

ACCEPTABILITY OF ECO-SUFFICIENT POLICY-MEASURES AMONG FINNISH REGIME REPRESENTATIVES

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a brief history of consumption



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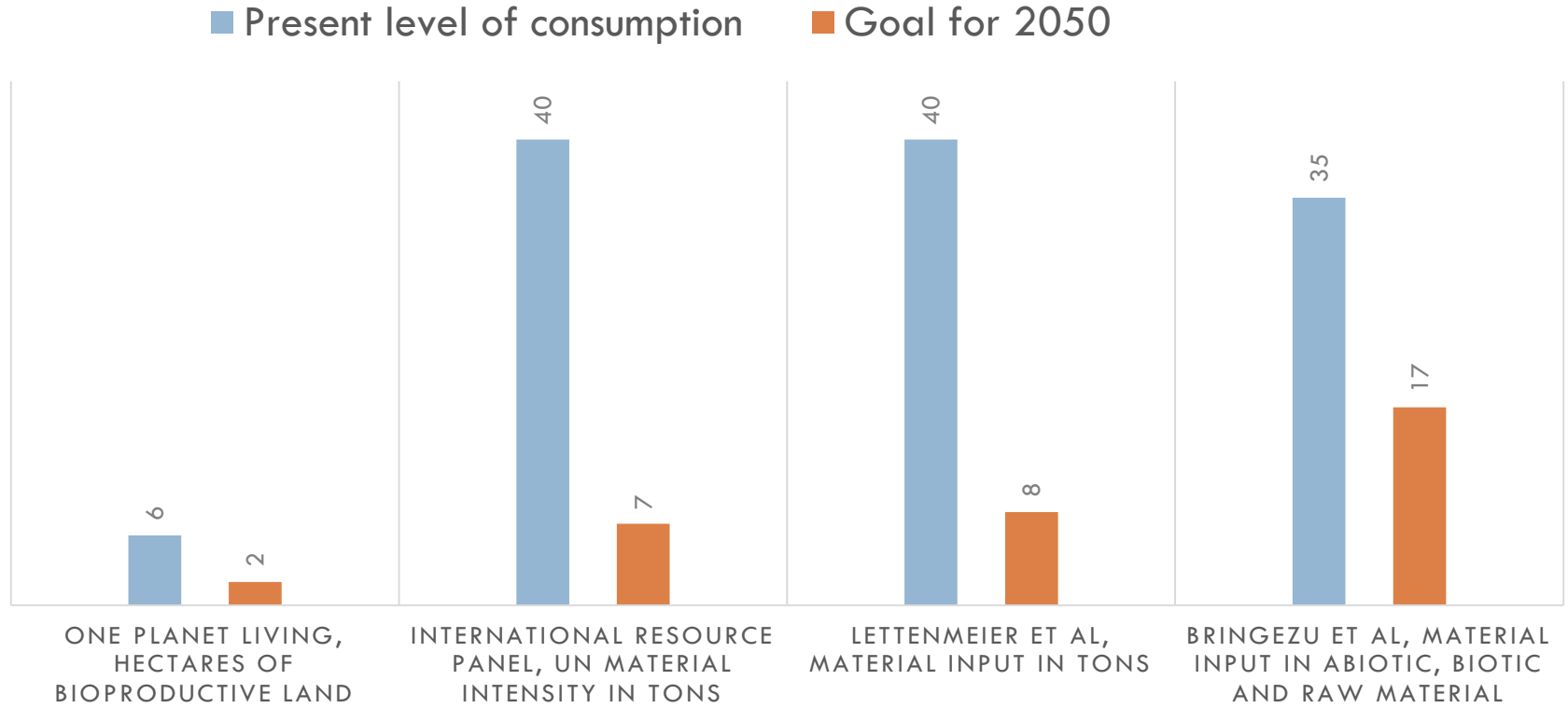


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Overconsumption, the root of all evil?

Sanna Ahvenharju - FFRC

Research estimates 50 – 80 % cut in natural resource consumption is necessary



Capping the demand by consumers

- Stop to the 'Individualisation of responsibility' (Maniates 2002)
- From ABC approach to systemic changes (Shove 2010)
- From meeting the needs *through personal consumption* to
 - ▣ reducing or preventing needs or
 - ▣ meeting them collectively or in co-operation with others (Manno 2002)
- Strong sustainable consumption governance (Fuchs & Lorek 2005)

The Finland we want by 2050 –
Society's commitment to
sustainable development



The vision of Society's commitment is
a prosperous Finland within the limits
of the carrying capacity of nature.

