Revisiting the 'Legitimacy – Effectiveness Dilemma' of Environmental Protection

– The Importance of Considering Personal Values in Researching Environmental Policy Legitimacy

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Abstract
The understanding that environmental protection in contemporary (liberal) democracies suffers from a 'legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma' indicates that a choice has to be made between implementing policies and policy instruments which are *effective* in their long-term protection of the environment, or implementing policies which are *legitimate* in the sense that they respect and abide by core liberal principles. Theoretically, this notion has led to a range of attempts to demonstrate that (at least some forms of) sustainability are indeed compatible with (at least some forms of) liberal democracy. Empirically, the dilemma has also had political implications as most governments are reluctant to frame the environmental challenge as requiring a fundamental change of individuals' attitudes and lifestyle.

However, this article argues that the attempts to resolve the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma rest on a fundamental assumption which lack an important piece of the legitimacy-puzzle, which makes it difficult to reach a reliable conclusion on what the balancing of legitimacy and effectiveness in environmental policy-making requires. What is missing from the notion of legitimacy as an ultimately normative concept are empirically determined answers to the questions on *why* people either accept or reject the policy; as well as *which* set of values that, in each particular context, must be respected or upheld in order for legitimacy to be at hand? These answers can hardly be found without examining those personal values held by the majority of citizens; those values that are truly established in society and therefore can form the basis for a legitimate relationship. Therefore, this article suggest that now is the time to approach the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma from a different perspective, where we instead take the concept of legitimacy for what it really is; something that can only be fully assessed through an evaluation of the correspondence between citizens' personal value-systems and the normative underpinnings of policy. To the end, an initial empirical testing of this approach to legitimacy also suggests that the obstacles to strong environmental protection should be less significant in political practice than in theory, as people are willing to trade individual freedom for stronger environmental protection.

I. Introduction

For the past decades, a range of scholars within the field of green political thought has been engaged with the challenging task of finding a place for green politics on the contemporary political arena. This challenge, in turn, has to a significant extent emanated from the positioning of ecologism and green political theory as opposite to (or at least radically different from) the dominating social theory of liberal democracy. From a theoretical as well as empirical perspective, liberal democracy has been portrayed as an inadequate setting for a politics of sustainability as it has to address these issues with 'one arm tied behind its back' (Dobson, 2003:142). It has been described as resting on weak core principles, as well as being to an unhealthy extent in the hands of vote-maximising politicians, market forces and self-interested consumers. As a result, different strategies have been tried and suggested in the endeavour of providing a viable foundation for strong environmental protection in modern (liberal) democracies[i]. *First*, it has been proposed that the notion of incompatibility between liberal theory (most prominently its 'neutrality-principle') and a politics for environmental protection is false; for example by arguing that liberalism by no means is value-neutral in itself (cf. Dobson, 2003; Hailwood, 2004); that the liberal demand for neutrality is valid only with regards to the policy-making procedures and not to their outcomes (Sagoff, 1988); and, consequently, that the liberal environmental citizen also holds both *environmental* rights and duties (Bell, 2005). *Second*, attempts of reconciliation between these two sets of values have also been made. In particular the search for a middle-way, where shallow versions of green theory and social versions of liberalism can meet and reinforce each others' arguments, has been in focus for this type of strategy (cf. Achterberg, 1993; Saward, 1993; Eckersly, 1996; Bell, 2001; Jagers, 2002). *Third*, and in contrast to the former two strategies, it has been argued that the *prima facie* challenge presented by liberalism is in fact very real and that attempts to find a place for environmental protection within its realm is futile. The solution for this problem is, of course, simply to do away with liberal democracy as the governing social theory in preference for either a weaker (or even eco-authoritarian, see for instance Heilbroner, 1974 or Ophuls, 1977) or a stronger (e.g. participatory or deliberative, see for example Eckersly, 1992 or Smith, 2004) form of democracy[ii].

From these strategies, it is possible to discern two different strands of argument both leading up to the conclusion that the relationship between the goal of long-term stable ecological sustainability and contemporary western democracy is somewhat uneasy. The first argument, and the one most easy to agree with, draws on the *empirical* problems with implementing environmentally protective policies in a society founded on the principle of capitalism, as this is driving a quest for material affluence, unrestricted consumerism and an ever expanding economic growth (cf. Hayward, 1998; de Geus, 2004; Wall, 2005). In the same manner, other empirically founded reasons for rethinking and reforming contemporary liberal democracy have been put forward, but as with the political economy-argument above these build on difficulties in political practice rather than theoretical incompatibilities. For instance, as Barry (1999:198) argues, if the resolution of environmental problems requires 'a sense of collective purpose' (or even an ecological citizenship), then the practices and

procedures of a representative liberal democracy may fall short and indicate the need for a more deliberative, grass-roots democracy. Similarly, if the quest for sustainability is (as most would agree is the case) a global and intergenerational project, the relatively short time-frame and territorially bound institutions of liberal democracy can hardly be appropriate neither for constructing nor enforcing the needed policies (Jelin, 2000; Jagers, 2002; Dobson, 2003). Unquestionable, the current political system of the industrialised West is intertwined with practices, traditions and lifestyles that strongly contributes to the rise of environmental problems and, similarly, makes it increasingly difficult to amend them, both from a political and an individual viewpoint. Perhaps, then, it is true as Doherty and de Geus (1996:1) put it, that 'only 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'.

