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**QUIET ACTIVISTS**  
—  
**ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND VALUE ADJUSTMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY ADVISORS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

**Master of Science**

by

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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I investigate the influence of environmental values on the work of environmental policy advisors in a regional council in New Zealand and the influence on the institutional values of their work environment on their personal environmental values.

Values are relatively stable concepts of socially acquired beliefs and norms that influence the perception and behaviour of humans and are organised in interdependent and dynamic structures that can be changed through social experiences. Environmental values are partly responsible for environmentally friendly behaviour, which encompasses a variety of activities and even lifestyle choices.

People, who have chosen to work in the environmental sector are exposed to environmental values through working for institutions that represent environmentally friendly principles. By working in an environmental context, environmental values can get changed by social interaction, which can lead to an adjustment or approximation to the dominant notion of environmental values within the workplace (Finegan, 2000)

Although policy advice is expected to be a neutral and objective task, statements are still written by persons with an individual opinion that, although suppressed, represents the values of the writer (Heineman, Bluhm, Peterson, & Keary, 2002). It is therefore likely that the whole process of evaluating information and preparing a policy recommendation is influenced by the values of the policy advisor.

My findings indicate that environmental values of employees get adjusted to the institution's environmental values through their work. This happens through a merging of their private environmental values into their professional values, through processes of adjustment. This change not only results in identification with the job but also presents a way to circumvent possible value conflicts in the work environment.

The policy process involves a number of stages where information is re-evaluated and discussed to fit the formal and structural requirements of policy making under the Resource Management Act, which is done in collaboration with others. This leads to a social construction of values that are represented in collaboratively developed policy recommendation.

In my conclusion, I show that policy advisors at regional government level use. in New Zealand have environmental values, use them for environmental protection, and adjust them to work more efficiently for the environment within a public service organisation. The use of their environmental values by the participants show that they are environmentalists and do what environmentalists do, but in a quiet, unobtrusive way.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Margret and Horst,  
for showing the love and strength I aim for.

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

### ***1.1 Background and Research Questions***

Concern for the state of the environment is not a concept exclusive to modern western societies; it however characterises the phenomenon of environmentalism that in its modern form originated from the western societies during the 1870's (Taylor, 2005). Effects of human settlement and industrialisation during this and later eras have had a significant impact on the perception of issues regarding human impact on the natural environment and led subsequently to the current notion of environmental concern (Taylor, 2005).

Concern about environmental problems can be expressed on different levels, such as individual or local, and also change the attitudes of society towards environmental issues (Sutton, 2000). The concept of modern environmentalism, as an expression of this concern, started to gain in importance during the 1960's in western societies and is often referred to as a social movement (Dryzek, 2003; Pepper, 1996; Taylor, 2005; Wapner, 1996). Abramson and Inglehart (1995) attribute the change of the importance of environmental concern in society to a shift from materialist to postmaterialist values that represent the increase of economic security in western societies at that time. Others attribute environmental concern to environmental values of an individual (Dietz, Fitzgerald, & Schwom, 2005). Since values are believed to be socially acquired (Stern, 2000a), a shift in the values of society as described by Inglehart and Abramson (1995) could be seen as a prerequisite for the change in individual values.

The rise of environmentalism as a social movement is seen as the cause of change in individual and institutional behaviour towards the environment. Due to this influence, societies are engaging in environmentally aware behaviour that attributes value to the environment beyond the economic value (Sutton, 2000).

Individual environmentalism can be expressed by actions such as recycling or saving energy on a private level as well by membership in an environmental organisation,

and is partly caused by environmental values (Stern, 2000a). Apart from individual actions, environmentally friendly behaviour can be endorsed by institutions or corporations. Change towards environmentally friendly measures that is initiated by governmental institutions is done with policies, regulations, and laws. Institutional environmentalism can thus represent the institutional definition of the value of the natural environment. This environmentalism is a politically and socially derived construct and represents to a degree the environmental values of society (Hannigan, 2006; Sutton, 2000).

Both individual and institutional environmental behaviour are based on the value that is attributed to the environment by the environmental values. The degree of influence of environmental values on individual environmental behaviour is however debated (Dietz et al., 2005; Kaiser, Hubner, & Bogner, 2005). Values are stable concepts of beliefs in individuals that act as guidelines for behaviour and orientation within society (Schwartz, 1992). Values, including environmental values, are socially constructed but do not necessarily cause conformity or similar behaviour in individuals (Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). The expression of environmental values through environmentally friendly behaviour is very varied in scope and focus. This variety shows in the levels of commitment to environmentally friendly behaviour ranging from environmental activism to an annual donation to an environmental organisation (Tesch & Kempton, 2004). Environmental values are also presumed to influence occupational choices of individuals (Chawla, 2006). The choice to express concern for and commitment to the environment through taking on an environmental job could be influenced by environmental values.

Environmental jobs could be divided into three major groups. Jobs in the non-profit non-governmental sector include working in an environmental activist group or as a volunteer for environmental protection, whereas jobs in commercial sectors, such as consulting or engineering, have an environmental aspect but do not necessarily focus environmental protection. Governmental positions are concerned with natural resource regulation and environmental protection, but can only focus on environmental protection within political frameworks.

While non-profit non-governmental organisations (NGOs) might have a higher representation of political activists and volunteers than the government or commercial organisations, all can have a positive impact on the environment. The perception of NGOs and governments as opposition is not accurate as both can collaborate in political processes (Fischer & Black, 1995). However, despite this reality of cooperation, people who decide to work in an environment-related job in a government position have potentially different values to political activists for the environment who might work for an NGO (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994). The difference between these groups shows that there are many ways to contribute to environmentally friendly behaviour. Public servants who work in an environment related field act environmentally friendly without political activism.

The writing of policies for environmental legislation is not a direct or primary environmentally friendly behaviour such as recycling, saving energy or activism. However, the implementation of policies can have significant impacts on the environment. A considerable responsibility lies therefore with the writers of these policies. Environmental policy regulates issues regarding the protection, exploitation, and restoration of the environment. The writing process of a policy involves a range of people that contribute information, suggestions and analysis to the subsequent decision (Heineman, Bluhm, Peterson, & Keary, 2002). The evaluation of this information is done by policy advisors, who also compile it and write recommendations to the decision makers. This work is dominated by the legislative framework and internal structures of the organisation, but the influence of personalities, values and individual motives cannot be ruled out (Heineman et al., 2002).

