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Citizen and Consumer: The Dual Role of Individuals in Environmental Policy

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Abstract

This article investigates the dual role - exemplified by the ideal-types of the *consumer* and the *citizen* - individuals' face in contemporary environmental policy. As crowding-out theory highlights the implications of using 'wrong' incentives or controlling means, examining the match between policy and those value-systems guiding individuals' decision-making process in practice should indeed be a relevant undertaking. Sweden provides the empirical example for the article, in which a text analysis of policy documents is compared with the results of a mail-out survey to 4000 individuals in four different counties. The article finds that external motivations are perceived as being highly relevant for the promotion of ecological sustainability in Sweden and, thus, that the notion of the consumer-role as guiding individuals' behaviour in the environmental field is rather strong. However, at the same time people tend to ascribe the motivational values included in the Self-transcendence cluster (altruism) a far greater importance as guiding principles in life than the opposing values of Self-enhancement (egoism), indicating that the citizen-role indeed is important to account for in policy-making. Hence, clearly there is a mismatch between Sweden's contemporary policy documents and the general value orientation held by Swedish people in general.

Keywords: moral behaviour, households, policy implications, pro-environmental behaviour, value orientation.

1. Introduction

Environmental problems in general are no longer believed to be solely the result of industrial activity in a few polluting facilities; according to contemporary environmental policy-documents, they also stem from the millions of choices people make everyday in their roles as consumers and household members. By this account, the past decades have marked a turn in environmental policy making on the global arena. From conceiving the challenges of environmental degradation as a task to be solved exclusively by the iron-triangles consisting of 'governmental agencies, bureaucracy and well-organized target-group interests' (Lundqvist 2001), the main focus is today on behavioural patterns at the level of individuals, which in many cases are pointed out as the single largest obstacle on the route towards an environmental sustainability (cf. SOU 1997:105). This emphasis of transformed behavioural patterns commonly suggests altering the daily practices of both single individuals and within households, usually through the introduction of new environmental obligations expressed as household-related activities; implementing a sustainable household waste management, influencing the choice of more environmentally benevolent everyday transports within the household and encouraging the use of consumer power to steer production in a more environmentally sound direction. The bottom line is, accordingly, that a policy which includes strategies for some form of behavioural change on the individual level is needed in order to protect the environment. Thus, it stands clear that everyday human behaviour matters very much for the environment and therefore also for policymakers who design economic or legal policy instruments aimed at improving environmental quality and/or conserving natural resources. However, the economic, management and environmental issues involved are complex; there are numerous factors that need to be considered if a policy promoting households involvement in environmental benevolent activities is to be effective.

First of all, it must be acknowledged that individuals' decision-making process can be thought of as being influenced by a number of separate, but nevertheless interconnected, factors. Individuals' ethical compass guides them in making decisions about most issues, including environmental concerns and behaviour. At the same time however, institutions prevailing in society affect this compass and are amenable to change (North 1993). Economic activities, like all social phenomena, are therefore necessarily embedded in culture, which includes all kinds of social, political and moral value-systems and institutions. These profoundly shape and guide human behaviour by imposing obligations, enabling and disabling particular choices, and creating social or communal identities, all of which may impact on economic behaviour. For instance, households' perceptions of the time spent on and the value of waste sorting will determine the success of policies aimed at encouraging such activities. Notably, if households take a strong positive moral stance to waste sorting, the use of economic incentives may be a relatively ineffective policy instrument as it may 'undermine an individual's sense of civic duty' (Frey and Oberholzer-Gee 1997). Similarly, policies that rely solely on voluntary efforts may prove to be unsuccessful in households for whom waste management is perceived as a very time-consuming activity (Bruvoll *et al.* 2000). Therefore, to be familiar with the motives given by individuals for their environmentally significant behaviour is imperative when constructing effective environmental policies which are relying on the cooperation and engagement of household members. For instance, it has been shown that some means to promote action may be inefficient or even counterproductive (e.g. Berglund 2003). Without acknowledging also the role for intrinsic motivations and behavioural patterns founded in the personal moral

obligations of the *citizen*, there is an evident risk that new environmental policies will contribute only to a short-term reformation of specific activities.

We thus need an increased knowledge of how households perceive and why they choose to (or not to) comply with environmental policies and intentions. Yet, previous research on households' contributions to environmental sustainability in the social science field has largely focused on either the environmental preferences (as expressed in attitude or value-orientation surveys) or actual activities and constraints, but little effort has been put on providing an integrated analysis. Thus, in the environmental field households and household behaviour are still somewhat of a 'black box', i.e., we know relatively little about how household members organize their pro-environmental activities and how moral considerations translate into actual behaviour.

