campaign's goal is. A message that is clear and fits the target population's values and norms is more likely to bring about change and be further disseminated.
- A campaign should utilize multiple channels (e.g. the mass media and interpersonal communication) as each has its strengths and limitation.
- A campaign should also be clear about who the beneficiary is, what the rewards are and whether they are immediate or in the long run.

4.1.3. Use of the Mass Media

The mass media is an important source of information for many people and have extensive reach. Because of these reasons the mass media is often a popular channel for planned communication. The mass media is an effective tool at motivating involvement and action (Nitz 2000). Even when people are not consciously looking for information, there is a high chance that they will come across an issue that has been heavily covered in the daily paper and television news. Media can increase involvement by stimulating people to learn more about an issue simply by mentioning it, because issues that get more coverage are generally perceived to be more important (ibid).

However, the popularity of the mass media also gives them (in particular the news media) a lot of power in framing social issues, which may work for or against the planned communication. Not all media coverage portrays a positive image of the issue the communication planner hopes to promote, and the communication planner often has no control over how information given to the mass media will be used (Windahl et al 1992). Studies show that media coverage of environmental news have been inconsistent, distorted, uncertain, cyclical and sporadic. For example, news articles about the ozone layer published on the same date in the same country (15th April 1993 in USA) ranged from “Wider damage to earth’s ozone layer is feared” to “After 2000, outlook for ozone layer looks good” (Nitz 2000: 48).
Because of the mass media’s double-edged-sword features, decision on whether or not, and how, to use the mass media can be a hard choice for the communication planner.

4.2. The Multi-step Approach of Communication


Katz and Lazarsfeld's Two-step model (cited in Windahl 1992) recognizes that individuals receive information from the mass media as well as from each other. Successful communication uses more than one channel and achieves its goal through more than one step. This model proposes that communicators reach the public indirectly through “opinion leaders” in different organizations and social groups. Step one in this model involves a message being communicated through the mass media to opinion leaders, while step two takes place when the message is disseminated through opinion leaders to the public. By combining two channels, communicators achieve both transfer of information via the mass media and transfer of influence via interpersonal communication.

Taking this step logic of communication, Windahl et al (1992) introduce the diffusion nature of information flow inspired by Rogers' theory and develop the Multi-step approach. Since the purpose of planned communication is often to promote an innovation (either a physical object or an idea), core to this is the adaptation process, which includes the stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. Communication does not stop after step two (when message goes from opinion leaders to the public). The communication planner should aim to make the public react positively to the innovation and accept it. The preferred channel(s) of communication differ from stage to stage during the adoption process. For example, when the public is first exposed to the innovation and actively seek information and knowledge, the mass media is preferable to interpersonal communication; when an informed individual is ready to form an opinion about the innovation, interpersonal channel (friends, teachers, family) play a more crucial role. Communication planners are the change agents in the adoption process. It is they who point out the need for adopting the innovation, establish communication relationships, and ensure that adoption takes place etc. (ibid).

4.3. The Network Approach of Communication

The Network model of communication challenges the traditional concept of communication which sees a linear flow of message from source through channel to receiver (Windahl et al 1992). Advocates of the Network approach argue that that virtually everyone belongs to one or more social networks which in turn function as communication networks. Kincaid (1979, cited in Windahl et al 1992) believes that members of the same network, despite initial differences in perception and
interpretation of a message, may arrive at mutual understanding and possibly collective action. Hence the value of tapping into networks for effective communication is that “shared information may lead to collective action and attainment of goals that probably could not have been achieved otherwise” (Windahl et al 1992: 79).

It is particularly useful to consider networks when interpersonal communication is the preferred channel. It is important to identify the suitable networks that will work in favour of communication efforts. Rogers and Kincaid (1981, cited in Windahl et al 1992) suggest that the communication planner should evaluate the properties of a network in terms of its connectedness, integration, diversity and openness. Greater potential for effective communication is found in networks that interact with their environments, where members are closely connected to the network and closely linked to each other, and where diversity is valued. To utilize networks, the communication planner must discover their existence and understand their nature. It is also important that the message is salient and transmittable (Windahl et al 1992). If a message fails to get through to the first receiver in a network, it will not go further no matter how connected, integrated or diverse the network is.

**4.4. The Social Marketing Approach of Communication**

Can one sell a social idea in the same way as one sells a commercial product? This was the query that inspired social marketing - the application of commercial ideas and methods to promote social goals, regarded as a promising framework for planning and implementing social change (Kotler and Zaltman 1971).