The identification of the influence of environmental values on policies could enhance the understanding of indirect environmentally friendly behaviour. This behaviour could contribute positively to environmental protection without activism and within a seemingly opposed system. Environmental policy is made by people who can be environmentalists. One of my interests was how the values of people involved in policy making influenced policy. If environmental issues attract a certain type of

person with environmental values, then environmental policy is made by environmentalist public servants and not just by public servants without any concern for the environment. Environmental values or environmentalism can however not be a prerequisite for working as an environmental policy advisor. The other question was thus whether being exposed to environmental issues would influence the values of policy advisors towards a more environmentally friendly predisposition.

In New Zealand significant environmental policy is made under the Resource Management Act (RMA). This includes central government, regional councils, and district councils. I chose to investigate the personal views of policy advisors in a regional council about their job and environmentalism, as their work contributes to the outcome of environmental policy. Regional councils determine their own policies about environmental and resource management issues. The policy advisors are working within an organisation that, due to the size of the regions, usually employs in-house scientists, policy advisors, and other experts. The evaluation process that leads to a policy recommendation is shaped by the collaborative effort of these people, making the policy advice a socially constructed and value-based effort of a group of environmental value holders.

While there is reliable statistical data on environmental values and the predictability of environmentally friendly behaviour, qualitative data is still rare (Kaiser et al., 2005). By interviewing people who are involved in policy-making about their personal values, I hoped to be able to determine whether there were influences of environmental values on an individual basis in the policy making process.

My research questions were therefore as follows:

- Do environmental policy advisors believe that their personal environmental values influence their work?
- Does their policy advisory work influence their personal environmental values?

This study is limited to a small sample of policy advisors who were all employed by one regional council in New Zealand. The unique environmental legislation in New Zealand and the corresponding requirements for policy advice and the interpretive approach to the research places limits on the generalizability of this study into other similar situations.

The research sought to offer some insight into individual reasons for people to work for environmental departments in a local government organisation. In context of previous studies, it looks to contribute to the small field of research about individual values as influences in policy processes.

## ***1.2 Overview of Chapters***

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter two contains an introduction and literature review to the topics mentioned in the summary in 1.1. It is divided into three main sections concerning value research, environmental values and working for the environment.

Chapter three introduces the methodology used for this research. Ethical considerations, data collection, and analysis approach are discussed; together with the qualitative approach of the research and the corresponding issues of validity and reliability. In addition, the sample of seven policy advisors in a regional government in New Zealand is described.

Chapter four present the main findings of the research. The results are arranged in three categories of environmental values and work environment, environmentalism and value guidance and value adjustment. The findings are discussed after their presentation instead of an additional chapter for discussion.

Chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the results of this research and answers the research questions. The chapter includes implications for policy development and concludes with suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

In this literature review I discuss value theories, environmental values and the influence of environmentalism on occupational choice of individuals. I also present an overview of relevant areas of the environmental legislation in New Zealand as far as it concerns the work area of the participants in my research project.

Specifically, in section 2.2 I discuss the formation of value theories in social science and introduce concepts of values that are widely used for research. This is followed by an introduction to models that assess these values and their potential influence on behaviour within a theoretical framework.

Section 2.3 is concerned with a special kind of values, environmental values. I provide some background information on concepts of environmental values and the corresponding phenomenon of environmentalism before I focus in the influence of environmental values on the lifestyle of individuals.

Before I conclude this literature with a summary, I review parts of environmental legislation in Section 2.4 that are significant for policy advisors who work in a regional council.

### ***2.2 The Notion of Value Research***

#### **2.2.1 The development of modern value theories**

The word value can be assigned to several meanings as a noun, like an economic value, religious or moral value, or as a verb to the valuing process. The meanings of the word change upon the perspective of the interpreter and the objects that values are bestowed upon (Pauls, 1990).

The use of value concepts in a non-economical context has its roots in Greek philosophy (Raz, 2003). Philosophy has contributed a variety of theories about human values in general but also theories about origin and influence (Raz, 2003; Shand, 1993). Philosophical thoughts, such as the works of Nietzsche can be used as an example for a values theory that also fits into modern sociological concepts such as constructivism. Nietzsche claims that human values, as all thoughts and considerations, cannot claim to be universally valid and true for there are no 'facts' but only interpretations and thus every individual thinks from a different perspective (Shand, 1993). Accordingly, values are derived individually and are perceptions of the individual and not objective truth. Further Nietzsche claimed that values are motivating and guiding our lives and perceptions of ourselves (Shand, 1993).

In sociology, philosophy has played a considerable part, together with psychology, in deriving concepts of human values. (Pauls, 1990; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). Sociological research about human values and their social effects originates from early psychological considerations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which saw values as an alternative or additional concept to behavioural research that was mainly based on the hypothesis that factors such as instincts, physiological needs and external stimulation influence behaviour (Tomasi, 1998).

The idea that values determine behaviour dates back to 1918 with an article by Thomas and Znaniecki who related values to observable actions (Adler, 1956). Amongst others, Gordon Allport followed this idea and published a global concept of values for psychological tests of behaviour in 1931, introducing six classes of values that represented a broad scope of different areas such as religious and materialistic values (Vaughan & Hogg, 2002).

In his review of values research in sociology, Adler (1956) showed that sociology rapidly adopted the new concept and produced a vast amount of classifications and definitions of values. Based on his literature review, he reduced the available concepts and categorisations of values and summarized them into four types of values which he called absolute values, material values, social values and values that influence action,

but recognized that “there are, in addition, some mixed types” (p. 272). Adler’s review was followed by more categorizations and definitions of values.

Values research and its formalization of value theories also gained popularity with psychologists (Rokeach, 1973; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). However, in social psychology, attitudes became viewed as the main concept for explaining behaviour rather than values. This led to a variety of different notions and theories as to what attitudes and values are, what they encompass and how they are structured (Rohan, 2000; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). In sociological and psychological terms, the word value can be associated with a range of other words that all have similar meanings, like attitude, belief, preference, norm or principle. In some situations a value can represent the same qualities as a belief or attitude although the strength of conviction associated with the words varies. In general, values are referred to as more strongly held and less changeable than attitudes and both are likewise used to explain or predict behaviour (Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). The strength that is attributed to these concepts is however acknowledged to be different, with attitudes generally believed to be weaker than a value and more specific to certain situations (Ettinger, Stein, Crooks, & Crooks, 1994; Feather, 1999; Rokeach, 1973; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002).