Our point of departure is that the individual's environmental stance is liable to be interrelated with specific ethical positions, which may be amenable to change by economic incentives and/or legislation. We therefore need a progress towards a deeper understanding of the many important aspects of economic life and how these correlate with the motives presented by environmental policy and the policy instruments in use. Therefore, this article sets out to describe and investigate the dual role individuals' face in contemporary environmental policy. Our anticipation is that there appears to be a mismatch between environmental policy documents, where the importance of economic rationality and external motivation for individuals' decision-making process are put forward, and the intrinsic motivation and values held by people in general. Further, based on previous research, we can anticipate that households more often express moral motives for many environmental activities, which is crucial to take into account when designing effective policies in the environmental field. Sweden provides our empirical example, being a country with the expressed official aspiration to 'pioneer the shift to a sustainable society' (Skr. 2001/02:172).

The article proceeds as follows. First, we briefly present previous research on households' pro-environmental behaviour, including the problem with a crowding-out effect of inadequately designed policies. Second, we define the dual role of individuals, exemplified by the two ideal-types of the *consumer* and the *citizen*. Third, through the use of empirical examples, the nature of peoples' moral behaviour is explored, both as it is expressed in contemporary environmental policy, and by the individuals themselves. Finally, some concluding remarks are presented.

2. Research on Households' Pro-Environmental Behaviour (PEB)

Environmentally significant behaviour describes behaviour with positive or negative consequences for the environment (Gardner and Stern 1996; Oskamp 2000; Stern 2000). Behaviours with a perceived positive environmental impact, e.g. recycling of waste, using public transportation or bicycle instead of the car or purchasing green products, are termed as pro-environmental behaviours (PEB). Models in economics generally assume that individuals' actions are guided mainly by external rewards. While this often is a good assumption, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that for civic oriented tasks, such as PEB, intrinsic motivation may play a comparable role. Although not convincing to all (e.g. Arrow 1972), this premise of rethinking the interaction between different types of motivation has recently gained acceptance within the field of economic psychology (see e.g. Frey 1997, and Brekke *et al.* 2003).

However, within the field of social psychology a great deal of research has been concerned with environmentally oriented determinants of everyday pro-environmental behaviour (for a general overview, see Gardner and Stern 1996). From this research we know that attitudinal factors such as values, environmental attitudes and awareness, and personal norms influence PEB. People with a cooperative value-orientation have also been shown to participate in recycling activities at a larger extent (McCarey and Shrum 1994).

As for recycling issues, earlier research efforts have focused largely on the demand for waste-management at the household level and how economic incentives can be employed to affect the production of waste and recycling behaviour (e.g. Fullerton and Kinnaman 2002). Another line of economic research, e.g. Bruvold (1998), employs cost-benefit analysis to assess the social benefits and costs of recycling programs (in comparison to incineration and landfill etc.). An important part of this research has been the valuation of households' time spent on sorting and cleaning activities. Finally, in many willingness-to-pay studies households often express strong support for, say, green electricity but these same attitudes are seldom reflected in actual behaviourⁱ.

The main strengths of the above research endeavours are their focuses on (a) real-life resource scarcities (i.e. time and budget constraints); (b) willingness-to-pay estimates; and (c) policy relevant questions (e.g. economic versus administrative policy incentives). However, what is in common for the many economic studies on PEB is that they build on restrictive assumptions about human behaviour (e.g. rational and utility maximizing individuals),ⁱⁱ and thus largely neglect issues of moral motivation. This is in spite of the fact that other strands of research conclude that motives do matter and that people undertake, for example, recycling activities and buy environmental products largely for reasons founded in personal moral (Ackerman 1997; Hornik *et al.* 1995). There exists therefore a need to complement the economic studies with ethical and psychological considerations. The standard economic approach to pro-environmental incentives assumes that households' underlying motives for undertaking e.g. recycling activities are unaffected by the policy implemented. Recent research in the field of economic psychology suggests, though, that this is not necessarily the case (see e.g. Frey, 1997; Brekke *et al.* 2003; and Thøgersen 2003). Thøgersen (1996) for instance, argues that moral should be important to consider in relation to a pro-environmental behaviour such as recycling, and Bratt (1999) shows that personal norms influence specific types of behaviour such as recycling positively. In a recent study of recycling behaviour in a Swedish municipality, Berglund (2003; forthcoming) shows that households who take a strong positive moral stance to waste sorting are more likely to (a) express a relatively low opportunity costs of the time devoted to these activities; and (b) respond negatively – in the sense of feeling discouraged to undertake more recycling activities – to the introduction of economic incentives in the waste management field.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, Bruvold *et al.* (2000) argue that moral responsibility is a motive to why people choose to undertake time-consuming recycling activities.