Nevertheless, one highly relevant issue remains and constructs the foundation for the second line of arguments, that is, the question if this development towards (ultimately) a steady-state global economy and a transformed ecological consciousness among the citizenry even can be initiated by contemporary governments, not to say be carried through in practice? Is this transformation politically viable to forcefully promote? Is it at all possible to, within the theoretical framework constructing the normative foundation of contemporary liberal democracies, implement those measures necessary for a strong and effective environmental protection? More precise, can the liberal state legitimately be advocating a fundamental, yet admittedly necessary, change in individuals' attitudes and lifestyles? Regardless if these questions in the end are met with a positive or negative answer, their mere existence serve as to highlight the notion of also a *theoretical* incompatibility between liberal democracy and environmentalism, where the emphasis on core liberal values of individualism, autonomy and the value-neutral state are portrayed as being (at least potentially) at odds with what is necessary for achieving ecological sustainability. Now, whether this challenge is real (and possibly can be amended) or not (and thus presents no real problem in the first place) are indeed relevant theoretical notions which can be, and have been, debated extensively by philosophers and political theorists (Dobson, 1995 & 2003; Wissenburg, 1998 & 2006; Barry, 1999; see also most contributions in Doherty and de Geus, 1996; and in Dobson and Eckersly, 2006). However, the question I will attempt to discuss over the following pages rather concerns the practical relevance of such a debate for the politics of environmental protection. Will continued research on theoretically informed compatibility analyses, and likewise further attempts to solve or refute the proposed (theoretical) incompatibilities of the kind referred to above, contribute to bringing environmental protection and liberal democracy together also in practice? And if not, what would be an alternative approach to this endeavour?

The article proceeds as follows. First, I present an overview of the proposed theoretical problem with implementing strong environmental policies in contemporary democracies, conceptualised as the 'legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma'. Second, I argue that the understanding of this dilemma rests on a too narrow definition of legitimacy and that an alternative approach to the study of legitimacy therefore is needed in order to fully

comprehend and evaluate the possibilities for legitimately introducing effective environmental policies. Third and last, through the use of empirical examples, I provide an initial exploration of how an alternative definition of legitimacy would effect conclusions on the legitimacy - effectiveness dilemma, including its implications on political practice.

II. The Legitimacy – Effectiveness Dilemma of Environmental Policy-Making

I would like to start by suggesting that the answer to the former of the questions posed above is No; theoretically informed compatibility analyses can, in this respect, hardly take us any further than they already have. The main reason for this being that those compatibility analyses taking liberal democratic values or principles as a starting point never can provide a comprehensive answer to the questions of compatibility posed above as they lack, in a manner of speaking, an important piece of the legitimacy-puzzle. The argument is, in essence, rather straight-forward; how can we possibly find ways to legitimately promote behavioural change if we are not first familiar with the values real citizens hold? Therefore, now might be the time to approach this issue from a slightly different point of view and take the analysis of environmental protection in contemporary liberal democracies one step further.

Let me briefly explain my position. Underpinning the many efforts that have been made to, from a theoretical perspective, provide an answer on how to solve the proposed incompatibility between liberal democratic values or principles and a strong politics of environmental protection lays the notion of a *legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma*, which is thought of as hindering forceful environmental policy-making. This notion, in turn, has rather far-reaching policy implications as it indicates that some measures are impossible for the liberal state to legitimately take in order to protect the environment, for the reason that the means necessary challenge (at least at first glance) the core liberal principles of individual freedom and state neutrality. For instance, the neutral state cannot be overly enthusiastic in promoting a set of new environmental values to its citizens, as this might be understood as leaving its metaphysical neutrality aside and openly displaying preference for one (out of potentially many) overarching doctrines on the good life (e.g. Rawls, 1993). The liberal state has therefore to make a choice: either to implement policies and policy instruments which are *effective* in their long-term protection of the environment and serve as to make the transition to an ecologically sustainable society, or to implement policies which are *legitimate* in the sense that they respect and abide by the liberal principles of neutrality and individual autonomy. Thus, as summed up by Lundqvist (2004:16, my italics), 'ecologically rational governance must strive for sustainability *within limits drawn by democracy and individual autonomy*', which, again, means that 'choices of institutions and instruments for sustainable resource use must be made in ways that secure their political legitimacy' (Lundqvist, 2004:6). Given its philosophical foundation (and indeed the far-reaching policy measures required for reaching an ecologically sustainable society), liberal democratic governments cannot at the same time ensure effective and legitimate environmental policies – or can they?