The classification and definition of values has been ongoing and there has been a similar ongoing development of various theories in values research. Several different models of explanation have been produced over the years that assess values or their influence on other values and behaviour (Adler, 1956; Kaiser, Hubner, & Bogner, 2005; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). The theorising about values in general needs to be based on a clear definition. Pauls (1990) refers to a three-part distinction of value theory types, listing descriptive, normative and meta-normative types as categories. While the descriptive value theory produces ideas about what values held by a person or group are, normative theories attempt to define what values should be. Meta-normative theories provide criteria to evaluate normative theories and can be found to provide basis to both normative and descriptive values theories. These criteria of value theories can be further diversified into subgroups. Social sciences and psychology however generally employ descriptive values theories in their methods

(Pauls, 1990). The hope that a simple kind of taxonomy of values and perhaps their influences on humans and human behaviour could be developed within a theory has never been realised but nevertheless some exhaustive theories on value definitions have been produced.

The difficulty to agree on universal terms and definitions for human perceptions of their needs and moral obligations has been recognised in the earlier stages of values research (Adler, 1956; Rokeach, 1973). From these various definitions and theories of values I explore and present the concept of values and their relations I used in this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Concepts of values**

In this section I introduce the concepts and definitions of values that are most commonly outlined in values literature to create a coherent picture of the values theory that is the basis of my research. The focus will be on Rokeach's value concept and the value theory of Schwartz, which in turn is based on Rokeach's work.

The use of the word value as a concept could be divided into four aspects: (a) a value describes an object; (b) an object is judged as valuable by a values judgement; (c) values are norms that are referred to for conduct of action; and (d) value holders that represent an individual or group and their specific values (Rezsóhazy & Neil, 2001). This distinction is however theoretical. The use and understanding of a person's values by her/himself is unlikely to be structured in this way. Thus, the interpretation of one's own values and what they refer to might use all four categories instead of just one.

Since values do not separate into precisely sectioned definitions, they are frequently described as systems. This solution is not due to the lack of tools to identify singular values but aids the understanding of the interrelations in people's value constructs. The intertwined nature of the value systems however makes it difficult to single out specific values. Values seem to have fuzzy boundaries that are hard or maybe impossible to define by language, which is inherently limited and subject to

interpretation in abstract situations. The assumption that values are connected, dependent on and influenced by other values is the basis of most definitions. Their interdependence suggests a hierarchical structure, according to the strength of mutual influence (Oyserman, Neil, & Baltes, 2001; Rezsóhazy & Neil, 2001; Rokeach, 1973).

However, the relations amongst values whether they are hierarchical or flat could no longer be explained with a purely descriptive approach but needs a meta-normative rationalisation. As mentioned earlier, sociological values research works predominantly with descriptive value theories. Descriptive value theories range from basic twofold typologies like Rokeach's distinction between terminal and instrumental values (Rokeach, 1973) to more complex models such as the six value typology of Allport in 1931 (Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). A meta-normative theory of values is Schwartz' value theory (1992), which assumes a spatial interdependence of values that is not part of their descriptive characteristics. Values research has produced reliable data about such relationships amongst values, which indicates some internal consistency of the value relationships (Schwartz & Bardi, 2003; Stern, Dietz, & Guagnano, 1995a).

While the necessity of a clear definition for single values can be debated from a theoretical point of view, research methodology requires a clear descriptive categorization in order to conduct reliable and valid research about value relationships. However, a precise description of values can still lead to confusion or weak results due to misinterpretation since there is no guarantee that participants have the same understanding of a particular value (Rezsóhazy & Neil, 2001). In order to explain the interdependent relationships amongst values, a descriptive concept has to be developed first.

Rokeach's descriptive concept of values (Rokeach, 1973) is frequently cited as the basis of further theories and can possibly claim a founding status for behavioural value theory on a meta-normative level (Dietz, Fitzgerald, & Schwom, 2005; Feather, 1999; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). In 1973, Rokeach divided

values into two categories of terminal (end state) and instrumental (mode of conduct) values, which reduced initially the long lists of other theories (Adler, 1956). Based on his definition that that “a *value* is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable [...]” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5), instrumental values refer to a behaviour that is desirable while terminal values represent goals in life to be achieved. Both kinds of values are to be understood as a kind of anchor which attitudes can be arranged around. The distinction continued in subcategories, making his theory more precise but still diverse. Rokeach found that terminal values could be further distinguished into social and personal values, depending on which of the areas they represent. They determine a person’s attitude based on their priority (social or personal) in a given situation and represent goals for themselves or society that people aim to achieve, such as personal freedom or world peace. He divided instrumental values further into moral and competence values and defined them as desirable traits in a human, such as honesty in the moral categories, and acting politely as a self-actualisation value in the competence category. Overall, Rokeach determined 36 values, but noted that this might seem “a relatively small number” for expressing the variety amongst values (Rokeach, 1973, p. 23). In order to compensate this, Rokeach’s concept of values theory used a hierarchical structure in which values could be arranged. The possible combinations of this rating provided the anticipated variety.

Rokeach did not explain the relationship between his two distinct categories of terminal and instrumental values, although he assumed that “they represent two separate, yet functionally interconnected systems” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 12). While he referred to the development of values by saying that “a value system is a learned organization of principles and rules to help one choose between alternatives, resolve conflicts, and make decisions” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 14) he did not create an own theory about the development of values. His concept of values is therefore only descriptive but provides a definition of values that is used by other researchers as a basis of their definitions.