Recent research has also approached the problem of negative responses to the introduction of economic incentives by analyzing peoples' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to environmental issues (e.g. Frey 1999). In recent years many experiments^{iv} have been conducted demonstrating the importance of rethinking the interaction between different types of motivation. Among other things, it has been observed that monetary incentives can 'crowd out' other sorts of motivation, often called 'intrinsic' motivation. The conflict between consumer and citizen roles is actualized by this debate since purely economic incentives such

as prices, sometimes fail to reach the goals set. One of the most important and empirically best-founded reasons for this is set up within crowding theory and points out this destruction of intrinsic motivation. When an external intervention in the form of a reward reduces individuals' intrinsic incentives to act it is referred to as 'the hidden costs of reward' (see, e.g. Deci & Ryan 1985).

Frey (1999) generalizes this 'hidden costs of reward' in two respects: '(1) *All* outside interventions can affect intrinsic motivation; in addition to *rewards* the same effect can come about by external *regulation* (commands); and (2) External interventions *crowd out* intrinsic motivation if they are perceived to be *controlling* and *crowd in* intrinsic motivation if they are perceived to be *acknowledging*' (Frey 1999:399). These generalizations help us think productively about moral dimensions of policy problems and help us incorporate a dynamic dimension into our analysis, an aspect that often is missing in economic analyses.

One illustrative example of this crowding theory is a case study of a 'token economy' where old people living in asylums were exposed to different economic incentives such as making their beds in exchange for vouchers. After some time these people were no longer prepared to do anything if they were not paid for it, i.e. they were 'demoralized' by the incentive structure presented to them (Frey 1999). Furthermore, once crowded out, the intrinsic motivation rarely returns when the monetary incentive is removed. This is true, for example, for a field study conducted in a group of day-care centres in Israel (Gneezy and Rustichini 2000) where parents arrived late to collect their children. After introducing a monetary fine for late-coming parents, more parents began coming late. When the fine later was removed, this latter behavioural practice was, however, retained.

To exemplify, governments have recently shown interest in the practice of implementing schemes charging households by the pound they discard. Such unit pricing or 'price-based' system is a way of authorities for getting the prices right in order to reach the optimal level of recycling. This scheme can be successful at first, but over time the economic incentives might crowd-out other, intrinsic motivations to the extent that people might not care of further environmental problems unless they will receive financial benefits of doing so. This risk of a costly incentive-spiral leads Widegren (1998:78) to the conclusion that the foundations of PEB not should be thought of, or treated, as stemming solely from rational responses to regulation or economic incentives: 'unless one resorts to very costly schemes of (positive or negative) incentives, [...] some kind of moral and altruistic motivation is essential for PEB'. Thus, to promote sorting at source, knowledge about peoples' intrinsic motivation is very important. The interesting policy implication is thus that if people undertake environmental activities such as recycling for moral reasons, pricing policies (e.g. a weight-based-pricing system) may crowd out ethical motivation and even lead to less activity undertaken.

This shows the importance of applying a multi-disciplinary approach to households' sustainability activities, i.e. one that draws on the lessons found in the economics, political science and psychological literature. It is, in the policy-making process, important to also take into account the explanatory factor of intrinsic motives in order to reach effectively working policies.

3. Consumer and citizen – are they in conflict?

Usually two opposing camps dominate the view on individuals' economic behaviour regarding environmental issues. First there are the *consumers* who respond to economic

incentives and make rational choices determined by their egoistic preferences and the (predominately economic) constraints they face. The traditional economists generally represent these. On the other hand we have the *citizens* whose decisions are based on a separate set of values, more in line with an altruistic outlook. That is, they may refrain from individual short-run gains if the society at large is better off in the long-run.

Assuming that we agree to these descriptions of consumers and citizens, assigning the *consumer* as an autonomous rational optimizer and the *citizen* as a team player who puts the society's interest in front of his or her own interest, are we *either* consumers *or* citizens? Can we be both? What about the neighbour who is a member of the green party yet at the same time drives an old car polluting the environment? To answer this we first need to properly define our two extremes and for elucidation exemplify with some familiar scenarios.

The dual role of individuals in environmental policy, as citizens and consumers respectively, have been given attention within a range of disciplines, mainly through the above mentioned distinction between the individual whose acts are motivated by an altruistic concern for a larger community (the citizen), and the individual guided by primarily individualistic and materialistic concerns (the consumer). This somewhat simplistic distinction has also in many ways constructed a central topic for green movements and activists since the beginning of the environmentalist wave in the late 60's. Drawing on the above mentioned motivational distinctions between the two roles, the predominant environmentalist view denotes that the strong ties between capitalist economy and individual freedom in contemporary democracies have turned individuals into passive, rights-claiming consumers and given raise to institutions unable to cope with the societal changes needed for preventing a future ecological crisis (c.f. Olson 1965; Hardin 1968; Barry 1999; see also Eckersly 1992). Accordingly, the key for amending the present environmental situation, most environmentalists conclude, lies in the movement of individuals from being preference-maximizing consumers to becoming citizens concerned with the common good of the community. A citizenship, based not on individualism and economic rationality, but rather on each individual's moral concerns and sense of responsibility for a common good must prevail if the collective action problems of the environment are to be solved in the long run. As Doherty and de Geus (1996:1) puts it: '[O]nly by challenging material inequalities and bureaucratic hierarchies will a new communitarianism emerge that will be powerful enough to overcome the atomized self-interest of individual consumers'.

