The Individual or the Community: Towards a Common Understanding of Values.

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1. Introduction

The individual’s participation and responsibility is an important precondition [for reaching an ecologically sustainable development] (Prop. 1997/98:145, s.29, my translation)

This paper is written as a part of the research project Households’ Response to Political Sustainability Aspirations – a Question of Policy Legitimacy, headed by Dr. Carina Lundmark at Luleå University of Technology. In turn, this project is included in the interdisciplinary SHARP Program (Sustainable Households: Attitudes, Resources and Policy Instruments), financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SNV) and the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Formas). Involving both political scientists and psychologists, the purpose of the project is to study the match between political sustainability aspirations and the values and attitudes held by household members, in order to evaluate the legitimacy for Swedish environmental policy. The outcomes are perceived to provide political decision makers with important insights in their efforts to create more legitimate, and thus more efficient, policy instruments.

A fundamental assumption, on which the research project relies, is that people’s willingness to adhere to a certain policy’s requirements depends to a significant extent on their perception of the policy in question as legitimate. Policy legitimacy, which is the project’s main focus, builds on trust, in the sense that political decisions rest on fundamental values that are shared, or at least accepted, among the citizenry (Beetham 1991). A key question in the search for legitimacy and, thus, policy acceptance is, following Beetham (1991), if the policy can be justified by reference to common beliefs and values. An individual’s personal set of values is believed to strongly influence how a policy, its ends and means, is perceived and thus shapes the way in which the individual responds. Furthermore, individuals’ value-priorities also affect the way in which policy instruments (legal/regulative, economic and informational) are received, and the perception of them as acceptable and effective (or unacceptable and inefficient). An indication that the connection between values, attitudes and behaviour is of utmost relevance can also be found in official Swedish environmental policy documents, which for example states that “patterns of consumption and people’s behaviour can be seen as a function of values and attitudes” (Skr.1994/95:120, p.18, my translation). Thus, to evaluate under which circumstances the Swedish environmental policy is perceived as legitimate, the correspondence between the normative foundations of Swedish policy and value-systems within Swedish households must be explored. The primary task for this evaluation of policy legitimacy is, therefore, to identify and map the relevant values that are believed to a) construct the foundation for environmental policy aspirations, and b) shape people’s attitudinal or behavioural decisions. For the Swedish environmental policy which, as the quotation above implies, requires peoples’ active involvement in order to implement sustainable development, this value-correspondence is perceived to be a highly important factor: without value-correspondence no legitimacy and without legitimacy less or non adherence to the policy in question.

What types of value-systems, then, are relevant to consider when conducting an evaluation of the value-correspondence as well as legitimacy in the field of environmental policy? Two specific demands need to be addressed. First of all, the value-systems in question must be relevant according to previous research conducted within this field, which means that they must be determining factors for individuals’ willingness to act in accordance with official

* For more information about the SHARP Program, participating researchers and projects, please visit the SHARP website on URL: www.sharpprogram.se.
governmental policy, i.e. for the policy’s legitimacy. Second, based on previous research it can be concluded that values permeate the societal structure as a whole and that these therefore can be identified on both different levels and with different actors. Therefore, the value-systems considered must also be possible to identify empirically on two separate levels; with individuals and in official policy documents, forming the basis of a theoretical framework for future empirical research within the project.

A wide array of values is anticipated to influence policy legitimacy in the environmental field. This research project has identified two main value-systems that are perceived to be of vast importance for what people choose to actually do within households that might contribute to an improved environmental situation: a) values regarding the proper relationship between the individual and political authority, and b) values regarding what constitute the relationship between human beings and nature. These two value-systems are believed to influence people’s perception of a number of relevant factors such as: acceptance of state interference in their daily lives, the presence of environmental risk or threat, and feelings of trust towards societal actors that are managing such threats. By the use of discourse analysis, mass-surveys and in-depth interviews oriented towards these two value-systems, the research project will identify and compare values expressed as normative foundations in national and municipal policy documents with values held within Swedish households. The extent of which these value-systems correspond is a key factor in the evaluation of policy legitimacy.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to take the first theoretical step towards a forthcoming analysis of the above mentioned value-correspondence in Swedish environmental policy. The forthcoming theoretical model will be used with the purpose of (1) identifying the values and attitudes held amongst individuals and expressed as normative foundations in Swedish environmental policy documents, (2) evaluate their significance for individuals’ differing behavioural and attitudinal decisions, and (3) assess their importance for individuals’ perception of the environmental norm as presented in contemporary environmental policy. In doing this, the first task is to address the need for an understanding of the concept of values as such, the way in which different value-systems interplay with individuals’ attitudes and behaviour, as well as how these might be identified in official environmental policy documents.

The compatibility between environmental policies and the ideological concepts that constitutes the view on the proper state-individual relationship, e.g. values regarding democracy, citizenship, liberty, equality and/or justice, has been the focus for a range of political science research projects approaching the issue both philosophically and empirically. In his PhD-thesis Sverker C. Jagers (2002) lists four alternative compatibility studies previously conducted by political scientists and green political theorists. Jagers matrix indicates that the focuses in this field has been on the comparison of environmental values or policies with liberal democratic principles or institutions in the search for a, at least theoretical, possibility of uniting the two. The major question asked in these types of compatibility evaluations is whether policies or values originating in environmentalism can co-exist, side by side, with the principles underpinning a liberal democratic state. Thereby, previous political science research gives valuable suggestions as to how, and what parts of, environmentalist policies might challenge ideological concepts in a contemporary democracy. None of these above mentioned approaches, however, are concerned with the prospect of combining the normative foundations of environmental policy with values actually held by household members. This suggests that a study of environmental policy legitimacy, which to a
great extent also involves the consideration of the values held by individuals, needs to expand its scope beyond the focus on ideological principles of previous political science research.