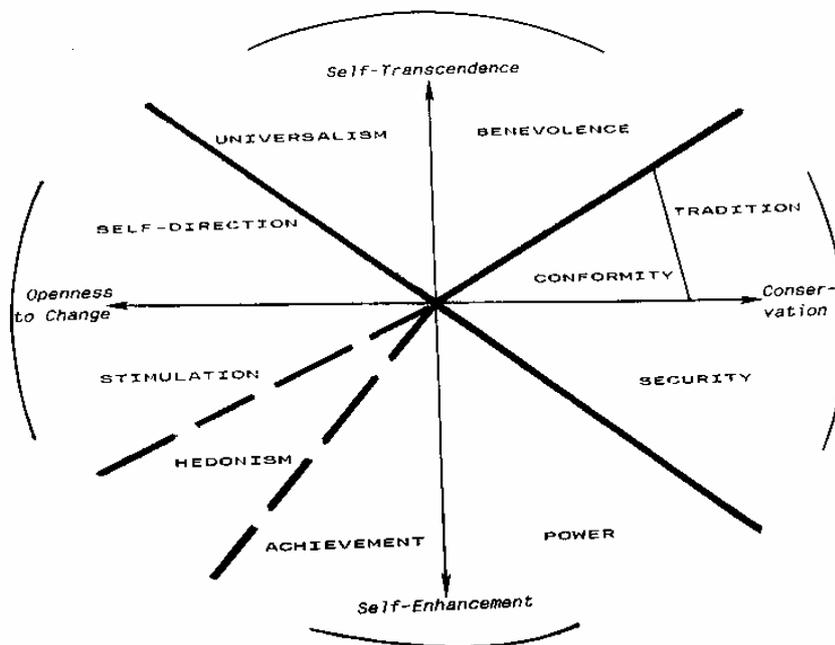
Rokeach's definition of values includes the reference to social or personal desirability or preference that is the central point of concepts that see values and attitudes socially constructed. With this understanding, Rokeach aligns with Kluckhohn (1951) about the value as a concept of the desirable that subsequently influences behaviour, but does not elaborate further on the influences of preference on values or their development. He cuts his own definitions of desirability short and leaves the mode of value generation relatively open. Pauls (1990) refers to the definition of desirable as something that ought to be desired which is within the power of society as the defining actor of moral practices. He identifies the definition of values through desirability as the application of a normative criterion that restricts the understanding of value in a descriptive research situation. However, a descriptive value theory needs to define its object of research, which is restrictive of alternative interpretations. The application of normative typologies to the definition of values for descriptive methods can enhance the understanding of these definitions. Desirability, although a restrictive term and varying through the change of society, is therefore frequently used to describe values in general terms (Dietz et al., 2005; Kaiser et al., 2005; Pauls, 1990; Stern, 2000a).

Referring again to Rokeach's definition that "A *value* is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5) and that "this belief transcends attitudes toward objects and towards situations" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 25). Vaughan and Hogg (2002, p.128) define values as "a higher-order concept thought to provide a structure for organising attitudes" and attitudes as "[an] organisation of beliefs, feelings and behavioural tendencies" or "a general feeling or evaluation" (p. 108). Rokeach's notion of attitudes "[refers] to an organization of several beliefs around a specific object or situation" (p.18) while Dietz (2005) defines them as "positive or negative evaluations of something quite specific" (p. 346). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, p. 551) elaborate the point of value definition with the following statement: "According to the literature, values are (a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviours, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance." Rezsóhazy and

Neil (2001) see values as part of a hierarchical interdependent system of values that is not necessarily clearly explainable and evades assessment. Schwartz also defined values as “desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives” (as cited in Feather, 1999, p.57). The notion of a value as a superior ordering or classifying concept for attitudes that relate directly or more specific to behaviour is the common theme of all definitions in this section. I disagree with Rokeach’s distinction between attitudes and values on the basis that values are single, very specific beliefs while attitudes refer to an organisation of beliefs “that are all focused on a given object or situation” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 18). I concur with Schwartz (1992), Schwartz and Bilsky (1987), and Rezsóhazy and Neill (2001) that values are interdependent and trans-situational systems that correspond with desirable goals in life and are capable of influencing or guiding behaviour or at least the intention or decision to perform behaviour. The definition of values for this research is derived accordingly as the representation of a belief or system of beliefs that influence subsequent attitudes according to the strength of the individual value compared to other competing or corresponding values.

This influence of values on attitudes and each other leads away from a purely descriptive concept of values. Schwartz (1994) and Rohan (2000) argue that Rokeach stopped short of actually classifying values and value relations and thus delivering a theory on values by only describing the nature of instrumental and terminal value. Schwartz subsequently derived his own value relationship theory that was based on Rokeach’s definition of values but abandoning the distinction between terminal and instrumental in favour of terminal values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). The Schwartz Value Theory determined 10 values that represent distinct goals or motivating principles that each influence how people are leading their lives (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005). While Rokeach distinguished between only two categories and assumed a relationship, Schwartz suggests that 10 values have a dynamic relationship to each other which is either compatible or incompatible (Schwartz, 1992). He conducted research by using the Schwartz Value Scale (SVS) for determining values of people. The SVS is again, like Rokeach’s value definition, widely used by other researchers for the determination of values (Dietz et al., 2005; Rezsóhazy & Neil,

2001; Rohan, 2000). Using the example of individual and collective interests, Schwartz found in his research that values representing individual achievements such as hedonistic lifestyle did not mix with collective responsibilities such as values representing benevolence. This points toward values that either mutually exclude each other or are compatible. The result of Schwartz' research was a "quasi-circular diagram" (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005, p. 170) to show which values are adjacent or opposed to each other and which general value dimension they belong to, as reproduced in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1** - Schwartz's Value Theory model showing the relations amongst values, reproduced from Schwartz (1992, p. 45)

In this diagram, the values are arranged according to their compatibility with the neighbouring values. Achievement and Power are within the dimension of self-enhancement, this means, the pursuit of goals in life that correspond with these values is possible simultaneously, as the values are in adjacent positions. The opposite value dimension represents values that are incompatible to a simultaneous pursuit. These types of orthogonal values distributions have also been found in other social psychological research (Duckitt, 2001).

This research was conducted with groups of people from 20 different countries in order to justify the results as universal. Schwartz could show that value structures could be generalised to all country groups but presumed that this structure is changeable and no structure would be truly universal since “values structures probably evolve over time as social conditions are transformed” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 47). Schwartz does not see the values as stable or set but rather sees individual values associating with one of the comprehensive value area titles. Individual values perception can thus vary from the initial value definition and with this system, the theory accommodates the variation in human values.

The Belief System Theory (Grube, Mayton, & Ball-Rokeach, 1994), another theory based on Rokeach’s work, follows a similar assumption that values are interconnected and changeable. For the purposes of my research, the same relationships between values as in Schwartz’ theory and other theories based on Rokeach are assumed. This means that values can influence and antagonise each other and also change subsequently or shift their relative position, which is important for the anticipated value adjustment due to external value influence.

While the evolution of societal values is not a part of my research, I agree with Schwartz’s suggestion that values evolve and change is valid for individual as well as societal values. He also mentions that although cultural perceptions of norms might be influential, the SVS represents values of individuals and not cultural ones. Schwartz’ research thus also suggests that values change after the initial development in an individual and are influenced by society. Since my research looks at the environmental values of individuals, Schwartz’s theory of developing and changing values is appropriate. The next section will therefore explore the development of values and their subsequent adjustment.

