

Abstract

Nilsson, A (2007). *Psychological perspectives on environmental policy measures: The role of values, norms, and attitudes*. Department of Psychology, Göteborg University, Sweden.

The major aim of this thesis is to investigate how psychological, and especially social psychological, concepts and theories may enhance the understanding of peoples reactions to issues relevant for environmental policy measures.

More specifically, the aim is to investigate antecedents of attitudes towards policy measures as well as antecedents to people's valuation of environmental resources. A comparison of the roles of values and norms for decision makers in public and private organizations was made in Study I, and decision makers in private organizations addressed in their private and professional role in Study II. The results showed that environmental values and norms were important determinants of willingness to accept climate change policy measures for decision makers in the public sector, but not in the private sector. Study II investigated acceptance of climate change policy measures by decision makers in the private sector addressed as private citizens in contrast to decision makers in their professional role. It was hypothesised and found that acceptance was related to environmental values and norms among decision makers addressed in the role as private citizens but not among decision makers addressed in their professional role. Complementing studies I and II, the aim of study III was to examine behavioural effects of values in reactions to policy measures. It was hypothesised that an economic policy measure would activate self-enhancement values, and a regulation measure self-transcendent values, causing more self-interested behaviour for the economic compared to the regulation condition. The results did not support the hypotheses. Although the economic condition caused more self-interested behaviour than the regulation condition, support was not obtained that this was caused by value priorities or activation of values. Study IV investigated people's valuation of environmental resources and whether differences in emotions and moral perceptions between willingness to accept (WTA) and willingness to pay (WTP) framings can account for differences in WTA-WTP that have been observed in previous studies. It was hypothesised and found that emotions and moral perceptions explained the differences between WTP and WTA. Donating to the public good caused stronger negative emotions in the WTA condition compared to the WTP condition, and not donating was perceived as less moral in the WTA condition than in the WTP condition. Together, the findings contribute to the understanding of how people relate to environmental policy measures. A general finding is that the context is important for how values influence attitudes and how environmental resources are valued.

Keywords: Values, norms, attitudes, climate change, environmental policy, environmental valuation

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ISSN: 1101-718X ISRN: GU/PSYK/AVH-191-S ISBN: 978-91-6287217-5