The importance of values as an explanatory factor for individuals’ attitudes towards behaviour, as well as for the actual behaviour itself, is, in contrast, an important focus for research within the field of psychology. Whereas political scientists, as noted above, have been preoccupied with the study of ideologies and their influence on the way political reality is (or should be) valued, psychologists in general are more interested in the underlying values and personal value systems that ideologies either implicit or explicit refers to, and on their significance for the formation of individuals’ attitudes towards political behaviour. A combination of theories emanating from psychological value-studies, with the political science focus on ideologies and democratic principles would thus provide the study with a comprehensive overview of values, value-systems and ideologies, to be used when evaluating both the legitimacy for the Swedish environmental policy and the effectiveness of policy instruments used. In the following sections, this paper will therefore take the first step towards such a common understanding of the concept of values and aims at combining political science theory with values-research conducted within the field of psychology.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, the relationship between values, ideologies, attitudes and behaviour will be outlined, combining research results from both political science and psychology. The aim of this section is to show the way in which values and ideologies are connected and how they interplay in the forming of individuals’ attitudes and behaviour. Second, the value-system concerning the relationship between the individual and political authority (the state) will be examined and as a result, two contradictory ends of this political-ideological dimension, i.e. individualism and collectivism, will be outlined and explained. The focus will, in this part, be on the main conflicting parts of the two ideological outlooks, i.e. the view on the relationship between the individual, the society and the state, which are perceived to be of great relevance when put in the context of environmental policy (or, for that matter, any policy that indicates extensive individual participation). Third, value-types resulting from research in the field of psychology will be presented with the aim at finding and mapping connections, both theoretical and empirical, between these and the political-ideological dimensions. This is a key issue for enabling the forthcoming evaluation of value-correspondence, and thus legitimacy, for Swedish environmental policy. Fourth and last, the paper will give a brief outline of how the work with constructing a theoretical model for identifying and evaluating relevant values held amongst individuals, as well as their significance for attitudinal and behavioural decisions in the environmental field, will proceed.

2. Towards a common understanding of values

An important premise of this paper is that individuals’, and therefore also households’, response to environmental policy aspirations is interrelated with specific value-systems held by all individuals. Researchers and theorists in a variety of social science-disciplines have over the years tried to identify and map this connection or relationship between a persons’ values and her behavioural as well as attitudinal decisions. Even though this research has been conducted by psychologists and political scientists with a somewhat divergent focus on the concept of values, the differences lies mainly in the level of abstraction. Within the field of political science, the major part of this research has concerned the study of political culture, i.e. the study of the values and norms that influence a society’s political system and decision-making process (e.g. Almond & Verba 1963; Inglehart 1977 & 1990). Thereby, political
science research has, in this respect, mainly focused on the values in states, societies or communities rather than on the values held by single individuals. The focus on individuals’ values is found first and foremost in psychological research, where these are viewed as an important explanatory factor when predicting people’s actions and attitudes, thus receiving attention from a number of researchers (e.g. Rokeach 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky 1987, 1990; Schwartz 1992, 1994, 1999; Stern et al. 1995).

Based on various value-studies conducted within the field of psychology, the connection between individually held values and value priorities, external factors directed towards the individual’s choice of behaviour and the actual attitudinal or behavioural decisions is here proposed to be viewed as indicated by the figure above (fig. 2.1). With a focus on the specifics of attitudes and behaviour in relation to the environment, the figure shows the causal connections between the general values held by an individual, her more specific ideologies, and finally how these influence both the individual’s attitudinal or behavioural decisions as well as the way in which she justifies and explains her decisions. The figure also indicates that external factors, for example policy instruments or resource obstacles, are important to consider for their impact not only on the individual’s possibility to behave in a certain fashion, but also on her behavioural decision. This has been the focus for a range of research projects in various fields (e.g. McKenzie-Mohr 2000; Krantz Lindgren 2001). Also, the perceptions of
external factors are believed to vary between individuals, ultimately depending on the person’s value-system (Garvill, Marell & Nordlund 2001).

According to Rohan (2000), an individual’s personal value system, based on the priority of a set of universal values, causes people to a) view the world around them in a particular way, their worldview, and b) forms a person’s social value system, i.e. the perception of other people’s value priorities (Rohan 2000, p.270). These, in turn, determine a person’s attitudes, reactions and her immediate decisions on how to behave, what is sometimes referred to as norms. However, in more complex situations demanding conscious thought (for example engaging in environmentally benevolent acts; taking the bicycle instead of the car, sorting out household waste, purchasing green products, actively conserving water and energy), people also use value-system linked ideologies to help them make decisions (Rohan 2000). As with the concept of values, the term ideology is widely used within the field of social sciences and has therefore been given many differing connotations. The prospect for finding a consensus on the meaning of the term ideology, as it is used in political science and psychology research is, however, not an impossible task. For political scientists, the basic concept of an ideology is a set of ideas by which a social group tries to make sense of the world. An ideology thus consists of ideas that explains, predicts as well as evaluates social conditions and gives its bearer a personal orientation regarding her relation to the rest of the world (Ball & Dagger 1999; Shively 2003). Similarly, the ideology concept referred to by Rohan (2000, p.270) is described as the “rhetorical association or associations between things, people, actions, or activities and the best possible living”, endorsed or promoted by a group of people. There is also a consensus between the two disciplines regarding the fact that the individual’s choice of ideology has strong references to her underlying value-priorities. According to Shively (2003) ideologies are developed in accordance with individuals’ preferences, therefore reflecting both their wants and needs, something that also is expressed through our priorities between the set of universal values all including judgements on how to best enable the realisation of our preferences.

These value-system linked ideologies are believed not only to influence the actual behaviour but also the individual’s perception and response towards various external interventions. Examples of these interventions being policy restrictions and instruments of different kinds (economic incentives, laws and regulations, information campaigns), as well as the perceived resource constraints regarding factors such as time, money, information and/or technology, that might hamper or hinder environmentally benevolent acts (cf. Bennulf & Gilljam 1990; Witherspoon 1996; Lundmark 1998; McKenzie-Mohr 2000). More importantly, how individuals prioritise between different values, and consequently their preference for an ideology, is believed not only to influence their actual behaviour but also the way in which political reality is valued, their reactions and attitudes towards political action both in general and with regards to specific issues (such as the environment, see figure above).

This section has aimed to show that, despite certain variations in terminology, the ideologies studied by political scientists are strongly interrelated with values studied within the field of psychology. Furthermore, values have also been shown to construct the foundation for an individual’s adherence to a specific ideology, which indicates that also such views as on the proper relationship between the individual and political authority (i.e. the state) emanates from the individual’s priorities between universal values. This suggests that the two perspectives of political science and psychology not only can, but also should be combined in order to reach the comprehensive theoretical overview of the relationship between values, ideologies and attitudes needed for an evaluation of value-correspondence and, thus,
environmental policy legitimacy. In the following sections, this paper will take this comparison of two disciplines one step further, starting with the examination of two main ideological outlooks on the proper relationship between individuals and political authority that, with reference to previous research from the perspective of political science, are relevant to consider for an evaluation of value-correspondence. The paper will, however, also explore the connections between these ideological outlooks and value-types resulting from research in the field of psychology, in order to reach a better understanding as to how individuals themselves can be seen as adhering to one ideological concept or another.