Following this categorization of the two roles, Sagoff (1988) defines the whole concept of citizenship exclusively by the exercise of civic virtue and the promotion of a common good. He argues that the literature on environmental valuation fails to distinguish between the individual's role as citizen and consumer respectively: 'As a *citizen*, I am concerned with the public interest, rather than my own interest; with the good of the community, rather than simply the well-being of my own family. [...] In my role as a *consumer*, [...] I concern myself with personal or self-regarding wants and interests; I pursue the goals I have as an individual' (Sagoff 1988:8). By making this distinction, Sagoff too opens up for the conclusion that individuals need to act in the manner of the citizen if the sustainable society is to be reached (cf. Dobson 2003); for long-term successful environmental policies it is thus imperative not only to steer specific behaviours by pointing towards (positive or negative) consequences for the individual, but also to transform the consciousnesses of the citizenry so as to take into consideration also the collective consequences of everyday activities; i.e. to activate each individual's sense of moral

obligations towards the community. Following this line of reasoning, one miscalculation of contemporary policies might be the reliance on economic rationality and on consumerist responses to the removal or amendment of external factors considered hampering for PEB. By imposing regulations and providing individuals with economic incentives, the citizen-role outlined above is not accomplished. Rather, the role of the consumer is instead both strengthened and taken to be of greater relevance for promoting individuals' PEB.

This importance placed on the development and promotion of the citizen-role connects to the fact that PEB is anticipated to stem also from other sources, apart from the rational economic-instrumental calculations of the consumer. As noted by, among others, Beckman (2001:179) 'people sometimes choose to do good for other reasons than fear (of punishment or loss) or desire (for economic rewards or social status). People sometimes do good because they want to be virtuous'. Using Sagoff's definitions of the two roles, this indicates that the consumer sometimes gives way for the citizen in the individual's behavioural decision-making process.

However, the initial question still remains; are we either or? Well, the anticipation is that each individual can have multiple preference orderings, applying different preference maps in different contexts (Arrow 1951; Hausman and McPhearson 1996). For example, individuals will, presumably, easily take a consumer point of view when asked to value a market good, such as a Sex Pistols-album or a pint of beer. However, when confronted with issues remotely related to personal interests but closely related to collective interests such as the environment (e.g. global warming) the same individual might also choose to act from the citizen point of view. In line with what has been proposed by Beckman above, different situations might, then, be anticipated to activate different norms or values causing the individual to choose *either* a citizen or a consumer perspective, depending both on the nature of the situation and the activity proposed. This follows the assumption of S.H. Schwartz's (1977) norm activation theory; that people sometimes act in response to their own personal norms or feeling of moral obligation, rather than based on external motivations (including the informal sanctions for breaching a social norm)^v. In line with this, Rohan (2000) suggests that an individual's *personal value-system*, based on the priority of a set of universal values, is the main determinant for a person's immediate decisions on how to behave in real life situations, and for defending their courses of action.

Nevertheless, external factors are also important to consider as influencing individuals' PEB. For example, Stern (2000) has listed four causal factors for pro-environmental behaviour; values, context, capabilities and habits, all of which are interrelated with each other and serves as to shape behavioural decisions within the individual. We can therefore hypothesize that peoples' actions will depend not only on their own personal value-system, but also to what extent they perceive that other do what they should do and what local and/or national authorities stipulate them to do through the use of policy and policy instruments. Even so, how individuals perceive these external factors, including their effect on such concepts as freedom and fairness is largely determined by the personal values held by each and every individual (cf. Rohan 2000). Accordingly, Stern *et al.* (1995:1626) comes to the expressive conclusion that 'values are linked to the frame used to interpret information provided by the media and other sources', and that an individual's value-orientations have both direct and indirect 'explanatory power for individuals' beliefs about environmental conditions and their willingness to take action in response to them' (p. 1630).

The reason for acting as the green party neighbour is not that s/he necessary is immoral, acting without ethical concerns or displaying an exceptional double-standard, but rather a response to the external constraints *in this particular context*; an old polluting car may be the best s/he can afford. Thus, in real life we observe that people do respond to economic incentives. Consider another example of a tax increase on gasoline; we do identify a cut back on consumption when such tax increase is made. This is also in line with our consumer perspective. Still, that same person may for example recycle as much as possible without any consideration of the costs involved since his/her ethical compass guides him/her to. The bottom line is that although we sometimes act in the manner of rational consumers, responding to economic or regulative instruments, also factors outside economic rationality must be considered in the construction of environmental policy instruments. Depending on the nature of the activity and each individual's personal value-system, a sense of moral obligation and altruistic values can indeed also be anticipated to account for how the consideration between the two roles is made. Since the two different roles – consumer and citizen – are discerned by them reacting positively on different strands of motivation, the response of the two roles is, consequently, anticipated to also be different towards the same motivation or policy instrument. Based in crowding-out theory, this, of course, should affect the construction of effective environmental policies relying on household participation.