Kotler and Zaltman, who came up with the concept, defined social marketing as “the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and market research” (Kotler and Zaltman 1971:5). Andreasen (2003: 296) further developed it as “the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, executing, and evaluation of program designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part”.

At its core, social market is a communication approach that aims to bring about behavioural change for social goals. Andreasen (1994) stresses that social marketing should apply to programs (not isolated campaigns) and it has to take behavioural change (not information dissemination) as its goal. As a prerequisite, however, Andreasen believes the target population needs to be somewhat informed about the social goal before the social marketing approach should be adopted.

Since its conception in the 1970s, social marketing has often been used by communicators to promote issues like public health (anti-smoking, protected sex) and injury prevention (use of seat belt). It focuses on changing behaviour to
increase the well-being of individuals and/or society. Social marketing has a particular emphasis on understanding and overcoming barriers to behavioural change.

Commercial marketing looks at 4Ps (Product, Promotion, Place and Price) when designing a strategy, i.e. the right product has to be developed before it is backed by the right promotion, put in the right place and sold at the right price (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Social marketing translates these 4Ps into social proposition, social communication, accessibility and cost of involvement.

4.4.1. Product/ Social Proposition
The social proposition can be a change in values, beliefs, affects, behaviour or a mixture (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Since it is the social marketer’s goal that the social proposition is adopted and maintained, the social proposition needs to be packaged to be appealing and desirable to target audience (Peattie and Peattie 2009). Heath and Heath (2007) suggest that any effective communication should follow the SUCCES rule, i.e. an effective message is one that tells a simple, unexpected, concrete, credible and emotional story. For social marketers, presenting a social proposition that complies to the SUCCES rule can be a tall order, because social marketers often need to communicate relatively large amount of information in their messages, namely describing the desired change, the rationale, the benefits, then the time and place for acting (Bloom and Novelli 1981).

4.4.2. Promotion/ Social Communication
A social proposition needs communication-persuasion strategy and tactics that will make the proposition familiar, acceptable and desirable. Commercial products often use advertising, personal selling, publicity and sales promotion, but the same cannot be replicated for social marketing (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Social marketing faces more limited options: paid advertisement might be too costly while hard-selling is often frowned upon. Even though the social proposition is the “correct” thing to do (e.g. quit smoking for better health), target audience tend to react negatively to outsiders who attempt to tell them how to run their lives (Bloom and Novelli 1981).

4.4.3. Place/ Accessibility
Place, as a marketing term, is about providing adequate and compatible distribution and response channels (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). For commercial marketing, it means ensuring the product can be found in retail outlets. For social marketing, it means providing target audiences the information and support they need in order to translate their motivations into actions (ibid). Examples of “place” in social marketing are a clinic that helps people to quit smoking, or a website for people to enroll as volunteers for a charity organization.

4.4.4. Price/Cost of Involvement
A new behaviour may incur money costs, time costs, inconvenience costs, and psychic costs (Rothschild 1979). Rationally, quitting the cigarette does not incur
monetary and health cost, but the psychic costs (irritation and anxiety) may be higher than what a smoker would put up with. It is the social marketer’s job to reduce as many costs as possible when engaging target audience in a desired social behaviour.

### 4.5. A Communication Model for Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable development, sustainable living and sustainable consumption – all of these notions pose a challenge for communication in the sense that it is difficult to formulate a simple, meaningful way to build a communication programme (Bloom and Novelli 1981). In the case of Malmö Fairtrade City, is there one single communication approach that will help it to best achieve its goals? If it uses the Multi-step approach, who are the opinion leaders that spread its message to the public and how does it ensure that adoption of new behaviour takes place? If it uses the Network approach, what networks does it utilize and how does it tap into the networks? If Fairtrade coffee as a product can be promoted by social marketing, can Fairtrade as a consumption principle be promoted in the same way? Also, if communication operates within complex contexts formed by social, political and economic factors, what are the factors that make Malmö Fairtrade City’s communication work difficult?
5. Promoting Fairtrade Consumption in the Fairtrade City

Malmö Fairtrade City’s Communication Policy opens with the statement “the whole Malmö Fairtrade City’s existence is built on communication” (Malmö Fairtrade City 2011, internal document, my translation). When asked about the role of communication in Malmö Fairtrade City’s operation, the Fairtrade City Coordinator Karin Wallin’s response was “I would say that everything we do is communication work” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April). Since communication is established as the core mission of Malmö Fairtrade City, understanding its communication approach and communication challenges will provide valuable contribution to knowledge about promotion of sustainable consumption.