3. Environmental policies and the state-individual relationship

The prospects for engaging individuals in environmentally benevolent behaviour have received attention from a number of researchers and theorists approaching the issue from the viewpoint of democratic theory (e.g. Barry & Wissenburg 2001). This suggests that people’s response to political sustainability aspirations might be influenced by their view on the relation between the state and the individual, and the implications environmental responsibilities might have for the individual freedom to choose and pursue their life projects. According to most green democratic theories, the contemporary notion of citizenship comprises both environmental rights and responsibilities, thus obligating people to behave in a certain fashion towards the environment (Lundmark 2003). The official Swedish, as well as international, sustainability aspirations prescribing an environmentally committed citizen are thereby also supported by a theoretical framework.

The relationship between environmental sustainability and contemporary western democracy is however, according to most advocates of green theory, somewhat uneasy. The predominant view is that democracy in its current form, especially with its strong ties to capitalist economy, will not be able to cope with the societal changes needed in order to prevent a future ecological crisis, and that it therefore must undergo more or less comprehensive changes. In some cases, green theorists of the survivalist school (e.g. Garrett Hardin, Robert Heilbroner, and William P. Ophuls) and environmental activists (e.g. Dave Foreman) even argues that contemporary liberal democracies are particularly ill-equipped for solving today’s pressing environmental problems. Using the reasoning in Garrett Hardin’s article *Tragedy of the commons* (1968) as one example of the disastrous impact the unrestricted freedom of liberal democracies has on the environment, the survivalists, following Robin Eckersly (1992, p.24), prescribes the need for “authoritarianism from above rather than [the liberal solution of] self-limitation from below”. This eco-authoritarian perspective on green theory has, however, only attracted a few adherents for, as expressed by John Passmore (1974, p.183), “[It] rests on the implausible assumption that the authoritarian state would be ruled by ecologist-kings”. Instead, the main part of the green theorists advocates a deepening of the existing democratic political system as a requirement for an ecologically sustainable development, to, so to say, rebuild the ship at sea (c.f. Eckersly 1992).

Nevertheless, the very idea of a policy for promoting environmental sustainability poses a considerable challenge to the present liberal democratic tradition and the principle of individual freedom. Most notably, it questions the (ideal type) liberal notion of a neutral state, i.e. a state that does not support, nor suppress, particular ways of life but rather grants each individual the liberty to, independently and by herself, choose and pursue individual life projects (Barry & Wissenburg 2001). Being a political goal, the desired end-state of environmental sustainability stands in stark contrast to the means-oriented politics of liberal
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democracy, and these two concepts are therefore often viewed as more or less impossible to successfully combine. In line with this, the politics of sustainability rather fits the description of a communitarian ideology, where the state leaves the principle of neutrality aside for the purpose of steering its citizens in the right direction towards a collective good (or, towards an acceptable way of living with respect to future generations and nature itself) (Jagers 2002; Doherty & De Geus 1996). According to Doherty & De Geus (1996, p.1) the need for democratic change in this communitarian direction is evident among most green parties and movements:

Only by challenging material inequalities and bureaucratic hierarchies will a new communitarianism emerge that will be powerful enough to overcome the atomised self-interest of individual consumers.

Thus, one of the key issues within contemporary ecophilosophical debate has not been whether individuals’ acts and thoughts in relation to the environment should be influenced, and ultimately transformed or not, but rather whether this should be executed under the control of a community (ecoaarchanism) or by the state (ecosocialism) (cf. Eckersly 1992). For the purpose of evaluating policy legitimacy in the environmental field, the need for an investigation of how the state-individual relationship is perceived among households, as well as expressed in official documents, thus seems imminent. The well-debated suggestion that the political system of liberal democracy certainly can be viewed as being challenged, at least in theory, by a politics of sustainability is one reason for this focus. The other is that individuals’ views on the relationship with, and duties of, the state also can be seen as important factors for attitudes towards other political projects, for example the welfare system and the politics of redistribution (Rothstein 1994). Therefore, the mapping of collectivist- as well as individualistic ideologies, and the value-systems underpinning them will be the focus for the following sections of this study. These value-systems are considered important factors for explaining attitudes towards political behaviour in general, but also for predicting individual’s response to various external interventions, thus making it an essential part of the study taking into account the research project’s aspiration to also explain the effectiveness of various policy instruments, in addition to the primary evaluation of policy legitimacy.

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<th>Values regarding the state-individual relationship</th>
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**Figure 3.1. The anticipated interplay between values regarding the state-individual relationship and policy legitimacy.** If the individual’s value-systems corresponds with those values expressed in official policy documents, for example if the individual believes that the duty of the state is to steer its citizens towards one conception of the good life, a policy which’s normative foundations expresses these values is perceived to be considered legitimate by the individual. On the other hand, if the individual’s general value-system does not support such a view on the state-individual relationship, a policy which suggests this will instead suffer from a legitimacy deficit.

* The terms distribution and redistribution are used alternately in political science and philosophical literature, though with the same meaning. Whether an ongoing system of (economic) transfers in a society is regarded as distribution or redistribution depends on how the original allocation of goods/advantages is viewed (see for example Nozick 1974, pp.149-150).
4. Liberal individualism and state neutrality

As noted above, the relation between liberal democracy and environmentalism has, over the years, been explored by a range of green political theorists (e.g. Dobson 1990; Barry 1999; Barry & Wissenburg 2001; Eckersly 1992; Doherty & De Geus 1996). As pointed out by Jagers (2002) the issue in question has, though, mostly concerned the possibility of combining environmentalism with specific theorists or features of liberal democracy, attempting to create a theoretical perception of a green citizenship. In the following sections, the focal point instead consists of the values and attitudes towards political action in general that individuals hold with regard to their views on the state-individual relationship, and, further on, the possibility of combining political science and psychological theory on this matter. The ideological outlooks on the state-individual relationship are, as explained above, perceived to provide one set of important explanatory factors for the evaluation of policy legitimacy.