4. The role of individuals in policy

The first question addressed through our empirical analysis regards how individuals' PEB are approached in national policy documents, that is, whether the motivations and policy-measures used to promote pro-environmental action at the household level primarily are directed mainly towards the *consumer* or towards the *citizen*? This issue will be examined by analysing both (a) how individuals in general are portrayed in policy^{vi}, and (b) which explicit motivations are provided for PEB.

Regarding the view on individuals as being citizens or consumers, the role of the former tends to be largely overlooked throughout Swedish environmental policy. That the choice of policy instruments determines also the government's view of the citizenry is established by Barry (1999:227), who asserts that the use of regulative instruments are preferable to economic incentives as the latter 'addresses individuals and groups in society as being consumers'. Instead, by establishing a behavioural norm (or even better, enabling individuals to deliberate on this norm themselves), a more stable and long-term PEB is anticipated to result. Barry's reasoning is also found in a survey of the official report series (SOU) underpinning Swedish environmental policy post-Rio, where L. J. Lundquist (2004) concludes that individuals at large are described as being consumers, passively reacting to market incentives and governmental information and, thus, basing their decisions and considerations exclusively on economic rationality, rather than being 'politically competent subjects' ready to take an active part in deliberating on the moral foundations of the policy itself. Accordingly, also within the environmental policy documents analyzed for this article, there are numerous examples of the individual as first and foremost a consumer, promoting a strong belief in the importance of economic rationality and external motivations for individuals' decision-making process, in particular as the use of policy-instruments are outlined. For example, the most recent Government Communication (Skr. 2003/04:129, *authors' translation*) states that '...economic policy instruments are the most important tools for [reaching] a sustainable development...' (p. 141) and that the increased use of economic

instruments should be designed so that their 'steering effects are strengthened' (p.40). With regards to behavioural change with individuals, the use of legal instruments is not mentioned at all.

These above findings are further supported by an analysis of the explicit motivations for PEB provided by the documents. On the whole, Swedish environmental policy follows the Bruntland Commission's definition of sustainable development and the Swedish counterpart, the *generation-goal*, are put forth as being the overall aim for national environmental policies:

The government's overall objective is to hand over a society to the next generation in which the major environmental problems have been solved (Skr. 2001/02:172, p.6).

Irrespective of the fact that regulative measures are hardly ever suggested in the four documents specifying the direction of Swedish environmental policy between 1994-2004, the policy-documents further display a wide array of motivations and suggested policy instruments for reaching this goal. Following, again, the international environmental agreements (e.g. Agenda 21), the citizen-role is primarily given attention by reference to the responsibility of the industrialized world to limit its negative impact on the environment. Swedish environmental policy does, at several occasions, acknowledge the responsibility to limit or render more effective the use of resources in order to ensure a fair distribution of resources.

The already wealthy part of the world has got a particular responsibility. Barely a fifth of the world's population is responsible for the major part of the environmental burden and the consumption of the world's natural resources. We must utilise the resources efficiently for them to meet everyone's requirements (Skr. 1997/98:13, p.1).

Sustainable development in Sweden is closely linked to sustainable development in the rest of the world. Our lifestyle and politics influences others (Skr 2003/04:129, p.11).

At one instance (Skr. 2003/04:129) the key notion in ecologism, the ecological footprint, is also mentioned in the documents. This is, however, in the context of illustrative indicators for use as informational instruments, not in the first hand as constructing the core argument of environmental policy. Nevertheless, connecting this with the above statements indicates that social justice may well perform a vital role as a moral motivation throughout Swedish environmental policy. Thus, these above motivations all draws on the altruistic, moral good in acting in environmentally beneficial ways (for the benefit of present and future generations) and does neither contain any references to personal gains nor any specified monetary incentives for contributing to ecological sustainability.

Nevertheless, other, and more pronounced, strands of motivation are also visible in the documents. Apart from the altruistic, universal motives for environmental protection that is embedded in some of the quotes above, the main line of argument in motivating environmental responsibility refers more explicitly to the individuals' roles as consumers. A concern for the environment is herein motivated by the expectance of reciprocity, i.e. of positive outcomes for the own person when acting according to the policy demands. In particular, motives portraying the changing behaviour in a more pro-environmental direction as beneficial for the individual herself (or her community) are substantially more frequent than motivations from rights- or justice-aspects. As an example; improved public health, economic benefits, increased competitive strength for businesses as well as positive effects on national growth and/or employment is all introduced as motivations for protecting the environment:

Swedish trade and industry sector can strengthen its competitiveness with a 'green business idea'. [...] In such a way, the ecological adjustment can become a carrier of long-term growth and stability in the employment sector. A broad adjustment can also contribute to creating employment within several branches and thereby contribute to increase prospects for growth also in highly exposed regions (Skr. 1997/98:13, p.1).