5.1. Communication Approach of Malmö Fairtrade City

5.1.1. A Mix of Multi-step and Network Approaches

Malmö Fairtrade City appears to have adopted a multi-step approach with a twist. The major departure from the multi-step approach is that almost everything is directly disseminated from the Fairtrade City office itself instead of through the mass media. Hira and Ferrie (2006) note that direct public sector involvement in promoting Fair Trade consumption has the benefits of increasing awareness, promoting standards, forcing the private sector to respond, and adding new formal institutional channels and resources to the Fair Trade movement. Although Malmö Fairtrade City is not a legal instrument to enforce consumption of Fairtrade goods, a municipality is a highly credible source of message that usually attracts more attention than civil organizations (Windahl et al 1992). Karin Wallin compared her experience working on Fair Trade for an NGO and for Malmö Fairtrade City and noted the significant difference – “When I started working here [at Malmö Fairtrade City], all the media called me, wanting to know about everything, so it’s from nothing [working for NGO] to everything just over one night, just because I started working for the city” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April).

In the conventional sense, step one in multi-step communication indicates a message being sent via the mass media to different opinion leaders. Malmö Fairtrade City also uses opinion leaders to reach the public, but it does so via its own channels instead of the mass media. Reading through Malmö Fairtrade City’s annual reports, I was able to identify who the opinion leaders are and how messages are sent through them to the three target groups: the City of Malmö, private companies and citizens of Malmö:

- **The City of Malmö**: Trainings on Fairtrade consumption are given to municipal staff working in different district offices. The municipality’s intranet provides information about the types of Fairtrade goods the municipality procures and how they can be ordered. Malmö Fairtrade City Office has trained a group of Fairtrade City delegates (“Fairtrade City-ombud”) who act as “opinion leaders” to inform their colleagues about the values behind and
practical information about Fairtrade consumption and ethical consumption in general. Even school cooks and teachers are informed about Fairtrade goods in conjunction with training on climate-friendly food (Malmö Fairtrade City 2010a and 2011b).

- **Private companies:** In 2010, Malmö Fairtrade City Office sent out an introductory letter to workplaces, hotels, restaurants and cafes in Malmö to inform them about Fairtrade. Decision-makers in company purchase were thus expected to be “opinion leaders”. They were encouraged to consider purchasing Fairtrade goods for their workplaces’ coffee rooms. The premises which were already serving Fairtrade goods were encouraged to register on the Malmö Fairtrade City website to announce their commitment (Malmö Fairtrade City 2011b).

- **Citizens of Malmö:** Citizens of Malmö are informed about Fairtrade consumption through different means, such as public events (World Fairtrade Day, Malmö Festival, the Christmas market “Good Jul” and the national Fairtrade campaign Fairtrade Fokus), the Malmö Fairtrade City website, printed materials (Malmö Fairtrade City brochure and the Organic/Fairtrade Guide) and talks given to more specific groups e.g. grade school students and university students. The Fairtrade City volunteers, called Fairtrade Ambassadors, act as “opinion leaders” in these contexts. They have all received training beforehand thus they possess more in-depth knowledge about Fairtrade and can explain to interested parties on a direct, personal basis (Malmö Fairtrade City 2008, 2010a and 2011b).

The above examples illustrate how the Fairtrade message is being sent directly from Malmö Fairtrade City to “opinion leaders” who would go on to inform various publics about Fairtrade. According to the Multi-step model, when the public has been informed of Fairtrade, reacted positively and accepted the idea, mass communication channels should be available for interested public to seek for more information (Windahl et al 1992). In the case of Malmö Fairtrade City, the mass media is replaced by the Malmö Fairtrade City website (malmo.se/fairtradecity). When informed individuals are ready to form an opinion about Fairtrade, they have the interpersonal channels to reach their colleagues and friends (the “opinion leaders” in City of Malmö, workplaces and Fairtrade City Ambassadors). One can say that Malmö Fairtrade City does provide the channel for people to look for more information, but so far there is no device in its planned communication to ensure that people carry through the whole adoption process, i.e. take the actual step to buy Fairtrade products.

The in-depth interview with staff members of Malmö Fairtrade City shows that they have a growing awareness of the power of network communication and how they have begun to establish relationships with different networks.