In liberal theories of the state, to a large extent founded in 17th century contract-theory, among the most important institutions is the policy of state neutrality (cf. Ball & Dagger 1999; Holden 1993). Mainstream liberal ideas thus presuppose a state that does not support, or suppress, particular ways of life, but merely aggregates people’s preferences through a process in which they are all given equal consideration. Thereby, the state should not be authorized to favour one specific faith, morale or lifestyle, nor should it be allowed to treat a certain idea of what constitutes the good life as less valuable than others. In mainly this aspect, contemporary liberal democracy has been viewed as incompatible with sustainability aspirations also suggesting that citizens should take on environmental responsibilities and obligations (Lundmark 1998). According to the liberal-individualistic view, state neutrality is needed for several different, though interconnected, reasons; the state must remain neutral in metaphysical matters to avoid violating individuals’ nature-given freedom and equality, as well as not to interfere with each individual’s prospect to find out what constitutes the good life.

Contract-theory, which connects enlightenment-era philosophers with modern-day political theorists, rests on two main premises; that all individuals are equals and that everyone has a natural right to be free. Furthermore, contract-theory considers the state as (hypothetically) originating from a social contract, willingly entered into by free individuals in a state of nature, as a means to provide the security and stability not present in the anarchic pre-society (cf. Locke 2002; Hobbes 1997; Nozick 1974). For contract-theory liberals, however, the construction of the state gives rise to at least one problematic implication. On the one hand, the state is considered a necessary means to protect individuals from the violation of each others liberties. This is a certain danger considering the pre-society’s lack of law-upholding authorities, which, according to Hobbes (1997, p.70), makes the life of man “poore, nasty, brutish and short”. On the other hand, individuals must nonetheless, when entering into the social contract agree to transfer some of these nature-given rights to the state, granting it authority on a number of areas and thereby unbolting the possibility for an expanding, totalitarian state. Therefore, as pointed out by Barry Holden (1993, p.26), the classical liberal view of the state is that of a “necessary evil”, and an important part of liberal theory is thus concerned with how to deal with the danger of a far too extensive state, infringing on the rights and liberties it was initially set up to protect. The liberal solution is that the state’s authority, on this account, must be confined to a minimum of areas specified in the social contract, prominently the upholding of law and order as well as the political institutions needed for securing freedom and equality, thus establishing the classical liberal idea of limited, neutral government.
Important to note at this time is that a consensus on the definition of the terms freedom and equality, and thereby an agreement on the number of areas in which the state should be given mandate to function, is, however, not to be found within the multi-faceted liberal theory. The opinions on this matter differs from Robert Nozick’s right-wing libertarianism, which defines neutrality as non-intervention and thus considers the night-watchman state of classical liberal theory as the most extensive state that can be justified (Nozick 1974), to the welfare-liberalism of John Rawls, John Stuart Mill and Ronald Dworkin, predicting the need for a state-controlled distributive justice-system as necessary for the upholding of rights and liberties for all. According to Jagers (2002), a sharp dividing line can be drawn between (1) classic, or protective, liberal democracy and (2) social, or developmental, liberal democracy (Jagers 2002, see also Held 1997). The difference between these two liberal democratic ideals concerns predominantly the definition of liberty, which in turn influences both the scope of equality and the views on government and state action. Classic liberal democracy defines liberty in a pure negative way, as the individual’s freedom from constraints, and equality as limited to an equal amount of negative liberty for all. All other inequalities, such as economic differences, are thereby allowed to exist without intervention according to the ideal prescribing a passive, non-intervening state. In relation to this, the sole duty of the classic liberal state is to ensure all its citizens equal liberties, i.e. to prevent any violation of these liberties, and thus to itself be as limited as possible in order to avoid unjustified restrictions on liberty. Social liberal democracy, on the other hand, relates liberty and equality to the concept of autonomy, i.e. all individuals’ (equal) opportunity to formulate, choose and realise life plans. The view on the duties of the state is therefore somewhat different from classic liberal democracy. Instead of the passive night-watchman state, the ideal state in social liberal democracy takes an active responsibility in ensuring the equal opportunities for its citizens, indicating the need for both economic redistribution and other state-controlled measures.

However, when expanding the scope of liberal theory to include its relation to environmental policies and policy legitimacy, further questions regarding the proper scope of state action still need to be addressed. According to classic liberal democracy, what actions can be legitimately prohibited by the state in order to ensure equal liberties for all? Does protection of the environment fall within the boundaries of what the state may take an active responsibility for with reference to negative liberty? In social liberal democracy, does the state, in order to ensure all equal autonomy, need to take further measures except pure economic redistribution? Are policies promoting the protection of nature needed to promote all individuals’ opportunity to choose and realise life-plans? These above questions all relate specifically to the way in which nature is valued and, even more importantly, as to how environmental risk and resilience are perceived. Keeping in mind that the main focus for the research project is the degree of value-correspondence between normative foundations of environmental policy and households’ values, these questions implies the need for a further exploration of individuals’ perception of environmental risk and resilience. As mentioned in the introduction above, this will be the main focus for the study of the second value-system; the relationship between human beings and nature.

Turning once more to liberal theory, it is evident that despite the apparent disagreement on what the concept of liberty actually implies, the need for state neutrality on metaphysical

* The question, of which acts are to be defined as harmful and thus allowed to be prohibited by the state with reference to liberty and autonomy, is an ongoing debate within the fields of political theory and jurisprudence. Considering, for example, the scope Mill’s harm principle (see below), H. L. A. Hart (1977), holds that two further questions need to be addressed before an act is banned by the state: if the activity is harmful in itself, and if the activity would endanger society as a whole if no law was made against it.
issues (e.g. faith, values, morale, and lifestyle) is nevertheless considered imperative from the viewpoint of both liberal democratic ideals. What constitutes the good life is considered exclusively a matter for the individual herself to decide, without any interference either by the state or by other individuals. Classic as well as social liberal democracy thus embraces the deontological, Kantian approach to liberalism which, as opposed to liberal utilitarianism, holds that claims made on behalf of the community or policies directed towards some kind of general welfare always must stand back for individual preferences (Sagoff 1988). As expressed by John Rawls (1999, pp.186-187):

[The] government has neither the right nor the duty to do what it or a majority (or whatever) wants to do in questions of morals and religion. Its duty is limited to underwriting the conditions of equal moral and religious liberty.