### **2.2.3 Developing values**

Within socio-cultural theory, the creation of the value system of a person is largely seen as a development in a social setting (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Dietz et al.,

2005; Duckitt, 2001; Oyserman et al., 2001; Rezsosazy & Neil, 2001; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002). The main source of explanations towards values, value and attitude change and their impact on personalities is psychological research (Ettinger et al., 1994; Oyserman et al., 2001; Rohan, 2000). Sociological concepts draw from these findings to place values into a social context (Stern, 2000a).

The direct social company of a person and his or her wider social orientation is thus seen as the strongest influence on values (Oyserman et al., 2001). Ethical considerations, worldview, and concept of self are then orientated on the society's standard but with some differences due to individual preferences and experiences. In assuming that values are mainly socially acquired, the immediate society and the individually constructed value system of a person become the contributors to a personal values system (Robbins & Greenwald, 1994). The society functions as the value defining actor and the individual value system as the re-negotiable construct that frequently gets re-oriented against current norms (Kuczynski, Neil, & Baltes, 2001).

Values research assumes values to be changeable and not set even in adults, if they are confronted with a convincing argument (Ettinger et al., 1994; Feather, 1999; Grube et al., 1994; Uyeki & Holland, 2000). On acquiring attitudes and thus, subsequently values, Ettinger et al. (1994) list the observation of behaviour of others and learning through conditioning as the main influences on behaviour, which function as interpretive help for an individual's understanding of their surrounding, social identification, and adjustment to peers. These influences are also important for the case of changing one's attitudes and potentially one's values through (a) comparison with attitudes and values of others, (b) the comparison of inconsistencies amongst one's own beliefs, attitudes and values (and subsequent adjustment) and (c) the persuasion by (perceived) peers, which would be the above mentioned re-orientation.

Society, and intimate or immediate society even more, can thus be considered as a main influence for moral standards, ethics and opinions on the right way of life. Society defines what ought to be good, desirable or wrong (Kluckhohn, 1951; Pauls, 1990; Rokeach, 1979) and the individual aligns with a majority of these definitions and includes these concepts into his or her own values conception. Peers could be described as the fine tuning influence on values as they can provide individual feedback to a person (Ettinger et al., 1994).

A person could therefore harbour values that are created by social norms or peer influence and can be altered individually by persuasion or conflicting attitudes, and self-derived values through conditioning, which can get subsequently changed due to the same individual or social influences. This individual value system of a person can have preferences that are different from the society's standard and may experience conflict situations when making decisions (Braithwaite, 1994; Feather, 2002; Hogg, Neil, & Paul, 2001). In general, social influence and persuasion is considered to be a strong influence on individual perceptions of values (Chaiken, Neil, & Paul, 2001; Petty, Neil, & Paul, 2001; Ryan, 2000).

In order to understand the development and adjustment of values, it is necessary to distinguish between values and attitudes.

Strictly speaking, values are 'just' attitudes in the sense that they convey people's evaluations of 'objects' (e.g., one values freedom). Yet researchers continue to use both terms because the objects toward which we hold values are broader than the objects toward which we hold attitudes (Chaiken et al., 2001, p.900).

The interchangeable use of attitudes and values makes it difficult to distinguish between a researcher's perception of values and attitudes. As mentioned earlier, attitudes were defined as something more specific to a certain situation but dependent on the order of values. In that case, values as the overarching or unifying concept of a group of attitudes are in direct connection to the attitudes and vice versa. Strong

attitudes about a general topic might be representing a value. These “core-evaluations” (Petty et al., 2001, p. 894) that are expressed through a set of weaker attitudes are causing a change in the value organisation if they shift from one value to the other, in order to keep the internal value consistency intact or logical.

Assuming that attitudes are considerably weaker and less set than values or core-evaluation, in a judgement situation, value-dependent attitudes may come into conflict with each other (O'Neill & Spash, 2000) when they are both relevant for the decision but contrary to each other. Since values are thought to translate into attitudes (Feather, 1999; Kaiser et al., 2005; O'Neill & Spash, 2000; Rezsöházy & Neil, 2001; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003; Vaughan & Hogg, 2002), attitudes and not the values are bearing the conflict with each other (Feather, 2002) when they are both relevant for a decision. Values could remain unchanged by the decision outcome but their hierarchy, influence or structure could be altered by reflective consideration of a past judgement decision.

In other words, in a conflict situation of individually-derived and socially-acquired values, the definition of desirability by the society and/or peers and the preference of the individual would enter a hypothetical comparison in strength of conviction to determine a decision outcome. This would result in a rearrangement of attitudes and through this, even value hierarchies (Petty et al., 2001). In case of attitudes towards behaviour, Kaiser (2005) and Chaiken et al. (2001) add that these contemplations may only apply to behaviour that follows the evaluation of the circumstances, in contrast to behaviour that is a reaction without intention.

Within this context, socially-acquired values influence in varying degrees attitudes of varying strength, that inform and influence decisions in judgement situations and with this, behaviour. A ranking of importance of the concepts could have the following order: socio-cultural position → values → (↔) attitudes → behaviour. Judgement decisions that trigger contemplation of hypothetical scenarios could then also play a role in changing the order and relationships of attitudes or values. Conflict situations like this are also of interest for environmental behaviour research where the seemingly

opposing interests of economy and ecology, or ecology and convenience influence behaviour. In order to understand value-based behaviour, the understanding of the influential strength of values and its adjustment is important.

#### **2.2.4 Values and behaviour**

Values have been used to explain behaviour, attitudes, decision-making and environmentalism amongst other things (Feather, 2002; Rezsosazy & Neil, 2001; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003). Values and attitudes have also both been associated with the prediction of behaviour as well as the changing of it (Adler, 1956). Schwartz and Bardi (2003) point out that there is little use in changing values unless it is evident that values, or these specific values, actually change behaviour. While research points towards values as elements of behavioural change (Kaiser et al., 2005; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003; Stern, 2000a), it has not yet been proven that values generally influence behaviour, but only that in some cases values play a part in changing behaviour (Schwartz & Bardi, 2003), which is the main point of critique on most research findings regarding values and behaviour (Oyserman et al., 2001).