Strong policies 1 / 2

Short name	Explanation	Classification
Local bonus schemes	Setting up local bonus schemes that encourage lifestyles with low resource consumption	enabling
Neighbourhood sharing facilities	Setting up facilities for sharing equipments, tools, machines, etc. in all urban neighbourhoods	enabling
Right to part time work hours	The right to decide own total working hours and amount of free time to all employees	enabling
Shared use of living space	Increasing shared housing squaremeters, e.g. through housing regulation	enabling
National target for resource consumption	Setting a national target (e.g. 8 ton material footprint) for the level of natural resource consumption per capita by the year 2050	informative
Individual consumption reporting	Yearly monitoring & reporting of natural resource consumption at individual level	informative
Ban on advertisements	Ban on advertisements of specific products or services (e.g. flights, meat) with high impact on resource consumption	informative/disabling

Strong policies 2/2

Short name	Explanation	Classification
Specified resource tax	High tax (40-70 %) on specific products or services (e.g. flights, meat) which have high impact on resource consumption	disabling
Material footprint tax	Material footprint tax on all products and services	disabling
Restrictions to the size of apartments	Setting limits to the housing square meters per person	disabling
Quotas for selected products	Personal quotas for selected products and services with high impact on resource consumption	disabling
General consumption quotas	Personal quotas for all natural resource consumption	disabling
Reducing maximum working hours	Reducing the maximum working hours (e.g. 25 hours/week)	disabling
Maximum wage cap	Setting maximum wage cap (e.g. 150 000 €/year/household)	disabling

Regime participants (32 invited, 18 participated in all)

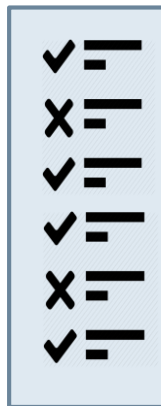
Sector of society	Selection principle	# invited	# inter-viewed	# responded to survey
Parliament	All parties	8	3	3
Local government	Two cities selected by random - from 1st to 5th and 6th to 10th largest cities	2	2	2
Ministries	All ministries relevant to consumption of natural resources	6	4	3
Interest groups	Major economic and employment interest groups	5	5	4
Companies	Largest companies in the food, transport, housing and consumer product sectors	4	1	1
Science	Main policy research organisations independent of government	4	3	3
Media	Largest media companies	3	3	2

Exploring acceptability – Pushing the limits

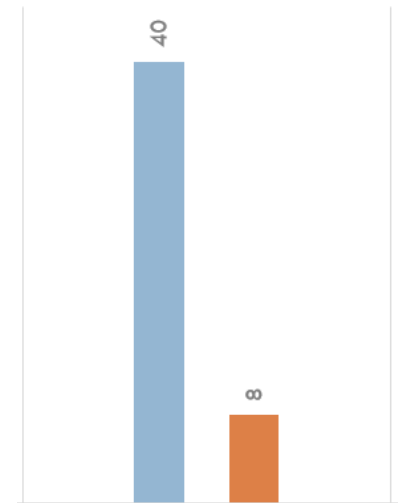
1. Face-to-face interview
2. Joint agreement on the target
3. Using the future to get distance
4. Survey
5. Full anonymity



In the year 2040...