An active environmental policy can contribute to an ecologically sustainable development and to creating new employment opportunities which increases welfare and guarantees employment (Skr. 1994/95:120, p.3).

Today's environmental problems entails substantial costs due to loss of production, destruction of materials, impaired health, destruction of the physical cultural heritage and depletion of both renewable and non-renewable natural resources (Skr 2003/04:129, p.37).

Furthermore, the altruistic care for others are somewhat distorted by an underpinning national focus as positive gains for Swedish interests is assured in exchange for individuals' PEB. Environmental protection is here given a purely instrumental role in enhancing the growth, economy and public health in Sweden. A further aspect of the territorial focus in the analyzed documents is the method of motivating a policy of environmental protection with the positive benefits this might have for the economic development of the Swedish regions.

In the bilateral cooperation on knowledge building, the countries in Sweden's proximity should be prioritised, that is, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, North-West Russia and Poland primarily. In these countries, both the environmental effects and the establishment of the cooperation in itself are judged to best being able to profit beneficiary countries' as well as Swedish interests (Skr. 1994/95:120, p.7).

Pollution knows no national boundaries. We are particularly affected by emissions in Northern Europe. The EU's eastern enlargement is therefore important for the Swedish environment. All of this constitutes reasons for Sweden to pioneer the international shift to ecological sustainable development (Skr. 1997/98:13, p.1).

Ecological sustainability is of great importance for a sustainable regional development from several aspects. An attractive natural, cultural and living environment is important for attracting entrepreneurship as well as businesses and residents, and does also contribute to an increased growth and development e.g. environmentally friendly local production and tourist industry. Local environmentally friendly production can have great significance for employment and livelihood in rural- and sparsely populated areas. An environmentally motivated trade and industry generates increased competitive strength and contributes therefore also directly to increased development and growth (Skr. 2001/02:172, p.45).

In sum, with policy-makers in Sweden, the notion of the consumer-role as guiding individuals' behaviour in the environmental field is rather strong, judging from the formulations in the above referred to policy documents. Economic incentives and the consumer's passive reaction to governmental guidelines motivated by, first and foremost, personal gains are prevailing in the four documents, leading to the conclusion that external motivations are perceived as being highly relevant for the promotion of ecological sustainability in Sweden. How, then, does this representation correlate with the self-image of Swedish household members?

5. The nature of peoples' motivation

Traditional economic models usually take a utilitarian ethics approach, that is, they assume that people only consider the outcome of their actions and, as established, assume that people systematically react to changes in the constraints. For example, a price increase (in relative

terms) is expected to lower the consumption of the more costly good or induce people to engage less in the relatively more costly activity. Our definition of a consumer fits into this description. However, it seems that in many environmental issues people tend to take a rule-based ethical stance and that some persons may value the process *itself*. Persons may not particularly like certain results but practice the activity if they add sufficient value to the procedure as such (Sen 1977). Anticipation would be that environmental benevolent activities on the household level, which do not produce distinct, or even noticeable, outcomes for the individual, are particularly sensitive to this type of motivation. As Beckman (2001) concludes, individuals might therefore act, not for personal benefit, but rather for them valuing the activity in itself. This is in line with our citizen point of view and a price change would have little or no effect in this case. It may even be counterproductive if a non-priced good is artificially priced due to demoralizing mechanisms of human behaviour.

In a broad sense we can claim that individuals have two different main motives, viz., (a) intrinsic motives, where the person likes the activity in itself; (b) extrinsic motives, where the person does it because of monetary payment or because of order. An environmental application to this is that one can do it either because our environmental consciousness tells us to do so (if the costs are not too high) or that we are doing it because we are told to do so by authorities or that it is financially beneficial. As argued above, in traditional economics, as well as in contemporary environmental policy-making, primarily the latter set of motives are acknowledged as determining the individuals PEB. How is it then in our everyday life? Has the *consumer* taken over the economy while the *citizen* is out to lunch? That is, are judicial interventions and economic incentives the only thing that matters for people to undertake an environmentally beneficial activity?

We use Schwartz's value-inventory scale (1992) to assess individuals' general value-orientation. The respondents^{vii} were asked to rate on a 9-point scale to what degree each of 20 values functioned as a guiding principle in their life. The responses on the 9-point scale was: - 1 (opposed to my values), 0 (not important), 1-5 (unlabeled), 6 (very important), and 7 (of supreme importance).