Before scrutinizing this question, let's turn for a moment to political practice. Here, it seems apparent that this dilemma also has had implications, as the anticipated problematic relationship between strong environmental protection and contemporary liberal democratic values has led most governments in the industrialised West to portray environmental issues as requiring a less comprehensive solution; as 'technical policy issues' which can be solved through government planning and minor behavioural amendments rather than normative issues requiring fundamental changes in attitudes and lifestyles (cf. de Geus, 2004; Wissenburg, 2004)[iii]. Governments and (rational, vote-maximising?) policy-makers have taken the incompatibility-line of reasoning to their hearts, and are reluctant to either take such policy-measures or discursively frame environmental issues in a way that might be interpreted as challenging the liberal core values of autonomy, individualism and neutrality. Instead, contemporary environmental policy are constructed around more or less innovative ways of balancing the (presumed) need for securing individual autonomy and state neutrality and the (very real) need for environmental protection. For example, by using economic policy instruments directed towards individuals in their role as consumers, governments take measures to protect the environment while at the same time keeping the mechanisms of a free, yet somewhat manipulated, market in place (cf. Lundqvist, 2001; Hobson, 2002 & 2004). Individuals can thereby exercise their individual rights and autonomy as prescribed by liberal democratic principles, but now underneath the discursive umbrella of Ecological Modernisation where environmental protection is framed as nothing less than a positive-sum game (cf. Hajer, 1995; Dryzek, 2005). Following de Geus (2004), the past decades have thus seen a 'pacification of the environmental issue' as it has been rhetorically incorporated in the political discourse, but there reduced to an administrative problem which can be solved through adjustments of the market and of public policy. In reality, environmental policy rhetoric is not always (or rather seldom) followed by corresponding political practice (e.g. Söderberg, 2007). At the same time, however, some strands of research points towards the contemporary framing of environmental issues in predominately economic/consumer terms as being starkly out of touch with the values actually held by the general public, and towards the potential dangers with using the wrong incentives for governing long-term behavioural change (Berglund and Matti, 2006), but so far have these not had any significant impact on policy-making practices.

III. Different Conceptions of Legitimacy

So, what is wrong with the conclusion on the liberal – environmentalist divide underpinning contemporary environmental policy-making? And perhaps more important, what alternatives are there to this type of analysis of the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma? I would here like to argue that by approaching the concept of legitimacy in the way the dilemma proposes, as an exclusively *normative* concept, the theoretical debate (and, as explained above, therefore to some extent also political practice) disregards the fact that conclusions on a policy's or a policy instrument's prospect for legitimacy requires more than the one-sided focus on the normative

problem of fit. In other words, trying to balance legitimacy and effectiveness by implementing weak sustainability and at the same time safeguarding a set of liberal core-values is all very well if we are certain that this is what is required for broad public acceptance; and the concept of normative legitimacy seems indeed to suggest precisely this. However, if we instead treat the concept of legitimacy as, following Beetham (1991), something to be assessed through the evaluation of value-correspondence between the normative underpinnings of policy and *citizens' personal value-systems*, these theoretical discrepancies between liberal philosophy and environmental protection should not be regarded as an empirical policy problem in the modern state. At least not before any empirical in-depth studies have been made.

Given that legitimacy in itself is a concept bestowed a wide range of connotations and therefore, to say the least, is characterized by definitional inconsistence (Jachtenfuchs, 1995; Føllesdal, 2004), researchers within the social sciences have suggested several approaches to the study of legitimacy, out of which two have had the most apparent impact on recent scholarly work. Connecting to the above hinted problem with compatibility-analyses that take liberal philosophy as their starting point, legitimacy evaluated from the perspective of political or moral philosophy is commonly described as being *formal* or *normative*, relating less to the subjective beliefs of the citizenry and considerably more to the nature of the object of study itself (Jachtenfuchs, 1995; Føllesdal, 2004; Tsakatika, 2005). Here, legitimacy is defined as objectively determined, something that is morally justifiable and therefore acceptable by it conforming to a predetermined set of normative criteria. Evaluating legitimacy by this normative approach is, therefore, merely a matter of determining whether the (by the researcher predetermined) standard is met or not. Thus, the core assumptions made in defining legitimacy normatively is, *first*, that society is founded on a specific set of shared values which must be respected and upheld throughout the power relationship[iv] for its legitimacy to be at hand, but also, *second*, that the nature of the set of relevant shared values can be determined merely by considering the philosophical foundations of the said power relationship. In the present context, it is precisely this conception of normative legitimacy which is thought of as underpinning the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma of environmental politics and green political thought; in particular since the dilemma also refers to the position that contemporary environmental policies are confined by the philosophical foundations of *liberal democracy* for them to enjoy legitimacy. Thereby, normative legitimacy emanates from the assumption that an objectively defined set of values or beliefs (distilled from the liberal tradition) is either more principally right or more widely supported by the citizenry towards which the policy in question is directed, thus determining their feelings towards the policy. In this, however, the question of whether or not these values indeed are shared by the citizenry (thus forming the basis for legitimacy), is taken for granted.

As can be expected, the normative approach to legitimacy has been subject to criticism and I agree with Beetham's (1991) rejection of the application of this normative conceptualisation for the evaluation of legitimacy as being too one-sided and not relating sufficiently to the actual values of the citizenry. In the words of Karlsson (2001:107), it 'neglects a common-sense understanding of legitimacy'. By building the evaluation of

legitimacy exclusively on the correspondence with moral-philosophical concepts or principles, the personal values held by the citizenry are altogether overlooked and it is instead assumed that consensus on a universal set of values does exist. Thus, evaluating the level of normative legitimacy for a power relationship does neither take into account the legitimacy of particular situations or contexts, nor the different understandings citizens might hold regarding the normative concepts by which it is evaluated. As such, the adoption of a normative approach to legitimacy also limits the application of the concept as culturally or historically bound variations in values are easily overlooked as being of lesser relevance.