An important factor shaping people's values lies within their perception of themselves (Dietz et al., 2005) and a close assessment of it considers these interpretations. Since values are translated into a set of attitudes as part of their definition, research about either attitudes or values can still overlap or be useful to the other (Chaiken et al., 2001). Although they are not interchangeable, for research about values-influenced behaviour, values and attitudes are both looked at because of this relationship (Uyeki & Holland, 2000)

It is therefore not surprising that some research does not lead to conclusions and values are hard to identify (Grube et al., 1994; Schwartz, 1992). The values and attitudes that trigger behaviour are as varied as behaviour itself is varied. The desire to identify simple structures in the human mind to change their behaviour has thus produced a number of theories on how to influence behaviour by altering values, beliefs, perceptions or attitudes (Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001; Petty et al., 2001; Reis, Neil, & Paul, 2001). However, while values are thought to influence behaviour, the

actual mode of it is subject to several theories (Manstead, Neil, & Paul, 2001). Assumptions, theories and models have been produced nonetheless, on how to change behaviour through values (Rohan, 2000).

As mentioned before, attitudes and values are not interchangeable but closely associated. Based on the assumption that attitudes are less durable or set than values and are oriented similarly to one's values, attitudes are commonly named as the target for change in order to change behaviour (Bamberg, 2003; Feather, 1999). A change of attitudes might also have an effect on values that are supposed to provide the framework for the organisation of attitudes. Finally, the alteration of any perception that is strong enough to change behaviour, could also have influence on the whole structure of this very framework and a person's values system. The strong reliance on validation from the social environment for justification of behaviour might also play a role in the difficulty of research to determine behaviour influenced by certain values, as well as the determination itself (Hogg et al., 2001).

Values are also interpretive. People have an individual notion about the definition of a value and specific values. The predictive power (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000) of values in research can only be reliable if there is an equal understanding of the values in question between researcher and participants (Kalof & Satterfield, 2005). While a monetary value is reasonably set, an emotionally laden aspect of values such as respecting elders or appreciating nature can already produce quite different perceptions (Grube et al., 1994). This applies also for acting environmentally friendly or for the intention to do so, as well as the definition of environmentally friendly in the first place. Contemporary models of value – behaviour relations are thus difficult to validate as people's individual understanding of values is influenced by so many factors. Nonetheless, a ranking, similar to the first one can be established: Socio-cultural position → perception of societal norms → values ↔ attitudes → (↔ feedback from behaviour) behaviour.

In this research, which is mainly concerned with environmental values and their effects on people, value/attitude-behaviour models and theories are less important. Nonetheless, the general or more specific models for values, attitudes or

environmental values can give information about how values are used and even about behaviour that is influenced by them. I therefore introduce some models of interest in the next section.

#### **2.2.5 Value systems, models and analysis**

The intricate nature of values makes them difficult to assess, either quantitatively or qualitatively. Although they evade a reliable predictability for behaviour in general (Kaiser, Wolfing, & Fuhrer, 1999; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003), large scale surveys that assess the full bandwidth or just specific values are relatively common in literature (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Grube et al., 1994; Schwartz, 1992; Uyeki & Holland, 2000). Value surveys have not been exclusively used to predict environmentally significant behaviour. Most surveys that report on this behaviour are therefore not of interest for this review.

Surveys of more direct relevance to this research are Rokeach's Value Survey (RVS) (Rokeach, 1973) and Schwartz's Value Survey (SVS) (Schwartz, 1994) which are both about value determination and classification. They are the basis for other value surveys including the ones concerning environmental values. There are some other surveys that have been used in large scale research on values, such as the World Value Survey (WVS) that is based on Inglehart's model of values based on materialism and postmaterialism (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995). This model is among the few survey models that are commonly used in wider sociological research (Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Schwartz, n.d.), but concentrates on the determination of change in cultural values of nations rather than the individual, which is why they are not considered in this literature review. The RVS and SVS are however described briefly.

In order to gain reliable quantitative data, Rokeach devised the RVS (Rokeach, 1973) where participants are asked to prioritise 36 listed values (18 terminal and 18 instrumental) that correspond with his descriptive value theory. These 36 values were derived from the subcategories of his theory by their maximum difference to the other values. Based on his empirical data, Rokeach reduced the vast number of values investigated to these 36 and concluded these to be the smallest number possible

(Rokeach, 1973). The list is deemed reasonably exhaustive (Stern, 2000a) although others find some values missing (Braithwaite, 1994; Rohan, 2000; Schwartz, 1992). Other theories have used a similarly structured approach with lists of values but the early presence of quantitative data from the RVS and detailed explanations might not only have been a good foundation but a deterrent for the use of competing theories, making the RVS very successful and widely used (Dietz et al., 2005; Feather, 1999; Rohan, 2000). Because the RVS is assuming the distinction between instrumental and terminal values and does not assess relationships, it is not always the appropriate survey to use and researchers have frequently altered or redeveloped it. Schwartz, for example developed the SVS in response to the distinction, which he thought was flawed (Dietz et al., 2005; Schwartz, 1992).

A further critique of Rokeach's underlying value concept makes it, according to Rohan (2000) "essentially a list of unconnected value words" (p. 260). This omission was picked up by Schwartz (1992) who developed a theory that focussed on the value relationships while still including the ranking of values. The SVS was first presented in 1992 and could be called one of the re-developed RVS based models. It is based on Rokeach's thoughts (Stern *et al.*, 1993) but attempts to "classify value contents" (Schwartz, 1994, p. 21) in order to reveal underlying structures that "indicate [...] which values are compatible, incompatible or unrelated" (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005, p. 170). Due to this work on the value theory, the SVS is currently the most widely used value determination tool in social sciences (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; Rohan, 2000; Schwartz, 1994).

Some other models assess values or attitudes as part of the prediction of behaviour. Behaviour can be understood in a context of cost-benefit consideration when it comes to the predictability of specific actions such as voting or recycling. However, a concentration on only one aspect of what seems to be an emotional, rational and self-educational transaction would dismiss parts that certainly play a role in understanding decisions made in favour of one or the other behaviour.