The above quotation coincides with the liberal support for, primarily, civil liberties*, such as the individual liberties of thought and conscience as well as freedom of speech, assembly and association, the enjoyment of which does not, in general, harm others or prevent them from enjoying similar liberties themselves. This prerequisite for enjoying one’s liberties can also be compared with Robert Nozick’s idea of negative rights, which indicates that the liberties of one individual are thought of as restricted (only) by the liberties of others* (Nozick 1974). Furthermore, the social liberal support for state neutrality on, first and foremost, metaphysical issues suggest the notion of liberty as, following Keith Graham (1986), divided into two spheres. Liberties belonging to the first sphere may be legitimately limited by the state, whereas the liberties in the second sphere, i.e. civil liberties, not should be the object of majority control. As pointed out by Terence Ball and Richard Dagger (1999), the classical liberals were most concerned with liberating individuals from government constraints and thereby limiting the public sphere. Modern liberal theory, however, also includes emphasis on the rights of individuals to rule themselves through government, in a democratic structure. This, however, indicates a system where only the preferences of a majority are met, which at first sight could be seen as posing a threat to the liberal principle not to sacrifice the good of one individual for the benefit of a majority. Nevertheless, this system is made acceptable on the account of two liberal democratic mechanisms. First, that the minority of today, through fair elections and with the support of equal political liberties, may well be the majority of tomorrow, and second that the state’s primary duties only concerns the neutral safe-guarding of its citizens’ interests, rights and liberties, i.e. legitimate majority rule. The danger of John Stuart Mill’s infamous tyranny of the majority (c.f. Mill 1991) is thus only to be expected in cases where the state, or majority, expands its sphere of influence to also encompass metaphysical issues, most notably by adopting a non-political, overarching goal with its existence (cf. Rawls 1993), thereby infringing on the rights and liberties in Graham’s second sphere, those not open for legitimate governmental limitation. In the words of John Rawls (1999, p.396): “The convictions and passions of the majority may make liberty impossible to maintain”.

It is however, from a liberal point of view, not entirely satisfying only to treat individuals and their preferences respectfully. In order not to infringe on anyone’s nature-given rights or liberties the state must, following Ronald Dworkin (1977), treat individual preferences with

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* Civil liberties are comparable with what Rawls (1999 & 1993) describes as basic liberties or the liberties of the moderns (as opposed to the ancient liberties which mainly consists of the equal political liberties). Compare also with the above discussed classic and social liberal democracy, where the former traditionally focuses on equal political liberties, and a separation from government.

* To exemplify the idea of negative rights, Nozick (1974, p.171) writes: “My property rights to my knife allow me to leave it where I will, but not in your chest".
equal respect, that is treat all individual the same in respect to those areas where they are the same, typically referred to as prospect-regarding equality or equality of opportunity (cf. Holden 1993). As noted above, democracy in general and contract-theory in particular, rests on the premise that all individuals are equal. This is evident in historical texts such as the American Declaration of Independence, in John Locke’s characterisation of man and with the works of John Stuart Mill. Also contemporary political theorists have adopted this notion of all individuals’ inherent equality. John Rawls (1999, pp.123-130), for example, describes individuals as equal in the sense that they are all free, rational and able to form independent life plans. This indicates that individuals, in being equal and thus equally able to work out for themselves a notion of the good life, are not inclined to let a majority determine the life plans for all. Nor is it compatible with the inherent equality of individuals for the state to sacrifice one person’s preferences in order to reach some kind of higher, general good. All individuals and their preferences must, by the state or by the majority, be treated with the same amount of respect:

Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests (Rawls 1999, pp.3-4).

John Stuart Mill also considers it important for a democracy to establish clear rules for the protection of the individual’s right to self-determination. “Every one is degraded”, Mill writes, “whether aware of it or not, when other people, without consulting him, take upon themselves unlimited power to regulate his destiny” (Mill 1991, p.173). In, what has been known as, Mill’s harm principle, he therefore concludes that all preferences in a society must be given an equal consideration: “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign” (Mill 2001, p.19). The worry is that the state and/or majority might otherwise be tempted to give precedence to certain lifestyles or beliefs, hence Mill’s fear of the tyranny of the majority. This amounts to the contemporary liberal idea that political processes, not special interests should guide the state’s decisions, taking the idea of the neutral state one step further (cf. Rawls 1993, Dahl 1989).

The liberal principle of state neutrality thus stems from the overarching aim to grant all individuals an equal amount of rights and liberties. However, it is not liberty per se that is the main focus for liberal theory, but the importance of individual freedom in enabling individuals to choose to live the good life, whatever this might turn out to be. In liberal theory, two prerequisites are needed for a life to be perceived as good (Kymlicka 1990). First, it should come from within i.e. be a result of goals and preferences formed independently by rational individuals, a thought which leads Rawls (1999, p.358) to the conclusion that “[t]he rational plan for a person determines his good”. Second, it should be possible for each individual to reevaluate and question earlier choices. The good life is thereby a most individual value, understood by John Stuart Mill as the possibility for fulfilling one’s preferences. This, in turn, demands freedom of choice and equal treatment in order to be achievable for, as pointed out by several democratic theorists, the individual is presumed to be autonomous in the sense that she is the best judge of her own interests. As a result, she is also the only one to know exactly where the “shoe pinches”, i.e. what she really prefer (Dahl 1989; Graham 1986). Therefore, state neutrality must be maintained in order to protect individuals’ possibility to independently choose and pursue individual life projects without interference from either the government or other individuals. In *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (2002,
first published 1689), John Locke prescribes what we today might call a secular state, i.e. a tolerant state which does not build on religion and thus lets its citizens arrange their lives and beliefs according to their own choosing. As proposed by Locke, the freedoms of religion and conscience, apart from being firmly protected by the initial social contract, should not be of any concern for the state. The reason for this being that true faith demands conviction and must therefore come from within each individual. As a result, any attempt to create faith by force is merely self-defeating. The parallel to contemporary liberal concepts of the good life as a subjective value is thus evident. Ronald Dworkin, for example, argues in the Lockean fashion, that the good life is not something that can be created or imposed on individuals from above, but rather that the process of living according to one’s own preferences is what constitutes the good life. Consequently, a specific attitude or lifestyle only forms a part of the good life on the account that it is a result of the individual’s free, independent choice. Good lives are, according to Dworkin, not created but lived (Dworkin 1999). This line of reasoning, then, amounts to the conclusion that the state, when aiming at enabling its citizens’ possibility of living the good life, not itself should stand for a specific metaphysical conception but rather grant all individuals the liberty to freely choose and pursue independent goals in life. In conclusion, state neutrality, aiming at upholding all individuals’ liberty, equality and the means for pursuing the good life is so the centre for liberal-individualistic ideologies, despite apparent internal differences en route.