If normative legitimacy can be criticised for taking to little an interest in the beliefs of the citizenry, the opposite case can be made towards the Weberian approach to legitimacy as a *social* object. According to this definition, a power relationship is considered legitimate when people in general believe it to be so and openly acts as to reinforce this notion (cf. Schaar, 1984; Beetham, 1991). Consequently, this amounts to an approach to legitimacy as acquiescence; as a social (Karlsson, 2001) or empirical (Tsakatika, 2005) phenomenon stemming exclusively from the subjective attitudes and behaviour of the citizens in a specific power relationship. Evaluating legitimacy from this point of view implies studying the explicit acceptance for a policy or a political authority and thereby examining whether the current object of study indeed is believed to be legitimate by those subordinated to it. The explicitness of this study implicates that the question of legitimacy for a power relationship is either put directly to the subordinate in, for example, an opinion poll, or inferred from a study of actual behaviour (cf. Jachtenfuchs, 1995:127-128). However, what is also inferred through this definition is the simultaneous dismissal of any external reference underpinning the level of legitimacy. The approach has therefore been defined as being relativistic, and as such independent of any judgements made by the observer referring to the relationship's moral rights or wrongs. Any power relationship, regardless of its normative foundations, can be defined as being either legitimate or illegitimate depending solely on the subordinate's reactions towards it, a conclusion which might be considered problematic given the fact that publicly expressed compliance may not necessarily be a sign of acceptance, but of indifference or apathy on the part of the subordinate (cf. Føllesdal, 2004) or of coercion on the part of the powerful (cf. Beetham, 1991; Jachtenfuchs, 1995)[v]. Of course, and possibly more relevant for a discussion on contemporary environmental policy, it can by the same logic be anticipated that a public suspiciousness towards, alternatively outright denouncement of, a specific policy or a policy instrument can be founded in other reasons than a fundamental rejection of the core values on which it rests.

Thereby, it is clear that also social legitimacy has its critics. Beetham, for example, agrees with the argument that the Weberian approach is amiss since it does not include any objective references for legitimacy in the form of normative principles, but his primary objections regard the fact that a sole focus on citizens' openly expressed acceptance misconceives their role in legitimising a power relationship (Beetham, 1991:10-11). A power relationship should not be evaluated by the degree to which people believe in its legitimacy, but according to the extent to which it can be justified in terms of the commonly held values in society.

> [W]hen we seek to assess the legitimacy of a regime, a political system, or some other power relation, one thing we are doing is assessing how far it can be justified *in terms of people's beliefs*, how far it satisfies the normative expectations they have of it. We are making an assessment of the degree of congruence, or lack of it, between a given system of power and the beliefs, values and expectations that provide its justification. We are not making a report on people's 'belief in its legitimacy' (Beetham, 1991:11, *my italics*).

This critique towards the Weberian approach argues that legitimacy not should be evaluated explicitly, by asking the subordinates about the believed legitimacy of a power relationship or studying their reactions towards a specific policy. Instead, the study of legitimacy should constitute an indirect method, where the level of legitimacy is inferred from the *indicators* on legitimacy elucidated through the empirical analysis. It should not be expected that the empirical material in itself will provide any straight forward conclusions on legitimacy but merely serve as the foundation for a future analysis; in particular building on the amount of value-correspondence between the object of study (e.g. a policy for environmental protection) and those subject to it.

How, then, should the level of legitimacy be properly evaluated, and by what criteria? Taking the critique of the normative and social approaches to the study of legitimacy together, it seems that the core of criticism concerns dissatisfaction with their lack in considering *personal values* as an important variable for legitimating a power relationship. Normative legitimacy takes its point of departure in the philosophical foundations of the state (often dated way back in the history of political thought) and social legitimacy likewise avoids the issue of personal values as the foundation for legitimising a policy by rather focusing on people's compliance in a power relationship. What is missing here is empirically determined answers to the questions on *why*, on what basis, people either accept or reject a policy; as well as *which* set of values that, in each particular context, must be respected and upheld by the power relationship in order for it to enjoy legitimacy? These answers can hardly be found without examining those personal values held, and the value-priorities made, by the majority of citizens; those value-hierarchies that are truly established in society and therefore can form the basis for a legitimate power relationship. In this regard, we can consider the proposition by Beetham (1991:20) that legitimacy is at hand if, and only if, openly expressed consent is founded both on the power relationship's conformity to the established rules of society, and on the fact that *these rules can be justified in terms of shared values generally held in society*. In his notion of legitimacy, Beetham (1991:100) thereby highlights the importance of personal values as he holds that studies on legitimacy involve 'reproducing the reasoning of people within […] society, and reconstructing the logic of their own judgements'. It is this set of values and value-priorities that constructs the true limits for a legitimate environmental policy. Legitimacy should therefore be defined not as a normative or a social phenomenon but as value-correspondence, indicating the need for a policy's normative foundation to reflect the personal values held by the citizenry in order to be legitimate[vi].