■ Goal for 2050



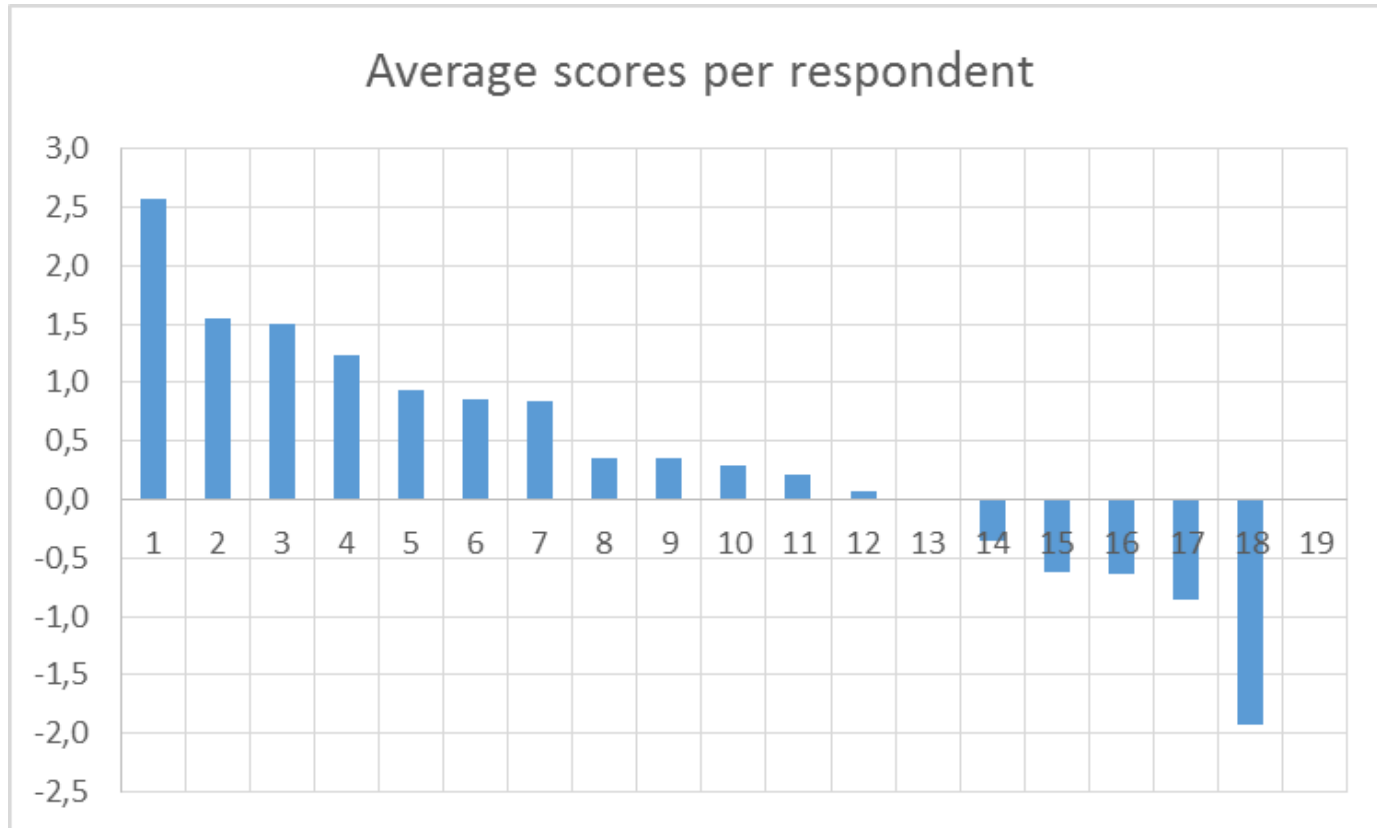
Acceptability above 0

Policy	Average	# Positive	# Negative	N/	Classification
Neighbourhood sharing facilities	↑ 2,2	17	0	1	enabling
Local bonus schemes	↑ 2,1	17	0	1	enabling
Right to part time work hours	↑ 1,6	15	3		enabling
National target for resource consumption	↑ 1,5	16	2		informative
Specified resource tax	↑ 1,2	14	4		disabling
Material footprint tax	↑ 0,9	13	4	1	disabling
Shared use of living space	↑ 0,9	14	3	1	enabling
Individual consumption reporting	↑ 0,9	14	4		informative
Ban on advertisements	→ 0,7	13	5		inform/disabl