5. Collectivism and the common good

Not all embraces a democratic ideal founded on the liberal-individualistic principle of autonomy and individual rights, thereby prescribing a passive or at least (metaphysically) neutral state. Amongst green movements, the idea of replacing individualism, which using the words of Garrett Hardin (1968) “brings ruin to all”, with a communitarian ideal more able to come to terms with the environmental degradation the liberal pursuit of self-interests brings, is widely spread. Also, empirical evidence supporting this democratic ideal have been found when examining normative statements in Swedish (and, presumably, other countries’ as well) environmental policy documents, suggesting that citizens act in accordance with the common goal of environmental sustainability (Lundmark 2003). For these reasons communitarian collectivism is in this paper placed opposite liberal individualism, at the other end of the state-individual dimension. The two ideological value-systems of individualism and collectivism stand in stark contrast to each other, when considering their respective outlook on the relationship between the individual, the society and the state. Thus, they are believed to have somewhat different impacts on the way in which political action and collective behaviour is valued, both in general and with respect to specific environmental policies.

As a response to, first and foremost, the rawlsian liberalism of the 1970’s, several political theorists and philosophers turned to the writings of Aristotle, where ideas on the existence of a shared understanding of the good is elaborated, and Hegel, who describes individuals as historically conditioned beings, finding with them a basis for critique of the liberal individualism (Gutmann 1985). In contrast to the liberal emphasizing of state neutrality in questions regarding metaphysical issues and the conception of the good life these, as frequently referred to, communitarians such as Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer prescribes a state with extensive possibilities, sometimes even obligations, to interfere in individuals’ lives when deemed necessary. They thereby reject the liberal idea of a neutral state confined to the upholding of individuals’ right to self-determination. According to the communitarian tradition, the state should be synonymous
with a collective moral understanding, incorporating certain sets of values founded in, for example, ideas on ethnicity, nationalism or a common history. Furthermore, the state’s duty is to promote the establishment as well as upholding of specific, culturally bound values in society and with its citizens, for the simple reason that the majority, or collective, regards them as being superior or more morally correct. Some communitarians even argue that the liberal emphasis on the individual’s freedom of choice is not an expression of respect, but of indifference (Kymlicka 1990).

The communitarian critique of the neutral state is diverse and can be divided into a range of different spheres (Avineri & De-Shalit 1992; see also Bell 2001; Kymlicka 1990; Uddhammar 1993). In the methodological sphere, claims are raised that the liberal image of individualism and universalism (see below) is false for the reason that liberals have failed to consider the importance of the social context as a determinative factor for the individual’s life and values. The normative sphere, in turn, contains the argument that individualism and state neutrality is undesired since it gives rise to morally unsatisfactory consequences. According to communitarians, the principle of state neutrality neglects the fact that some ideas or traditions are of such importance that they should be upheld, if not by the care of citizens themselves so through state action, as well as the fact that some practices also should be clearly dismissed. Furthermore, neutrality in form of the absence of a set, common goal for society is feared to create a legitimacy deficit for the liberal state, thereby diminishing the possibilities for a fully working and efficient welfare state (Kymlicka 1990, pp.227-229).

There is, however, one factor that constructs the basis of all communitarian critique: the ontological statement about the social nature of the self. Communitarians, especially Charles Taylor, claim that liberals in general have adapted an overly individualistic and thus far too unrealistic view of the self, leading them into their false conclusions about the duties of the state. This liberal atomism pictures the individual and her values as independent from her surroundings and “affirms the self-sufficiency of man alone or, if you prefer, the individual” (Taylor 1992, p.32). Thereby it contradicts the Aristotelian (an indeed also Taylor’s) view of man as a social animal, dependent on the communal context and the society for her own definition and with moral values formed by the belonging to a community. The self, communitarians believe, is constituted by various social attachments, tied so closely to the individual that they are more or less impossible to neglect (this can be viewed as a response to the Rawlsian original position, where individuals are thought to abandon their social status and choosing the institutions of a just society from behind a veil of ignorance, cf. Rawls 1999). In line with this Michael J. Sandel argues that the self can not be separated from the values an individual holds and these values are in turn determined by social attachments and thus constituted by the community. He writes: “Can we view ourselves as independent selves, independent in the sense that our identity is never tied to our aims and attachments? I do not think we can” (Sandel 1984).

This ontological claim of the self as intimately connected to the social context, naturally influences the way in which communitarians view the importance of community. Whereas liberals in general view the society as a voluntary association of co-operation, designed for all participants’ mutual advantage (cf. Locke 2002; Rawls 1973; Nozick 1974), the communitarian ideas of the self amounts to a differing conclusion. Considering the community’s great importance for constructing the individual and her values, it is regarded as

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* Taylor uses the term *atomism* as a characterization of liberal social-contract theory, which views “society as in some sense constituted by individuals for the fulfilment of ends which were primarily individual” (Taylor 1992, p.29), thereby holding the individuals as the foundations of society, i.e. atoms.
being far more than a mere association with a solely instrumental value for the individuals. Instead communitarians prescribe an inherent value to society itself, regarding it as a need for each and every person. Thereby the membership in a community, with its common values and goals, is considered the most important good of all; only by being members in a community can we find meaning and substance to our beliefs (Avineri & De-Shalit 1992, pp.6-7). Also, the community is not necessarily, as liberals suggests, a voluntarily one and the social attachments not always chosen. Since communitarians believe that the context of society is what forms us as individuals, an understanding of oneself can thus, following MacIntyre, only be attained in the context of this specific community. For that reason, all individuals also have an interest in preserving and upholding certain activities, traditions and lifestyles, i.e. those already present in the society that defines us.

Rawls, in line with the liberal accentuation of state neutrality explained above, argues that the well-ordered society “has no final ends in the way that persons or associations do” and, consequently, that “[i]t is not entitled, as associations within society in general are, to offer different terms to its members (in this case those born into it) depending on the worth of their potential contribution to the society as a whole” (Rawls 1993, p.41). Communitarians, however, takes a completely different standpoint in this matter. Considering, again, the importance of context, there can be no such thing as a subjective good life that each individual independently and rationally can find for herself. The struggle to find an individual good life should, as a result, be abandoned for a politics of the common good, i.e. the set conception of a good life that is constituted by the existing norms and values in society (Kymlicka 1990, p.208). Instead of remaining neutral in metaphysical matters, and thus allowing for the risk of people making mistakes in their choice of lifestyle, the state should embrace and encourage the way of life that coincides with the majority opinion of a good life (the common good). “[T]he states primary duty”, Charles Larmore (1987, p.92) writes, “is not to uphold some kind of neutrality, but to embrace and support a specific conception of the good life”. In contrast to the rawlsian neutrality this, admittedly paternalistic, communitarian state should use the common good as the standard for weighting individual preferences. The importance of an individual preference could then be evaluated in relation to the way it coincides with the common good, and also treated accordingly. By taking this stance towards individuality versus the common good, communitarians opens the door for a conflict between the values of freedom and community. Debates concerning state-level legislation in the US, where a “moral majority” more often than not demands a ban on activities that are viewed as going against the traditions or values held within society, provides an apparent example of this conflict. In such cases, however, communitarians tend to support the latter for, according to Michael J. Sandel (1984), whereas liberalism is the politics of rights; communitarianism is the politics of the common good, wanting to extend the state’s duties beyond the upholding of neutrality.