With these alternative views on legitimacy in mind, I suggest that a reconsideration of the potential for environmental protection in liberal democracies is needed. In order to come to a conclusion on the actual political implications of the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma,

and by inference on the possibilities for governments to legitimately initiate new environmental duties and responsibilities among the citizenry, a survey of the values already established in society, including how these are arranged in context-bound hierarchies, first needs to be performed. Only by, in this fashion, gathering all pieces of the legitimacy-puzzle together and letting the conclusions from an empirical value-survey rather than principles derived from political theory construct the point of departure for an evaluation of the prospect for legitimacy, will a reliable analysis of the place for green politics in contemporary democracies be possible to complete. By instead taking this approach to legitimacy, the previously considered imperative of being able to reconcile environmentally protective policies with classic liberal core principles might, thus, be circumscribed by the understandings that not all people, at all times or in all contexts necessarily subscribe to these values and that there instead might be other, competing sets of values established in society to a larger extent than we presume. One empirical hypothesis would be that values established among the citizenry in Scandinavia and continental Europe, where the liberal idea-tradition perhaps is weaker than in the UK and the US, is of a kind which do not require an environmental policy to first and foremost keep within the limits set down by liberal democracy's philosophical foundation. For political practice this would mean that discursive constructions in the likes of Ecological Modernisation (used for reconciling core liberal principles with environmental protection) might not be needed, and that the scope for legitimately implementing strong environmental policies is larger than previously imagined. On the other hand, it may well be that an analysis of legitimacy as value-correspondence concludes that core liberal values such as individual autonomy, self-direction and state neutrality *are* highly important also in this context of policies for environmental protection, but then at least we know for sure.

IV. Empirical Explorations of the Dilemma

As it stands, the notion of a legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma is underpinned by the definition of legitimacy as a normative concept where a catalogue of traditional liberal values serve as the key by which policy is evaluated. Thus, a policy which, either through its rhetorical goals or its practical consequences, do not respect these values in an adequate way might certainly be deemed effective when judged by its environmentally protective outcomes, but will not be considered legitimate in a contemporary (liberal) democratic setting. I have argued that this, however, is a rather narrow interpretation of the concept of legitimacy which builds on for the most part unverified assumptions on the importance ascribed to a predetermined set of values. Instead, I suggest that for the dilemma to denote real-life implications for environmental policy formulation, the general public must also share those (liberal) value-systems serving as the normative key of policy evaluation. The central empirical question is, then, if the assumption underpinning the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma is correct? Do people in general hold values consistent with a liberal ideal-type? Are these values established to such an extent that a policy infringing on individual autonomy or state neutrality would be deemed illegitimate? If so, does this hold also for the environmental policy-context? As an attempt to provide a first indication on the answer to these above questions some results

of mass-data collected within the SHARP Research Programme[vii] will be examined in order to point towards how individuals themselves relate to the concepts of individual autonomy and state neutrality, and how this understanding might implicate on the possibilities for environmental policy-making.

As a first instance, I use Schwartz' (e.g. 1992) value-inventory scale to assess individuals' core value orientation[viii]. The scale arranges a set of 10 motivational value-types based on the inherent conflict and compatibility between each type's organizing value-items[ix]. Through numerous empirical tests, the structure and content of the 10 values-types has proven to be both universally valid and reliable in categorizing individuals according to their preference for certain values over others, and is therefore widely referred to as a theoretical starting point in research both on values and behaviour in general (cf. Schwartz and Boehnke, 2004; Rohan & Zanna 1996) as well as with specific reference to the environment (cf. Stern et al. 1995; Widegren 1998; Schultz and Zelezny, 1999). Thus, the results from the value-inventory scale are here believed to provide a reliable indication of how the respondents rate the importance of different core values, and therefore serves as to elucidate the foundation for individuals' value-formation on more specific topics, for example in relation to environmental matters[x].

On a scale ranging from -1 (opposed to my values) to 7 (of supreme importance), the respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which each of 20 indicator-values functioned as guiding principles in their life. From this value-inventory, an index was created which arranges the items used as markers for the motivational value-type *Self-Direction*. This value-type assembles values that correspond rather well to core liberal values by signalling a preference for autonomy, independence and self-determination. To measure the preference for this value-type the weight given by individuals to the value-items *Freedom*, *Independence*, *Creativity* and *Curiosity* are considered (Schwartz, 1992; Rohan, 2000). At this point, it is therefore reasonable to assume that individuals who score high on *Self-Direction* to a larger extent also can be expected to form positive attitudes towards a policy aimed at enhancing individual self-determination, and similarly to reject policies that are understood as limiting individual autonomy. Table 1 displays means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha for *Self-Direction*, as well as the mean and standard deviation for each of the four items used to calculate it.

Table 1: Mean values, standard deviations, and scale reliability for Self-Direction

	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Cronbach's α*
Self-Direction	**4,92**	**1,13**	**0,65**
- Freedom	6,15	1,21	
- Independence	5,14	1,54	
- Creativity	4,22	1,90	
- Curiosity	4,17	1,79	

Following the results of the value-inventory, some support for the proposed legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma constituting an infringement on environmental policy making is indeed

found. As illustrated in table 1, the respondents show a strong preference for individual autonomy as the mean for the value-type of *Self-Direction* is closing in on 5, indicating that this value-type is a fairly important principle. Furthermore, the two items most explicitly associated with individual autonomy – *Freedom* and *Independence* respectively – also display the highest mean scores, with the mean score for *Freedom* being the single highest of all 20 items included in the survey (the lowest noted for the item *Social Power* with 0.68). Again, as value-orientations have proved to constitute an important foundation for an individual's formation of attitudes when facing new situations or social objects (Stern et al., 1995) the respondents' display of strong preferences for the items included in the *Self-Direction*-cluster might therefore be interpreted as reflecting also the likeliness of individuals to reject any new public policy as illegitimate in the case that it is understood as infringing on their individual freedom and autonomy.