The Fairtrade Ambassadors play important roles both in the multi-step and network communication processes. They are interested individuals who have voluntarily
signed up for trainings about Fairtrade and offered to work on the cause. When they help out at events, they act as opinion leaders and spread the message in public. In private, they are expected to be more likely to talk about Fairtrade with their friends and families because this is a subject they are passionate about (Sarvik 2011, Interview, 18th April).

Now Malmö Fairtrade City is planning to nurture a new type of “ambassadors”, i.e. key persons in different organizations and institutes that can help to spread the Fairtrade message to a broader public. Karin Wallin mentioned during the interview that they are targeting the management of Folkets Park (a popular public park in Malmö both among locals and tourists) and Malmö Tourism Board, “I want them to be ambassadors. I want them to tell their visitors. For example in Folkets Park, when welcoming tourists and visitors, we want them to tell visitors that Malmö is a Fairtrade City, so in our cafe you can find Fairtrade goods. So I want them to be the bearer of the communication” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April).

When asked about what Malmö Fairtrade City needs in order to reach out to more people, Malin Sarvik mentioned the need for a larger network. Network as a form of communication is appreciated because “People talk to each other and they spread the message. That’s the easiest way. I mean, people read things, they get affected, but not as affected as if your colleague or friend or family tell you about something” (Sarvik 2011, Interview, 18th April). The desired network should not only be larger, but also more diverse. That is why Sarvik and Börjesson cited the city area Rosengård, highly populated by people with foreign backgrounds, as a target. Via contacts with the district office and NGOs working in Rosengård, Malmö Fairtrade City hopes that the Fairtrade message can be disseminated to the residents. The people working at Rosengård district office and the local NGOs are the contact points that will lead Malmö Fairtrade City into the community; they are also opinion leaders who have significant influence on the residents. Due to close contacts with residents in various aspects of their daily lives, they are part of the residents’ social and cultural lives. Malmö Fairtrade City is also aware of the need to get information ready for specific groups. Emma Börjesson (2011, Interview, 18th April) mentioned that, considering the residents’ foreign background, they are thinking of making print materials in simple Swedish for Rosengård.

In May 2011, Malmö Fairtrade City launched its own page on the social network website Facebook. This means that Facebook users who are interested in Malmö Fairtrade City can establish a link to its page. Once a connection is established, users will receive all new updates posted by Malmö Fairtrade City on its Facebook page. Users can also post messages, comments and questions on Malmö Fairtrade City’s page, and even initiate discussions. Compared to the Malmö Fairtrade City website, the Facebook page is a more proactive and interactive way of communication. If more users link their Facebook accounts to Malmö Fairtrade City’s Facebook page, there is the potential for a large online network to be formed where members can share information and issues about Fairtrade consumption.
5.1.2. Social Marketing for Malmö Fairtrade City?

By becoming a Fairtrade City, Malmö shows its commitment to Fairtrade consumption. Golding and Peattie (2005) believe that social marketing is a suitable approach to promote Fairtrade coffee. Based on their proposition, one can argue that a Fairtrade City can also use the same approach to increase overall consumption of Fairtrade goods. In this section, social marketing’s 4P model (Product, Promotion, Place and Price) is used to analyze the works of Malmö Fairtrade City to see whether it is a suitable premise to implement the social marketing approach.

What product (social proposition) is Malmö Fairtrade City “selling”? By supporting Fairtrade consumption as a municipality, there is the underlying proposition that people who work and/or live in a Fairtrade City should follow the municipality’s example to embrace Fairtrade consumption. In its current operational framework, Malmö Fairtrade City works on increasing knowledge, demand and offer of Fairtrade goods in public and private sectors; increasing commitment for and awareness of ethical consumption; and encouraging a strong ethical consumption that goes in line with Malmö profile as a sustainable city (Malmö Fairtrade City 2011a). Almost all of its work involves information and knowledge dissemination, which do not seem to fit with Andreasen’s (1994) notion that social marketing is suitable for programs that aim at changing behaviours. On the other hand though, Andreasen also points out that the target population should be somewhat informed about the social goal before social marketing can be implemented. As Malin Sarvik (2011, Interview, 18th April) explained during the interview, “Our goal somewhere is to make them change their behaviour, but to start with we have to spread information and knowledge”. We cannot exclude the possibility that Malmö Fairtrade City could be in an initial stage of educating its target population about Fairtrade. When it believes enough people are well-informed and have accepted the Fairtrade concept, maybe it will work towards explicitly changing behaviours.