From Schwartz's value-inventory scale, four indices were calculated according to the two dimensions used by Schwartz (1992); openness to change (OTC), conservation (C), self-enhancement (S-E), and self-transcendence (S-T). The horizontal dimension, ranging between Openness to Change to Conservation arranges values that either motivate people to independently decide upon their interests and to follow these personal preferences (OTC), or motivate people to act as to preserve the prevailing practices in society and thereby rather give priority to the stability and will of the collective over independent decision-making (C) (Schwartz 1992; Rohan 2000). OTC is, in the survey, represented by the representative values of Freedom, A varied life, Independence, Creativity, and Curiosity whereas we let the values of Self-control, Safety, Social order, Acceptance of tradition, and Obedient represent the Conservation-cluster in our survey.

Values arranged on this dimension are anticipated to be relevant for a range of inquires regarding individuals' values-construct. However, for the topic of this article the focus are instead directed towards the vertical dimension of Self-transcendence vs. Self-enhancement as the values arranged on this dimension correspond rather well to our two roles (the citizen and the consumer), and has also been proven to have strong connections to the shaping of individuals' PEB. Thus, they indicate in what way an individual prioritize between either altruistic and pro-social values, or values promoting more of an egoistic behaviour (Schwartz

1992; Rohan 2000). Self-transcendence should therefore influence pro-environmental behaviour positively, while we expect self-enhancement to have a negative influence on pro-environmental behaviour. To one end of the dimension, Self-enhancement is made up by two motivational value-types; *Power*, which focus social power alongside authority and wealth; and *Achievement*, suggesting the importance of such values as success, capability and influence. Accordingly, Self-enhancement is represented by the values of, social power, authority, success, influential, and wealth. Placed opposite to Self-enhancement, the motivational values located at the other end of the dimension are anticipated to be incompatible with the self-centred focus of power and achievement. Consequently, Self-transcendence is constructed by the two motivational value-types of *Benevolence* and *Universalism*. These two value-types do both express an altruistic outlook, but differ in their scope. Whereas the former is defined as the ‘Preservation and Enhancement of the Welfare of People With Whom One is in Frequent Personal Contact’, the latter is defined as the ‘Understanding, Appreciation, Tolerance and Protection for the Welfare of all People and for Nature’ (Rohan 2000:261). The motivational values closest connected with PEB according to above are located within this value-type of Universalism, which, among others, contains the representative values ‘unity with nature’ and ‘protecting the environment’ (Rohan 2000). It is also within this value-type that the strongest connections to pronounced environmental attitudes have been observed (cf. Schultz and Zelezny 1999; Stern *et al.* 1995). Self-transcendent is in our survey represented by the values broad-minded, protected environment, social justice, helpfulness, and loyalty.

Mean ratings were calculated for each individual for the five values measuring OTC, C, SE, and ST, respectively. Table 1 display means, standard deviations, and Cronbach’s alpha for the index variables.

Table 1: Mean values, standard deviations, and scale reliability (Cronbach’s alpha, α).

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Cronbach’s α</i>
OTC	4.72	1.09	0.70
C	4.85	1.08	0.71
S-E	2.46	1.20	0.76
S-T	5.01	1.05	0.70

Thus far, the results from the empirical survey provide some support for our initial anticipation; that people also, and sometimes to a greater extent, are guided by other motives than traditional economic rationality. As table 1 above shows, people tend to ascribe the motivational values included in the Self-transcendence cluster (altruism) a far greater importance as guiding principles in life than the opposing values of Self-enhancement (egoism), indicating that what Sagoff have defined as the citizen-role indeed is important to account for in policy-making. Drawing on the reasoning above, this should also reflect the likeliness of individuals to form a personal norm regarding environmental issues, and, thus, hold intrinsic motivations for acting benevolent towards the environment.

However, one important question remains; what does this tell us? Do people actually choose to be virtuous when faced with increasingly higher costs (time, money and nuisance) for doing so? In other words, when the values of the consumer and the citizen do conflict (as they apparently do in several environmental issues), which role do people choose? Previous

research on this topic has shown that the external factors hindering environmentally benevolent activities actually take precedence over existing pro-environmental values. People tend to do one thing and say another – not the least since they want to be perceived as environmental friendly (not necessarily be it). Given the strong rating of Self-transcendence values, do people have a personal norm directing them towards engaging in prescribed environmental activities, or are the economic incentives dominating?