Besides the classical Cost-Benefit-Analysis (CBA) model that is used to determine customers' decisions in classical economics, other theories for behaviour determination have adopted a more holistic view of human behaviour when it comes to values (Adger, Brown, Fairbrass, Jordan, Paavola, Rosendo, & Seyfang, 2003; Niemeyer & Spash, 2001). A CBA assumes that a person rationalises costs and benefits of a situation before deciding for the preferred option in a strict economic sense, but ignores the underlying reasons influenced by values (Dietz et al., 2005; Prior, 1998). Rational-actor-models for behaviour are not focussed on values but on functions of attitudes and rational consideration. One widely used model is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which is used to predict and explain behaviour by an evaluation of people's attitudes towards performing a certain behaviour (intention), their norms and their perceived control over the situation. The TPB is more often used in relation to risk management, which is also closer to a number of models borrowed from economic research such as the CBA and further developed models like Willingness-To-Pay or Willingness-To-Accept (-Payment) (Adger et al., 2003; O'Neill & Spash, 2000). All three models try to determine the preference of actors for certain scenarios in order to give an estimate of likelihood of behaviour. These "economistic" (Keat, 1994, p. 333) approaches are however criticized for their narrow scope regarding values and behaviour since they were developed to determine monetary values according to people's preferences and evaluation of price (Niemeyer & Spash, 2001). Since behaviour is secondary to my research, these models were not used.

The link of environmental values and environmentally friendly behaviour is however notable. Economic models can be and are used in environmental decision-making situations, but they are not suitable for determining environmental values. This is again done by models that are mainly based on Schwartz's value theory. The following models correspond in their theory and goal of assessment of environmental values and their behavioural implications.

The Value-Belief-Norm theory (VBN, Stern, 2000a) is a model for environmentalism, corresponding to the Norm-Activation-Theory, which was developed by Schwartz in

1973 and is based on altruism as a motive for environmentally friendly behaviour (Dietz et al., 2005; Kaiser et al., 2005; Stern, Dietz, Troy, Guagnano, & Kalof, 1999). People's sense of obligation, knowledge of environmental consequences, and worldview are the predicting factors for behaviour in the VBN with the most important value being a three-part altruism (Dietz et al., 2005; Kaiser et al., 2005). Instead of determining a range of values, the VBN assumes that values act through the influence on a person's beliefs and perception of norms, and concern about the environment. These influences represent altruism in three different aspects (self-interest, biospheric and humanistic altruism) can change the perception of the state of the environment or environmental problems and result in a change of behaviour (Dietz et al., 2005; Stern, 2000a; Stern et al., 1999). The ranking of concepts that is the basis of the VBN is in the following order: socio-cultural position → values → worldviews → attitudes → intentions → behaviour. This order is similar to the one discussed in the last section but only includes one-way relationships. Based on the assumption of perpetual adjustment of values through peer feedback (Chaiken et al., 2001; Ettinger et al., 1994; Petty et al., 2001) I would expect a slightly altered relationship with reciprocal influences: socio-cultural position → perception of societal norms → values ↔ worldviews ↔ attitudes ↔ intentions → (↔ feedback from behaviour) behaviour.

With the introduction of worldviews into the ranking, a new intermediary between values and attitudes is introduced. This term represents the relationship between the two other concepts. Worldviews can act as the umbrella term for more specific areas of the values system. They represent more a cluster of values that are associated with a common area of concern, such as environmental values are values that can be used for guidance on situations concerning environmental issues. Whether or not this is an autonomous concept is not clear. Nonetheless, the ecological worldview of a person, which is linked to their environmental values and subsequent behaviour, is assessed by the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) Scale (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Jones, 2000). Research with the NEP scale is the result of the creation of the NEP that represented the change in the way people in western countries thought about the environment (Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978). The NEP scale was derived to measure

environmental concern. This term originates from political phrases and is not actually part of social psychological considerations (Bamberg, 2003). Participants were asked whether or not they agreed with statements about the condition of the environment. The original 12 question scale was altered later and turned into the NEP (Ecological) Scale, which represents the New Ecological Paradigm, to address further changes in the population's perception of environmental problems (Dunlap et al., 2000). The NEP (Ecological) identifies beliefs about the right behaviour toward the environment and is therefore limited to a certain area of values. It is used to measure environmental concern (Dunlap et al., 2000; Stern et al., 1995a) but does not address the translation of this concern into behaviour.

Research about environmental concern, attitudes, or values has been conducted in abundance (Kaiser et al., 1999; O'Neill & Spash, 2000; Stern, 2000a) and numerous other works have been either based on the models above, used them, or even generated their own approaches. The theories that are introduced in this chapter all cover a different aspect of values, environmental values or behaviour. While there are theories like the TPB that are focussed on behaviour and its change, other theories, like the NEP are concerned with the assessment of values corresponding to environmental values. All of them are used to gain information about the phenomenon of environmentally friendly behaviour.

This has led to a large amount of literature about general or specific types of environmental behaviour, attitudes, concern and values. In the following section I therefore introduce some definitions and suggestions of what encompasses the wider term of environmental values.

## ***2.3 Environmental Values***

### **2.3.1 The problem of defining environmental values**

As the previous sections have shown, defining values in general is a difficult task. Assuming that an environmental value is a product of social construction as much as other values (Hannigan, 2006), an additional problem is the wide field that claims the

term environmental. Some areas that use the term environmental values are politics, economics, science, law and ethics (Kalof & Satterfield, 2005; Paavola & Lowe, 2005). All of these areas have of course a different understanding of what values are (Paavola & Lowe, 2005). Since my research is focused on the ethical dimension of values about the environment, I shortly introduce some concepts in this area and omit discussions about materialistic, economic, or scientific evaluations of the environment.

The earlier mentioned attributes of values are valid for environmental values, too. Environmental values can be seen as something specific to the environmental topic or as general values that are referred to by people if they need them in a situation that concerns environmental questions (Stern et al., 1995a). A philosophical approach to environmental values for a determination of the existence of values that exclusively refer to environmental ethic is attempted by various environmental philosophy movements, such as deep ecology (Hannigan, 2006; Pepper, 1996; Sutton, 2000; Wapner, 1996). Lockwood (1999, p. 382) refers to “intrinsic, instrumental, functional, held and assigned values”<sup>1</sup> that are used in the wider research about environmental values, including economic and psychological areas. Whether or not environmental values are a specific order of values, or derived from general values is part of the discussion (Lockwood, 1999; Pepper, 1996). Although intrinsic value of nature is a philosophical construct that is used in the other areas including politics, “there is currently no psychometrically sound instrument that uses a philosophically robust concept of intrinsic value” (Lockwood, 1999, p. 389). The intrinsic value is another concept within the range of value concepts, which includes the valuing of nature for its own sake and in its own right (Pepper, 1996). Assuming that intrinsic and environmental values have the same characteristics as other values, they can be assessed in a similar way. However, in order to assess environmental values, categories or wider areas of coherent topics have to be identified. Without a definition of the environmental values that are looked at, research could not make valid claims about their attributes and influences (Lockwood, 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> Intrinsic values are meant to value nature for itself, instrumental values suggest a purpose to the entity that is valued, functional values of nature exist regardless of valuation and are physical, held values are values in Rokeach’s sense and assigned values correspond to the notion of attitudes

The distinction between hypothetical or theoretical considerations about values and measurable or quantifiable values is dominant in the discussion about environmental values. The notion of an intrinsic environmental value in environmental economics is one example where something abstract is taken into account by predominantly quantifying models, but causes problems within these models (Asafu-Adjaye, 2005). Attempts to categorise environmental values thus often include a two-fold theoretical approach that tries to distinguish between abstract and quantifiable values.