How does Malmö Fairtrade City promote/communicate the idea of Fairtrade consumption to make it familiar, acceptable and desirable for its target groups? Through different channels (website, talks and presentations, brochures, newsletters, articles in Grön stad), the Fairtrade concept is being introduced and its meaning explained. Interestingly, the ways Malmö Fairtrade City disseminate information and knowledge show that they do understand the importance of the social psychological approach when promoting sustainable consumption. Wallin and Sarvik (2011, Interview, 18th April) explained during the interview that they want to focus on giving Fairtrade a positive image. As we can see from the following examples, they have tried to make people associate Fairtrade consumption with something that is desirable, positive and natural:

- In Malmö Fairtrade City’s reports to Malmö City Council on the municipality’s Fairtrade consumption, committees that have increased their Fairtrade consumption are marked green while those with decreased Fairtrade
consumption are marked red. This tactic is meant to give committees motivation to switch to Fairtrade goods (Malmö Fairtrade City 2010a).
- Fairtrade consumption is constantly presented as pleasant, fun and effortless. At public events, Fairtrade Ambassadors dress up as bananas to set the tone for Fairtrade as something fun. Cooking demonstration shows how to make a delicious dessert at barbecues using Fairtrade bananas and chocolate. Free samples of Fairtrade chocolate are given out for people to have a taste of Fairtrade goods. Fairtrade roses are given out to pedestrians on Valentine's Day (Malmö Fairtrade City 2010a and 2011b). The Organic/Fairtrade Guide in particular send a very strong message that it is fairly easy to factor Fairtrade into everyday consumption as Fairtrade products can be found at many locations in Malmö. These examples show that instead of focusing on stories of misery in the developing world, Malmö Fairtrade City opts to motivate its target groups positively. Even when they do explain Fairtrade's contribution to sustainable development, the emphasis is on empowerment – “we want to show that you have a choice, and we want to show you that your choice is important” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April).
- Perhaps not an explicit intention, but the strategy to convince workplaces (both in the public and the private sectors) to serve Fairtrade goods in the coffee rooms has the side effect of enhancing Fairtrade as a natural consumption choice. When people consume Fairtrade coffee, tea, cocoa and bananas on a near daily basis in their workplaces, there should be a higher chance that an affinity is built up, and the psychological barriers to Fairtrade goods (unfamiliarity, skepticism etc.) become easier to break down.
- For the year 2011, Malmö Fairtrade City has chosen “children and youths” to be its focal target group among citizens. The rationales are both rational and psychological. On a rational level, it makes sense to influence children for long-term impact. On an emotional level, Malin Sarvik admitted that Malmö Fairtrade City is trying to leverage children’s “big power over their parents” (Sarvik 2011, Interview, 18th April) in purchase decisions of items such as fruit (bananas) and sweets (chocolates).

Does Malmö Fairtrade City provide any “place”/access to information and support for target groups to practice the promoted proposition, in this case consumption of Fairtrade goods? Even though Malmö Fairtrade City does not procure any Fairtrade goods for the municipality's various departments, it does provide procurement staff information on where and how to order Fairtrade goods (Malmö Fairtrade City 2010a and 2011b). Private workplaces can contact Malmö Fairtrade City via information provided in the introductory letter to learn more about ordering Fairtrade goods for their coffee rooms. For citizens, Malmö Fairtrade City cannot directly impact the availability of Fairtrade goods in the market. Instead the Fairtrade City website provides a downloadable list of cafes, restaurants and hotels that serve Fairtrade coffee and/or tea. The Organic/Fairtrade Guide, available as hard copies and downloadable version, presents detailed information of retail
businesses that offer organic and/or Fairtrade goods. Malmö Fairtrade City has provided a lot of concrete information for people who are ready to change their consumption behaviour on how to make the change.

Unfortunately, the price (costs of involvement) of Fairtrade consumption includes all the costs mentioned by Rothschild (1979): money, time, inconvenience and psychic costs. Fairtrade goods are in general pricier than non-Fairtrade goods. At present, Fairtrade goods are still not as widely available as non-Fairtrade goods, which means consumers probably need to spend more time and go to more places in order to get them. One form of psychic cost is “What’s in it for me?” because the direct beneficiary of Fairtrade consumption are far away, in another country, unrelated to the consumer. All these costs need to be reduced. Malmö Fairtrade City has no control over the pricing and availability of Fairtrade goods; the most it can work on is to reduce the inconvenience and psychic costs. By giving Fairtrade positive associations it is trying to reduce the psychological barriers. Encouraging companies and the municipal offices to provide Fairtrade goods in the coffee rooms is a direct way to reduce inconvenience costs.