In our survey, we also look at some of the key responses related to the individuals' motives for engaging in waste sorting^{viii}; these responses are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Motives for sorting waste

I sort partly because:	Agree	Partly agree		Partly disagree	Disagree	No answer
a) I want others to think of me as a responsible person.	7%	19%	11%	18%	33%	13%
b) I want to think of myself as a responsible person.	27%	37%	8%	6%	9%	12%
c) I should do what I want others to do.	43%	32%	6%	3%	4%	11%
d) It is an activity that makes me feel good.	17%	32%	20%	10%	9%	12%
e) It is economical for me as a person.	5%	10%	29%	11%	32%	13%
f) I feel a moral obligation to sort more to contribute to a better environment.	39%	40%	9%	6%	3%	4%
g) State and municipal authorities wants me to sort more to reduce negative effects on the environment.	21%	35%	27%	8%	4%	5%

Before scrutinizing Table 2, we first note that in our survey most respondents reported that they sort most of the types of waste fractions they generate at source. In other words, overall the respondents complied well with the requirement to sort and clean their waste, as expressed in policy-documents. Furthermore, Table 2 shows how the respondents perceived different statements about possible motives for undertaking waste sorting activities. It is worth noting that the respondents are heterogeneous with respect to most motives for sorting waste at source. For instance, roughly half of the respondents claim that they sort partly because they want to think of themselves as a responsible person, while the same share sort partly because it is a requirement imposed by the authorities. The strongest expressed motive (calculated on the percentage of respondents that either agree or partly agree with the motive), however, follows the prediction made with regard to the above showed importance of Self-transcendence values; respondents feel a moral obligation to sort waste in order to contribute to a better environment. This supports the thesis argued above, that people indeed want to be virtuous and, thus, act with reference to motives inherent in the citizen-role.

6. Concluding remarks

In this article we set out to describe and investigate the dual role individuals' face in contemporary environmental policy in Sweden, by employing four Government Communications and a mail-out survey to 4000 individuals in four different counties. The

following general conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. Judging from the formulations in the policy documents, the notion of the consumer-role as guiding individuals' behaviour in the environmental field is rather strong. Thus, economic incentives and the consumer's passive reaction to governmental guidelines is chiefly motivated by personal gains, leading to the conclusion that external motivations are perceived as being highly relevant for the promotion of ecological sustainability in Sweden. However, at the same time people tend to ascribe the motivational values included in the Self-transcendence cluster (altruism) a far greater importance as guiding principles in life than the opposing values of Self-enhancement (egoism), indicating that the citizen-role indeed is important to account for in policy-making. Clearly, there is a mismatch between Sweden's contemporary policy documents and the general value-orientation held by Swedish people in general.

We also gain support for our anticipation that people are guided by other motives than traditional economic rationality. The respondents' strongest expressed motive for undertaking recycling activities is that they feel a moral obligation to sort waste in order to contribute to a better environment. Based in crowding-out theory, this, of course, should affect the construction of effective environmental policies relying on household participation. Hence, a policy aimed at changing a pro-environmental behaviour such as recycling is not straightforward.

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ⁱ The same pattern has been shown through other research. See, for instance, Batley et al. (2001).

ⁱⁱ The implications of the utility-maximizing hypothesis are generally rejected in empirical studies of individual consumer behavior (see for example Blundell et al. 1993).

ⁱⁱⁱ For similar evidence on the relatively low time opportunity cost of recycling time, see also Bruvoll and Nyborg (2002). The latter point refers to the motivation crowding-out hypothesis suggested by Bruno Frey. See, for instance, Frey (1999) and Frey and Jegen (2001).

^{iv} For an overview of psychological literature on this subject, see Deci (1999); for a survey of empirical evidence, see Frey and Jegen (2001); for economic experimental evidence, see e.g. Frey (1997), Frey and Götte (1999), Fehr and Gächter (2000) and Gneezy and Rustichini (2000a).

^v Following Schwartz (1977:231), a personal norm is distinguished from a social norm in 'that the sanctions attached to personal norms are tied to the self-concept', that is, conformity to a personal norm gives rise to positive feelings of the self, whereas violation of a personal norm results in negative evaluations. Furthermore, a social norm is defined as a pattern of behavior expected within a particular society in a given situation; the shared belief of what is normal and acceptable and which shapes the actions of people in a society. Although the very fact that others in society follow the norm may be enough, important social norms are often enforced by law.

^{vi} The documents used for this analysis are four Government Communications: Skr. 1994/95:120 *The Environment – Our Common Responsibility*; Skr. 1997/98:13 *Ecological Sustainability*; Skr. 2001/02:50 *Sustainable Sweden – A Follow-up of Measures for an Ecologically Sustainable Development*; Skr. 2003/04:129 *A Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development*.

^{vii} During spring 2004, a mail survey was distributed to about 4 000 individuals in four Swedish municipalities; Växjö, Piteå, Göteborg and Huddinge. The response rate varied from 26–35 per cent (after two reminders).

^{viii} Household waste-management is often referred to as an important activity for including individuals in the work towards environmental sustainability. It is also one of the most noticeable and frequent activities for household members, and connected to a range of economic incentives, predominately fees and taxes (see, Lundmark 2003; Skr. 1998/99:63).