However, before drawing any further conclusions from this initial survey of core values, some difficulties with reliably interpreting these results standing on their own should be noted. Even though the Schwartz value-survey has proven reliable for exploring and categorising peoples' value-priorities, and even though core values are believed to serve as backstops of political and policy preferences (cf. Tetlock, Peterson and Lerner, 1996), a survey of core values do only reveal part of the process in which the individual's formation of values in relation to a specific policy-area takes place. In particular, two interpretative implications have to be taken into account. *First*, due to the generality of the core values, responses to this kind of survey do only provide a limited indication of each respondent's subjective interpretation of them. In this sense, the value-item *Freedom* can, for example, be described as being a 'floating signifier' (e.g. Torfing, 1999) in the sense that it is ascribed different meanings by different individuals in different contexts, and can thus be fully understood only when connected to a chain of other items. For instance, in its classical liberal connotation, freedom or liberty is first and foremost interpreted negatively, signifying freedom *from* constraints; freedom to act according to one's wishes; and, by inference, the absence of coercion from an all too extensive state (e.g. Berlin, 1969). This interpretation would certainly demand a less extensive environmental policy-making. On the other hand, we know that many individuals subscribe to quite different interpretations of freedom, which naturally should influence also their understanding of other social objects. For example, social liberals instead interpret freedom positively, as signifying freedom *to* self-realisation. This interpretation rather suggests a state which, albeit being neutral with regards to interpretations of the good life, actively empowers individuals and provides opportunities for autonomy. The passiveness of classical liberalism's night-watchman state is thus somewhat expanded. Lastly, the communitarian critique of liberalism provides yet another interpretation of freedom; as something which can only be realised *through* community. Therefore, the communitarian ideal prescribes a reconsideration of the liberal claim of the self as being 'atomised' (Taylor, 1992) or 'unencumbered' (Sandel, 1984), as well as an emphasis of 'the Good' rather than of individual (liberal) rights (cf. Theobald and Dinkelman, 1995). In contrast to the liberal prescription of state neutrality in questions regarding individual life-plans, the duty of the communitarian state 'is not to uphold

some kind of neutrality, but to embrace and support a specific conception of the good life' (Larmore, 1987:92). As these different interpretations of the value *Freedom* imply, only very general conclusions can be drawn from the value-survey analysed on its own as it is reasonable to assume that each interpretation also leads to a different formation of more area-specific values and policy-preferences when moving down through the value-hierarchy from the general, core-values to the more explicit policy-preferences (cf. Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

Second, and of course strongly connected to the reasoning above, individuals' are also from time to time faced with situations where the making of value trade-offs become necessary, i.e. situations in which two values, both held as positive by the individual, conflicts and where a sacrifice of one or the other therefore becomes unavoidable (cf. Tetlock, 1986; Hadari, 1988; Tetlock, Peterson and Lerner, 1996). From a theoretical perspective, legitimately giving up some parts of individual freedom in preference either for other core values (for example equality) or for freedom of a different kind can be traced both in the social liberal reasoning on the need for a more or less extensive welfare-state, as well as in the classic liberal ideas on contract-based state formation (cf. Held, 1997). This opening for a theoretical possibility to make a trade-off between an unrestricted individual freedom and other values deemed as important has also had consequences for the environmental debate, indicated by propositions to apply, for instance, the Lockean proviso; Nozick's side-constraints; Mill's no-harm principle or Rawls' just savings principle to issues regarding externalities and environmental justice (cf. Attifield and Belsey, 1994; Wissenburg, 1998; Bell, 2001). Individual freedom is, in these instances, limited (or traded) for environmental protection. As the need to make such a value trade-off unavoidably arises within environmental policy-making, it can reasonably be assumed that also individuals contemplating the legitimacy of a policy where protection of the environment conflicts with individual freedom and self-determination at least implicitly make a trade-off in preference for one of the two values. However, as the Schwartz value-survey do not reveal how individuals reason in situations where this type of trade-off is imminent, also the uncertain outcome of a conflict between the motivational value-type *Self-Direction* and strong environmental protection adds to the difficulties of reliable drawing more than very general conclusions from the value-survey. Thus, two questions remains to be empirically explored in order for conclusions on the proposed dilemma to be reliable drawn. *First*, are we faced with a situation in which a trade-off between core liberal values and environmental protection has to be made, that is, are these two set of values both held as positive to about the same degree? *Second*, if so, which value-set is granted priority in this trade-off?

From the value-survey we know that the value-items included in the label *Self-Direction* are considered to be highly important as guiding principles in the respondents' lives. In order to evaluate the possibility for a conflict of values to arise in relation to environmental issues (triggered perhaps by the implementation of a more comprehensive environmental policy), it is possible to consider the importance granted to another item included in the survey which directly relates to the respondents' assigned importance of environmental protection. The

respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which the value-item *Protected Environment*, defined as 'protection of the diversity in the ecological system', functioned as guiding principles in their life. Table 2 indicates mean and standard deviation for this item. Again, the scale ranges from -1 to 7.