Is Malmö Fairtrade City a suitable premise to implement social marketing? So far it has shown considerations of the human psychology in its strategies. It does provide information and support for new behaviours, and it has tactics to reduce some costs of involvement. The deciding factor seems to be its goal – whether it aims explicitly to change behaviour instead of just increasing awareness.

5.2. Challenges for Malmö Fairtrade City

5.2.1. Catching and Maintaining People’s Attention

While the Malmö Fairtrade City team is staffed by people who believe in the values of Fair Trade and are committed to convince more people to support Fair Trade, they admitted that it is hard to get people to listen to them. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggest that ethical consumption will be more appealing if consumers do not feel they are being inconvenienced or they have to pay a higher price. Despite efforts to reduce costs of involvement being made, there is a step that comes before – catching people’s attention. Malin Sarvik said, “First we have to reach them, and then we have to convince them” (Sarvik 2011, Interview, 18th April).

Reflecting on why it is hard to get people to be interested in and committed to Fairtrade, Sarvik said, “Communication is always difficult to all target groups because there are so many other things to listen to, to care about. Fairtrade is just this tiny little thing in their whole world” (ibid, emphasis added). In today’s information-saturated world, the competition is tough for a message to get through to its target receiver. Which message wins the race can depend on many factors, but one factor seems to be intrinsic to the message itself – “If they have bigger problems than which coffee they should drink, then no matter how aware they are they will never choose Fairtrade, because they have bigger problems [...] if they have time
and money to engage in this question then they will” (ibid). Is there any way Malmö Fairtrade City can convince people that Fairtrade consumption carries more weight and should be taken more seriously?

Another reason that could hinder consumers' interest in Fairtrade is that there is almost no tangible reward to the consumer for buying Fairtrade goods. When an issue does not directly affect them, it is harder to get consumers engaged (Carrigan and Attalla 2001). Workplaces, cafes and restaurants that serve Fairtrade goods and have reported to Malmö Fairtrade City will get a certificate as a proof of their engagement, so at least there is some recognition. For the general public, Malin Sarvik remarked that “it’s only their conscience that can be the reward” (Sarvik 2011, Interview 18th April). The act of buying Fairtrade goods may appear less enticing when there is no direct and immediate reward for the consumer.

Although Malmö has been a Fairtrade City for almost five years, the team believes that only a small proportion of the city’s population know about this status. Karin Wallin (2011, Interview 18th April) attributed this to the fact that Malmö Fairtrade City has not exactly focused its efforts to reach out to the citizens. However, even if Malmö Fairtrade City later decides to focus its efforts on highlighting Malmö’s Fairtrade City status, it still needs to find ways to raise people’s interest in Fairtrade consumption. What can be done so that people will move Fairtrade consumption to a higher position on their priority list? What can be done so that more people agree that improving the lives of others is a better reward than saving money? These are some challenges that need to be tackled, no matter how difficult they are.

5.2.2. Resources and Expertise

The Malmö Fairtrade City team is now staffed with two full-time and two part-time employees. This is the biggest team so far; still, it was not until early 2011 that the team grew to its current size. Karin Wallin worked as the lone Fairtrade City Coordinator for almost three years. Before she was employed, Malmö Fairtrade City affairs were taken care of on a part-time basis by the Agenda 21 Coordinator of Malmö’s Environment Department.

The lack of human resources has made planning very difficult. Wallin recalled the period in 2010 when she had to plan activities for 2011, ”I wasn’t really sure if Emma was going to work here, if there could be any… well none of you (referring to Börjesson and Sarvik) were here actually. I had no idea if it was only going to be me or more people, so it was quite impossible to set the goals” (Wallin 2011, Interview 18th April).

The lack of communication expertise is another challenge, especially for a team tasked with a core mission to communicate. “Malin has worked for Fairtrade City since October, and before that … it was only me, and I’m not trained in the information field”, admitted Wallin (ibid). When Wallin first began working as Fairtrade City Coordinator, the steering group had a plan for 2008 which looked “more like a wish list” with goals that were not specific and measurable enough for
evaluation (ibid). It was not until early 2011 that Malmö Fairtrade City developed a vision document, called *Platform 2011-2014*, that provides the backbone for further planning and decision-making.