A major part of the communitarian critique of liberal-individualism also concerns what has been known as the liberal universalism, which is the idea of only one, universally valid conception of the well-ordered society (cf. Rawls 1999), i.e. the neutral, liberal-democratic state as outlined above. The well-ordered society reflects, following Rawls (1999), a construction of the state on which all free and rational individuals would agree, given a fair situation of choice. According to communitarians, by basing their political ideal on predominately Western societies and values liberals fail to take into account the varying contexts in different cultures, places and ages, and their implications for the formation of individuals’ preferences and values (Bell 2001). Instead communitarians suggest that values and attitudes vary amongst different cultural, national or ethnical groups, generating the need for a multitude of political systems in order to take into account differing preferences and
values (Rothstein 1994). As shown above, the state has, according to communitarians, an obligation to preserve and promote a specific conception of the good life, founded in the traditions and culture of a majority of its citizens. This notion of moral relativism has received some support from, predominately, East Asian scholars referring to specific Asian cultural and religious customs as providing moral foundations for distinct political practices, different from the Western liberal democracy. For example, the first Prime Minister of independent Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, has stated that Asians in general have “little doubt that a society with communitarian values where the interest of society takes precedence over the interest of the individual suits them better that the individualism of America” (Bell 2001). In line with this, Lucian W. Pye (1985) describes the political culture in Asian countries as generally endorsing attitudes to political power and authority that is rather different than what is the case in, for example, Europe. Common denominators that can be found throughout Asian political culture are, according to Pye (1985), the respect for, and idealizing of, paternalistic authority in the search for dependency, personal security and group identity. This, again, presents a somewhat different precondition for the outlook on the state-individual relationship than the liberal-individualistic ideal described above.

Two different ideological outlooks, commonly used within the field of political science to characterize differences in the views on the proper relationship between the individual and political authority have now been briefly examined. The two outlooks together are, based on previous research conducted within the field, believed to present both support and challenges for values and principles suggested by environmental policies; therefore they present an important starting point for a legitimacy evaluation. The former, liberal-individualism, represents ideological principles that are believed to be challenged by the top-down structuring of individuals’ responsibilities towards nature, expressed within contemporary environmental policies and environmentalist ideas. This challenge mainly concerns the individualist idea of the neutral state, which in many ways seems to be at odds with policies promoting the daily performance of household-related activities in order to reach the common goal of environmental sustainability. The latter ideological view, here referred to as collectivism, approaches the issue somewhat different. It criticizes the idea of a neutral state and prescribes instead a state with an obligation to steer its citizens in the right direction towards the good life. Much stress is in this aspect placed on the upholding of already existing traditions and practices of the collective, and the weighting individuals’ preferences towards a common good in order to evaluate their possible contribution towards the best interest of a majority. Considering the issue of environmentalism, collectivism implies a state (or majority) obligation to direct citizens towards an environmentally benevolent lifestyle that promotes both ecological improvements and resource conservation.

6. Combining two disciplines – the value dimensions

The issue this paper now aims to address is whether it is possible to find connections between the ideological views presented above and the value-studies conducted by psychologists. Such a connection will, if found, enhance the understanding of values as an explanatory factor for individuals’ differing attitudes towards political action, and thus provide the study of policy legitimacy with important theoretical foundations. As already has been established, ideologies are, turning to the field of psychology, a mere expression of an individual’s value priorities, therefore including both explicit and implicit references to personal value systems (Rohan 2001). Empirical studies have also shown strong indications for a two-way connection between individuals’ value priorities and their political orientation. Most notably however,
value priorities can be said to guide individuals’ adoption of a specific political orientation (Devos et al. 2002). This implies that the motivational values underpinning both ideologies and attitudes are to be found in research conducted within the field of psychology. A range of research projects (most notably Schwartz 1992 and 1996. See also Rokeach 1973, Schwartz & Bilsky 1987 and 1990) has, over the years, set out to find a universal value-system structure, believed to encompass the value-types that constitute all individuals’ personal value-systems. In 1992, a study conducted by Shalom H. Schwartz demonstrated that values indeed can be thought of as forming a universal set of 10 types, differing among individuals only in the priority that each value-type is given. In addition to the finding of a universal set of values, Schwartz (1992, p.4) found that: “[a]ctions taken in the pursuit of each value type have psychological, practical and social consequences that may be compatible or may conflict with the pursuit of other value types”. According to this, the 10 value-types can also be arranged into a specific, two-dimensional value-systems structure arranging these consistent conflicts and compatibilities among values as shown by figure 6.1 below.

![Figure 6.1. A theoretical model of the bipolar value dimensions (Schwartz 1992, p.45).](image)

The two main value dimensions, and the universal values they comprises, found in this universal structure is intimately connected to the two types of ideological outlooks identified as relevant for the study of environmental policy legitimacy. The horizontal dimension, labelled openness to change – conservation, bears a striking similarity to its political-ideological counterpart discussed above (i.e. individualism – collectivism) since it indicates either a preference for freedom and independence (openness to change) or for conformity, tradition and security (conservation).

The openness to change end of the horizontal dimension puts the focus on opportunity and consists of values that to a high extent motivate “people to follow their own intellectual and emotional interests” (Schwartz 1992, p.43; see also Rohan 2000). It can further be divided into two value-types, both including values also found in the theoretical framework of liberal individualism discussed above. The value-type labelled self-direction suggests a preference for autonomy, independence and self-determination, and thus has “independent thought and action-choosing” as its defining goal. To measure the preference for this value-type the weight given by individuals to the values “freedom”, “independence”, “self-sufficiency”, “creativity”, and “choosing own goals” are considered (Schwartz 1992 & 1996; Rohan 2000). Individuals giving precedence to this value-type can thereby be anticipated to prove more positive towards letting a individualistic ideology guide their decision-making process. Placed adjacent to self-direction in Schwartz’s bipolar structure is the value-type of stimulation. In all
probability related to the same needs underlying self-direction values, stimulation has the need for “a challenge in life” as motivational goal. Associated with this value-type are the single values “an exciting life with stimulating experiences”, “a varied life”, and “daring”, the weight of which are measured for calculating an individual’s strong or weak tendencies towards the value of stimulation (Schwartz 1992; Rohan 2000). Empirical evidence also suggests that openness to change is to be found mainly amongst people living in countries with a strong liberal-democratic cultural influence. These are mostly contractual societies, i.e. societies characterized by “narrow primary groups and by secondary social relations in which people develop specific obligations and expectations largely through negotiation in the process of achieving and modifying statuses” (Schwartz 1992, p.57). Further, it has also been suggested that people who focuses on opportunity are also less unfavourably disposed in their response towards novelty as implied by, for example, the priority of values such as daring, creativity and a varied life (Rohan 2000).