Table 2: Mean value and standard deviation for *Protected Environment*

	Mean	*Standard Deviation*
Protected Environment	**5,10**	**1,64**

As *Protected Environment* also is rated as important by the respondents, it can be established that a conflict of values and consequently a need for making a value trade-off is likely in situations where a stronger, i.e. more comprehensive and restrictive, environmental policy is contemplated. The remaining question is, thus, which impact this potential value-conflict has on issues directly relating to practical policy-making measures. When the respondents are faced with situations in which they, at least implicitly, are forced to make a value trade-off between individual freedom and environmental protection, which value is rated as being more important? In prolongation, will a situation arise where policy-makers have to make a choice between legitimate *or* effective environmental policies?

In order to focus more closely on issues regarding environmental policy-making, the respondents were also, on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), asked to rate statements relating to individual autonomy and environmental responsibility. Responses to these questions are believed to provide an indication on the outcome of a potential trade-off between *Self-Direction* values and the value of environmental protection. The results are displayed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Responsibilities and individual autonomy in environmental issues

	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Percentage of respondents Agree**	*Percentage of respondents Disagree***
Every single individual has a right to independently decide if he/she should behave in an environmentally friendly way or not.	2,75	1,84	11,4 %	56,5 %
Every single individual holds a personal responsibility to actively work for an ecologically sustainable development (e.g. support environmental organisations, participate in demonstrations).	4,47	1,75	30,9 %	16,0 %
Every single individual holds a personal responsibility to change his/hers lifestyle in an ecologically sustainable direction.	5,44	1,38	53,3 %	4,0 %
Even though the majority is against certain measures aiming to improve the environmental situation, it is sometimes nevertheless necessary to implement them	5,37	1,32	53,9 %	5,8 %

* Percentage of respondents rating the statement as either 6 (unlabelled) or 7 (completely agree).
** Percentage of respondents rating the statement as either 1 (completely disagree) or 2 (unlabelled).

Given the high importance ascribed the motivational value-type *Self Direction* in the value-survey, the results from these more policy-specific questions indicates that respondents either hold an understanding of individual freedom and autonomy divergent from the one

represented by classic liberal theory, or, consistent with the high importance ascribed the value-item *Protected Environment*, are prepared to make a value trade-off where freedom is sacrificed for stronger environmental protection. For instance, a majority of respondents do not agree with the statement that behaving in an environmental friendly way is something the single individual should be free to decide upon, which indicates that a large proportion of the respondents are prepared to trade individual freedom in favour for stricter environmental codes of behaviour. It could thus be anticipated that policies containing prescriptions relating to the environmental practices of single individuals not necessarily will be dismissed as being illegitimate. In line with this, the survey-responses also show a rather strong support for the statements on individual responsibility in relation to environmental protection. In particular, a majority of the respondents agree that individuals hold a personal responsibility to alter their lifestyles in a more environmentally friendly direction. Lastly, a response certainly interesting when interpreted in a perspective of democracy, but which also indicates the weighing of freedom versus environment made by the respondents, is the strong agreement that the opinions of the majority not always can be allowed to determine the shaping of environmental policy-measures. In other words, individual self-determination must in certain circumstances be limited in preference for other values deemed to be highly important, and the state should therefore take responsibility for also implementing less popular (but environmentally significant) measures.

V. Concluding Remarks

In this article, I set out to demonstrate how an alternative, more comprehensive interpretation of the concept of legitimacy might implicate on understandings of a *legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma* thought to limit the possibilities to legitimately introduce strong environmentally protective measures in liberal democracies. As the comprehension of this dilemma previously, and consistent with the traditions of political philosophy, emanated from a definition of legitimacy as a normative concept, the scholarly debate surrounding the dilemma's implications has by and large been preoccupied with attempts to bring together liberal theory and environmental values or policies. However, in applying this definition of legitimacy, the significance of a correspondence between *citizens' personal values* and the normative foundations of policy is altogether overlooked as an important factor explaining why some policies and policy instruments are understood as being legitimate and others are not. In particular as the importance of involving single individuals and households in the environmental work are emphasised in most national policies and international agreements on ecological sustainability, it should be reasonable to include also the values held by these actors in any evaluation on the possibility for governments to implement more effective environmentally protective measures.

Therefore, as a theoretical contribution, I suggest that the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma's founding assumptions need to be reconsidered, and that now is the time for scholars of political ecology to incorporate also values and value-priorities actually established in society as a starting-point for further attempts to find a place for strong environmental protective

policies in contemporary democracies. This further implies, from a methodological perspective, that conclusions on policy-legitimacy should be drawn from an evaluation of value-correspondence as previously suggested by Beetham (1991). However, to really grasp the complex formation of values within the individual, a general value-survey also needs to be complemented by explorations aiming to elucidate how core values are both interpreted and translated into more situation-specific values and policy-preferences, as well as how individuals handle value-conflict and, in different contexts, make trade-offs between several conflicting values held as important. Only by, in this manner, reconstructing the logic of people's judgements (cf. Beetham, 1991:100) will we be able to provide answers on the legitimacy of policies for environmental protection.