Malmö Fairtrade City runs on an annual budget of one million Swedish kronor (SEK), which has remained unchanged since 2008. Although team members do not see this as a constraint – “We don’t need a lot of money. I think the money we have is enough” said Börjesson (2011, Interview, 18th April) – it is also a fact that it has impacted their work negatively. For example, Wallin explained that one reason that the team has so far focused internally on municipal departments is because “we have to prioritize what we should do with our limited resources” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April). Should there be more resources, perhaps they can allocate resources more equally on different target groups, but that is not the case for now.

Another thing that is a negative result of a modest budget is the inability to conduct pre-campaign studies, which is a rather common challenge for many planned communications (Bloom and Novelli 80). Because they cannot afford to do any pre-study, the team has learnt to learn from mistakes. For example, after multiple unsuccessful attempts, they concluded that it is more effective to take part in established events than to hold events initiated by Malmö Fairtrade City. If the team would have the resources to conduct pilot projects or pre-studies, it could have been spared the disappointment and frustration caused by unsatisfactory results.

### 5.2.3. Choosing Communication Channels

The regular communication channels of Malmö Fairtrade City include its website, its newsletter (about four issues per year), the steering committee, the Fairtrade City Ambassadors, recurring events (World Fairtrade Day, Fairtrade Fokus etc.), dialogue meetings (twice per year) and the annual reports (a long and a short version). Considered by the team as the core channel, the Malmö Fairtrade City website (malmo.se/fairtradecity) is where people can find background and latest news of Malmö Fairtrade City. It is also where an array of information is available for download: the newsletters, the annual reports, the *Platform 2011-2014* document, the *Organic/Fairtrade Guide*, and list of cafes/restaurants/hotels that serve Fairtrade goods. General information about Fair Trade and the Fairtrade City concept and links to external websites are also provided.

Quite unlike what has been recommended, the mass media do not make it to the list of regular communication channels. The use of the mass media so far remains on the level of sending out press releases in conjunction of events. The reason for such scant use of the mass media is mostly a consideration of cost and benefits. As Wallin (2011, Interview, 18th April) said, “There’s no guarantee that the media is interested”. “We send out press releases when we do something, then it’s up to them if they want to write about it or not”, Sarvik added (2011, Interview, 18th April). Malmö Fairtrade City has advertised in newspapers before to encourage workplaces to provide Fairtrade goods in their coffee rooms, but the weak feedback
could not justify the cost. Because “it [the mass media] doesn’t give you much back” (Wallin 2011, Interview, 18th April), Malmö Fairtrade City has decided to rely on the channels that they can “steer, control and decide” (Sarvik 2011, Interview, 18th April). For example, instead of daily newspapers, it rather uses the Environment Department’s Grön stad, a newspaper that is issued three times a year. Since Malin Sarvik is on the editorial team of Grön stad, she can thus have bigger control of when and what content about Fairtrade City and ethical consumption gets reported (ibid).

Malmö Fairtrade City has its reasons to forego the mass media as a core communication channel. Considering its modest budget, it is not hard to understand why Malmö Fairtrade City does not spend money on advertisement. Using its own channels, the team can be sure its messages are conveyed in ways that they are meant to be conveyed. Another way to understanding this choice is that that nowadays information technology has enabled organizations to establish their own communication channels (websites and social media pages) so efficiently that they no longer need to rely heavily on the mass media, and that people are getting information from diverse sources that the mass media’s importance as source of information is diminishing. Still, this means that Malmö Fairtrade City is missing out the opportunity to leverage the mass media’s framing power to its advantage. An issue is likely to be perceived as important if it is frequently mentioned in the mass media (Nitz 2000). This perceived importance is then likely to raise interest, which may then lead to increased involvement. Although as a municipality-led initiative, Malmö Fairtrade City does not need the mass media exposure to raise political interest, but such exposure would still help Fairtrade consumption to leave impressions with businesses and citizens.
6. Conclusion

This study aims to understand the complexities of promoting sustainable consumption. I have chosen to focus on a single case, Malmö Fairtrade City, to look at a municipality's use of communication approach in promoting Fairtrade consumption and the various difficulties it faces in its work. The results, as expected, are far from clear-cut. Malmö Fairtrade City's communication work cannot be labeled by a single approach; there are characters of both the multi-step and the network approaches with variations from the theoretical models. Although it displays features of the social marketing approach, Malmö Fairtrade City's current goal is not an explicit change in behaviour, which social marketing is conceived to achieve. The challenges it faces come from different sources: there is difficulty intrinsic to the appeal of Fairtrade consumption; modest resources have restricted its potential to do more; its choice of communication channels also reveals a common dilemma related to the use of the mass media in communication.