The value-types at the other end of the horizontal dimension (see fig. 6.1) are grouped together and given the collective label of conservation. Placed opposite to openness to change, the values underpinning the two ends of this horizontal dimension are believed to be incompatible with each other. Consequently, conservation does, as opposed to the individuality and flexibility of openness to change, instead motivate people to “preserve the status quo and the certainty it provides in the relationship with close others, institutions and traditions” (Schwartz 1992, p.43). Conservation is constructed by three motivational value-types that all focuses on the value of stability and preservation of the community, i.e. some kind of common good as opposed to the individual good life advocated within the openness to change end of the horizontal dimension. First; Tradition, which by accentuating the importance of both preserving and respecting traditional religion, culture and beliefs, as well as the significance of values such as “modesty”, “humility”, “acceptance” and “submission” (c.f. Schwartz 1992; Rohan 2000), find itself well in line with the social context-connection expressed in communitarian ideology. Second; the motivational value-type of Conformity follows the same path by also adding the need for restrictions on such actions that might upset or violate social expectations or norms. The values expressed within conformity is, for example, “obedience”, “self-discipline”, “respect” and “self-restraint”, thus adding to the image of the conservation label as intimately connected to an ideology that opposes individualism as a founding principle. Third; Security denotes not only the importance of protecting nation, family and self, but also the “stability of society” and a need for “social order” as well as a “sense of belonging” (Schwartz 1992), which, taken together, implies that also this motivational value-type provides support for a communal society and a politics of the common good, rather than individualism and state neutrality.

Research results within the field of psychology also demonstrates some, though not in any way overwhelming, empirical indications that the existence of a separate value-systems structure for East Asia can be anticipated (cf. Schwartz 1992). The Schwartz value-study (1992), involving samples from 20 countries, found that the Chinese samples display a somewhat different formation than the others. Whereas the actual values where the same, these were throughout the sample placed so as to form three separate value-types (societal harmony, virtuous interpersonal behaviour, personal and interpersonal harmony) placing great weight on values that can be said to reflect more of communitarianism or collectivist tendencies (e.g. social order, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders, accepting my portion in life) (Schwartz 1992, p.48). Also in a wider perspective, differences in value priorities were found corresponding to the ideological individualism-collectivism dimension. Especially in the case of the value-types conformity and stimulation, research showed a clear

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connection between a more liberal-individualistic, contractual state (e.g. New Zealand) and the value of stimulation, as well as between a more communal state (e.g. Taiwan) and the value of conformity. These empirical findings further connect the principles of the communitarian ideology discussed above, with value-systems making up the conformity end of the openness to change – conformity dimension.

All taken together, a strong correspondence can be found between the two motivational value-types, labelled openness to change and conservation, on the horizontal dimension of Schwartz bipolar model presented above and the conflicting political-ideological outlooks on the relationship between the individual, the society and the state, i.e. individualism and collectivism. The former of which places individual freedom of choice as well as state neutrality in questions regarding the “good life” at the centre of attention and the latter focusing on a perspective on democracy which challenges the liberal idea of self-determination and suggests that the state is obliged to prevent people from making poor choices in life. Thereby, it is possible to combine research results on this issue emanating from the two disciplines of political science and psychology. The correspondence, in turn, also indicates that the psychological instruments used for pin-pointing these two value-types through mass-surveys also can be used in finding evidence of preferences for either individualistic or collectivistic ideology with individuals, thus being able to predict their values and attitudes towards both political action in general, and towards environmental policy in particular. When developing the mass-survey to be used within this research project, the Schwartz value-dimensions, along with the theory-based value surveys used by psychologists to map people’s priorities between the motivational values, will therefore contribute with a selection of items on individuals’ response towards policy obligations and state interference in their daily lives.

7. Widening the perspective – forthcoming research

Now, whereas the conflict dimension outlined above is an important factor for understanding and predicting attitudinal and behavioural decisions as well as people’s response towards political acts and aspirations, it does not focus specifically on the issue of environmental behaviour. For example, within versions of green liberal theory, the question of whether the environment should be of state responsibility is itself, as noted above, a matter of debate. Thus, for a more complete understanding of the response toward sustainability aspirations and environmental policy instruments in specific, there is a need to combine this ideological outlook on the state-individual relationship with the more environmentally labelled one, focusing on the identification and understanding of values relating to the human beings-nature relationship. Also in this respect, the field of psychology is anticipated to complement political science theory with important insights as to how basic values determine individuals’ environmental attitudes. By doing this, a comprehensive picture of the value system’s that determines what people choose to do (or not to do) as a response to political sustainability aspirations will emerge, taking the study of policy legitimacy in the environmental field yet another step further.

Additionally, the highly relevant issue of individuals’ trust, both in institutions, societal actors, and in other people, with regard to environmentally benevolent behaviour, needs also be explored in further research. The Schwartz value dimensions is also in this aspect anticipated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the values and value-priorities that shapes the way in which people perceive the world around them. In doing this, and thus
widening the perspective to focus on more issues that are perceived to strongly influence policy legitimacy, Schwartz vertical dimension, labelled self-transcendence – self-enhancement is also of importance for the study on policy legitimacy and will therefore be incorporated in this study. This dimension indicates in what way an individual prioritises between the altruistic values of the citizen (e.g. equality and responsibility) and the more egoistic values of the consumer (e.g. social power, wealth and success) (cf. Sagoff 1988). This dimension also includes values in relation to the environment, what Schwartz labels universalism, and can thus serve as a connecting bridge between the two value-systems studied, i.e. the state-individual and the human beings-nature relationships respectively, and their influence on what people choose to do (or not to do) as a response to political sustainability aspirations.

References