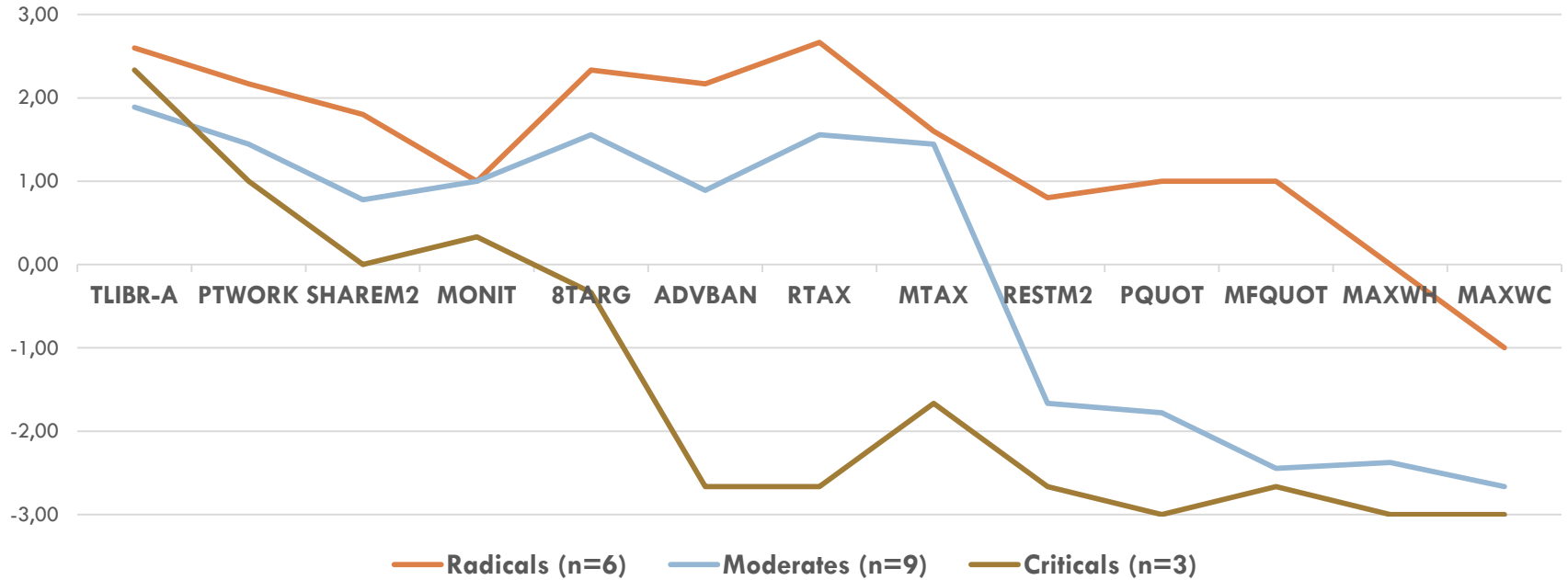
Acceptability below 0

Policy	Average	# Positive	# Negative	N/	Classification
Quotas for selected products	↓ -1,1	7	11		disabling
Restrictions to the size of apartments	↓ -1,1	5	12	1	disabling
General consumption quotas	↓ -1,3	7	11		disabling
Reducing maximum working hours	↓ -1,6	3	14	1	disabling
Maximum wage cap	↓ -2,2	3	15		disabling

Different participant profiles



3 groups of participants



Some points and concerns

- Behaviour change should be made easy
- Market-based policies popular
- Demanding targets may demobilise
- Step by step approach
- Numerical targets problematic
- Regulation is out of favor – PR strategy needed
 - ▣ Emergency option

Different motivations for policy choice



Critics – Cautious, risk-aware and sceptical

Moderates – Pragmatic, loyal to the system, risk-averse

Radicals – Pioneering, innovative, optimistic

Conclusions

- Preliminary results! + Results cannot be generalized
- Readiness for new policies is high
- Strong policies are considered inefficient – but potentially inevitable
- Higher acceptability – if changes are considered fast
- More research on strong consumption policies
- Risks and concerns need to be properly addressed to ensure support
 - Visionary descriptions are not enough
 - Pragmatic examples of existing or similar policies

Thank you!



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Example:

National monitoring of natural resource consumption

Setting a national level target for the natural resource consumption per capita would bring public attention to the scale of the required reduction. It would also emphasise the responsibility of the society as a whole to stop overconsumption, rather than leaving the problem for individual consumers. At an individual level, natural resource consumption of inhabitants could be monitored and reported yearly, for example together with taxation system.

Setting national and international targets has been part of Finnish environmental policy, for example, the legislation to reduce 80 % of the greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. Individual level monitoring is carried out in taxation and, for example, in the energy reports that are sent to consumers by their energy providers. Already now, individual level material footprints could partly be calculated from energy consumption, apartment size and type, private car mileage and air travels.

How feasible and acceptable do you consider the use of the following policy measures to monitor natural resource consumption?

A national target (for example 8 tons material footprint) for the average level of natural resource consumption per capita by the year 2050

▣ Feasibility (-3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, DNK)

Acceptability (-3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, DNK)

Individual level monitoring and reporting of estimated natural resource consumption

▣ Feasibility (-3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, DNK)

Acceptability (-3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, DNK)