6.1. Reflections

To a large extent, I believe that the research aim has been fulfilled and the research questions have been answered. The results show that promoting sustainable consumption is by no means an easy task. Even though Malmö Fairtrade City enjoys certain advantages operating as a municipal unit, these advantages do not take away the difficulties such as construction of a powerful message, catching people's attention.

Does this case show that Fairtrade City offers a new way to promote sustainable consumption? Using the identity of a Fairtrade City, Malmö is making a very public announcement to the public sector, the private sector and the civil society about its determination to encourage sustainable consumption. This is a symbolic as well as concrete support to Fairtrade products because the City of Malmö is not just saying it – its consumption of Fairtrade products actually increases year by year. Fairtrade City is also part of Malmö's sustainable city brand-building. Keeping the Fairtrade City status is an excellent example to show the world its commitment to sustainable consumption and sustainable living at large, and in order to be recertified as a Fairtrade City, Malmö needs to keep fulfilling the goals set by Fairtrade Sverige, year after year. In this sense, the Fairtrade City status creates a win-win situation where Malmö has its sustainable city brand enhanced and producers in the South benefit from increased sales of their goods.

The experience of Malmö Fairtrade City is an excellent example to show how we should never underestimate the time and resources needed to achieve a sustainability goal. It has taken Malmö almost five years' time before there is a “team” to work on the Fairtrade City initiative. It has taken the same amount of time before there is a formal document that outlines its goals and visions. It would be reasonable to expect such infrastructure to be in place from the start; unfortunately that is not what happened in Malmö. Planning an initiative to promote sustainable
consumption is perhaps more complex than it appears. Compared to a project to build a new road, planning resources for a program like Fairtrade City is harder in the sense that one cannot plan in terms of how much raw materials, machinery or engineers are needed because one does not see a concrete, measurable finished result as the goal. Malmö Fairtrade City started with a part-time coordinator to implement its activities; it then moved on to hire a full-time coordinator, and now a Project Officer and a Communicator have been added so now there is some form of a team, albeit still a rather small one. Malmö Fairtrade City has had to learn from experience what competencies are needed to perform their tasks well, and the hiccups it has encountered should be valuable lessons for other Swedish municipalities that intend to be certified as Fairtrade Cities. One of the most important insights is that a team – not a single person – comprising people with project planning and communication expertise is needed from the outset. If a municipality wants to show its genuine commitment to sustainable/Fairtrade consumption, the commitment of resources is the least it should do.

6.2. Suggestions for Future Research

As a growing trend, Fairtrade Towns and Cities provide exciting premises for researchers to study the promotion of sustainable consumption. It will be rewarding to conduct a multiple case study to compare different approaches used by different municipalities in the same or even different countries. Given the luxury of time, researchers can also go beyond analysis of strategies and look into the activities organized by a Fairtrade City in details through observation or even action research. Furthermore, one can turn the research focus away from the change agent (municipalities) and to the target population – it would offer communication planners invaluable insights if a study is conducted to understand how consumers perceive and experience a Fairtrade City’s efforts to promote Fairtrade consumption.
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**Interviews**

Börjesson, Emma (2011) Interview, 18th April 2011

Sarvik, Malin (2011) Interview, 18th April 2011

Wallin, Karin (2011) Interview, 18th April 2011
Appendix

Interview Guide

- Name, job title, responsibilities and length of time at Malmö Fairtrade City (FTC)
- Malmö FTC – size of unit, organizational structure, annual budget etc.
- Malmö FTC and Malmo the Sustainable City vision – relationship, contribution
- Role of communication in Malmö FTC’s work
- Malmö FTC’s goals
- Malmö FTC’s target groups
- Thoughts on awareness – attitude – behaviour
- Specific communication strategies e.g. Focus on info/ direct contact/ the mass media
- Change of strategy/focus over the years?
- Type of activity, timing – rationale? Pre-study?
- Most/least effective strategy – why?
- Most/least effective activity – why?
- The mass media – pros and cons – why?
- Evaluation – indicator?
- “FAIRTRADE CITY” – make Fairtrade promotion easier or harder? How?
- Which target group easier to communicate? In what ways? Stories!
- Which target group harder to communicate? In what ways? Stories!
- Overall: Tough job? Examples?
- Areas to improve? Resources/knowledge for that?