Finally, the concluding empirical exploration is taken to be a first attempt to apply personal values, rather than theoretical principles, as a foundation for conclusions on the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma. Even though the empirical material is both rather limited as well as focused on the Swedish case, the underpinning theoretical and methodological considerations are by no means valid only for the Swedish context and the results of the survey should therefore provide relevant insights for researchers and, in particular, politicians or policy-makers considering the possibility to legitimately implement effective environmental policies in liberal democracies more generally. The results of the empirical survey shows that, although people in general rate traditional liberal core-values such as freedom and independence as being highly important, they nevertheless either interpret these values or are willing to make value trade-offs in a way that strongly benefits the possibility for implementing policies that are both effective *and* legitimate. Thus, protection of the environment is either viewed as a precondition for individual freedom, or as something which is of superior importance in situations where the two values conflict. These results stand in contrast to what the legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma suggests, and shows that individuals in reality are inclined to view also environmental policies which might infringe on individual autonomy as acceptable. Thereby, it can be concluded that the political-theoretical foundations of contemporary democracies not can be taken to constitute *a priori* knowledge about the values and value-priorities held by individuals in these societies; that the recommendations for public policy drawn from the (normative) legitimacy – effectiveness dilemma therefore need to be reconsidered; and that the previously considered imperative of being able to (rhetorically as well as in practice) reconcile environmentally protective policies with liberal core principles might be less significant for reaching policy legitimacy.

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[i] For this, see a commendable overview of different compatibility analyses in Jagers (2002).

[ii] Other variants include calls for more of market-control and influence, a global green government or expert-rule in the form of an ecocracy (cf. Eckersly, 1992 & 2006; Lundqvist, 2004).

[iii] Certainly, also remnants of a previously all-pervading belief in the splendour of technocratic solutions underpin this line of political rhetoric.

[iv] I'm using the term 'power relationship' to describe all situations where questions of legitimacy might arise. In particular, power relationship here signals the relationship between the citizen and political authority.

[v] For example, Schaar (1984:108-110) argues that relating the level of legitimacy to the 'belief in legitimacy', the role of the state in manipulating it becomes far too important and an evaluation along these lines risks, therefore, to provide evidence of nothing outside the ability of the powerful to advance arguments of its own rightfulness: "The regime or the leaders provide the stimuli, first in the form of policies improving citizen welfare and later in the form of symbolic materials which function as secondary reinforcements […] Over time, if the rulers manipulate symbols skilfully, symbolic rewards alone may suffice to maintain supportive attitudes".

[vi] Beetham (1991) actually conceives of legitimacy as a three-dimensional structure, incorporating *expressed consent* (i.e. social legitimacy) and *rule conformity* in addition to *rule justifiability*. I nevertheless want to highlight the role of the justifiability-dimension as constructing the foundation for legitimacy. Social legitimacy could rather be understood as an outcome from a power-relationship which indeed may be legitimate, but which also can be upheld through coercion. In the same way it can be argued that the rule conformity-dimension (that the exercise of power follows a set of formal and informal rules) is "fairly uncontroversially subordinate to the other two [dimensions of legitimacy], because the rules themselves may be just or unjust according to some external standard" (Parkinson 2003:182; see also Beetham, 1991:17). Thus, the rules themselves need not only to be abided by in the process of acquiring or exercising power, but they must first and foremost themselves be justifiable in the sense that their normative foundations are shared also by the citizenry.

[vii] Within the SHARP Research Programme (www.sharpprogram.se), questionnaires were sent out to 2800 randomly drawn household members, 20-75 years old, in four Swedish municipalities (Piteå, Huddinge, Växjö and Göteborg) during spring 2005. The overall response rate was 30 percent. When the socioeconomic

characteristics of the respondents were compared with an average resident in each of the four municipalities, house-owners and people with either compulsory school- or university education proved to be somewhat overrepresented. People with education on upper secondary level were thus underrepresented in the sample.

[viii] Although the topic for this article so far has focused strongly on ideological orientations as the key for policy legitimacy, previous research have indicated that the ideologies are not particularly useful for identifying values or attitudes with single individuals, as these are either completely unfamiliar or quite meaningless to people outside the political elite (cf. Sniderman & Tetlock 1986). Therefore, explicit questions on ideological affiliation have not been posed to the respondents. However, empirical studies have shown strong indications for a two-way connection between individuals' value priorities and their political orientation. Most notably, value priorities can be said to guide individuals' adoption of a specific political orientation (Tetlock, Peterson and Lerner, 1996; Devos et al. 2002).

[ix] The 10 motivational value-types are further arranged in a two-dimensional value-systems structure highlighting the consistent conflicts and compatibilities among values. Horizontally *Openness to Change* (incorporating the value-types Self-Direction, Stimulation and Hedonism) is placed opposite to *Conservation* (incorporating Conformity, Tradition and Security). Vertically *Self-Transcendence* (Universalism and Benevolence) is placed opposite *Self-Enhancement* (Power and Achievement).

[x] This suggests a hierarchical ordering of values where general, core values underpin the formation of values and attitudes in more specific matters. This is consistent with most research on values and the environment (see for example Stern et al, 1995; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999)