Andrews and Waits (1978, p.1) introduce their definition by excluding economic values in saying that “environmental values are not objects that can be measured directly but relationships [...] of three kinds: individual preferences, social norms, and ecological functions.” This definition of environmental values already excludes the utilitarian aspect of “measurable” environmental values. Others include this aspect into their definition, such as Kalof and Satterfield (2005), who find four different aspects of environmental values, namely economic, philosophical and ethical, anthropological and sociological, and utilisable in judgement and decision-making. Another categorisation lists values concerning nature, humans, science and technology, economics and politics (Pepper, 1996, p. 5). Further definitions use similar categorisations, settling mostly on a dualistic concept of environmental values that separates the quantifiable environmental values from the ethical (Casey & Scott, 2006; Dietz et al., 2005; Fransson & Gärling, 1999; Kalof & Satterfield, 2005; Thompson & Barton, 1994). The three-part approach that uses altruism, egoism, and biospheric values as the categories already excludes the quantifiable environmental values (Kalof & Satterfield, 2005; Stern, 2000a; Stern et al., 1993). The dual categorisations have the advantage that environmental values of these groups have distinct features, such as being quantifiable or non-quantifiable.

The aforementioned theories about values in general can now be used to describe this scope. As explained in the second paragraph of this section, environmental values are firstly like other general values, but concerned with a specific topic. Stern et al. (1995a) even suggest that values about specific topics such as the environment are

drawn from the general values. Since the Schwartz Value Theory settles environmental values in the area of altruism alone (Dietz et al., 2005), it cannot explain ecocentric behaviour, according to Stern et al. (1993). In order to develop a coherent theory of environmental values, I have incorporated the extended definition by Stern et al. (1993) in my consideration, which settles on three value orientations that represent egoistic (self-interest), biospheric, and social-altruistic (humanistic altruism) motivations as categories for environmental values that influence an individual. I conclude that environmental values are thus the means for developing a position towards the environment that is derived out of the personal value construct of an individual, which is, according to Schwartz, constructed by social influences and individual learning experiences.

However, research about environmental values not only draws conclusions on the holding of environmental values but also on the consequences of them, like change in behaviour. A major interest in environmental values originates from the phenomenon of environmentally friendly behaviour (Casey & Scott, 2006; Chase & Panagopoulos, 1995; Kaiser et al., 2005). In the next section I therefore introduce some more specific value-behaviour models that concern environmentally friendly behaviour.

### **2.3.2 Environmentally friendly behaviour**

The behaviour link regarding environmental values is the dominant aspect in research about environmental values, concern, beliefs or attitudes (Casey & Scott, 2006; Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000; Dietz et al., 2005; Dietz, Stern, & Guagnano, 1998; Kaiser et al., 1999; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002) with environmental concern being the most often used expression (Bamberg, 2003; Casey & Scott, 2006; Kaiser et al., 1999). This term was originally borrowed from politics (Bamberg, 2003) and is general enough to stand in for all three concepts. Environmental values are believed to be crucial in determining or influencing behaviour towards the environment (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Still, while values are deemed necessary to develop awareness or the desired action for the environment (UNCED, 1992), it is quite unclear which values influence which attitude or behaviour connected to environmentally friendly behaviour.

There are many actions that could be deemed environmentally friendly, such as recycling, energy saving or reforestation. Environment-friendly or the term environmentally friendly means “not harmful to the environment” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). However, not all actions avoid harm to the environment; some actively seek to improve it. Equally, not all those actions that do something around, with, or for the environment are necessarily beneficial. In recent publications, environmentally friendly behaviour is also referred to as environmentally significant behaviour (Stern, 2000a), ecological behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2005), environmental behaviour (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000), or pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Lockwood, 1999), with most of them giving some examples of such behaviour such as recycling, consumer choice, or political action (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000; Kitchell, Kempton, Holland, & Tesch, 2000; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). While most publications give examples of environmentally friendly behaviour, Axelrod and Lehman (1993, p.153) define it as “actions which contribute towards environmental preservation.”

Due to the different interpretations of environmentally friendly behaviour, a wide range of social influences, ranging from politics to education can be reasons why people act accordingly (Hannigan, 2006). Bamberg (2003) notes that environmental concern has been used as an umbrella term for a state of mind that could trigger environmentally friendly behaviour. Research has used concern, attitudes or values alike for this purpose (Kaiser et al., 2005). Schwartz’s concept of environmentally friendly behaviour sees concern as an altruistic worldview toward the environment but Stern et al. (1993) argue that altruism alone would not explain human concern about the natural environment. Their suggestion is the threefold approach mentioned in the previous section made of altruism, egoism, and biospheric values. If altruistic values are responsible for environmentally friendly behaviour, people with a strong affinity to other social altruistic behaviour should also be the most environmentally friendly people. Schwartz’s hypothesis of altruism would thus not explain the approach of more radical groups of environmentalists, who disregard people’s needs in favour of the environment. However, combined with either egoistic or biospheric

value orientations, people's motives (e.g. to avoid personal harm from environmental degradation, or to avoid harm to the environment itself) can be explained in a more coherent way (Casey & Scott, 2006; Kalof & Satterfield, 2005). Stern et al. (1995b) however noted that biospheric values are not common in a general population sample, which turns the focus back to altruism. Finally, the VBN theory by Stern et al. (1999) cumulates these ideas into a theory that claims that personal norms or values are the basis for the general disposition to perform environmentally friendly behaviour, which includes cases of strong biospheric values without making them a prerequisite.

Stern (2000a) later identified a range of options for environmentally friendly behaviour. These are actions towards the environment that are performed by the person directly, or actions that have an indirect character such as donating money to environmental organizations. Stern (2000a) divides behaviour into intent-oriented behaviour that could give clues about people's values, and impact-oriented behaviour that represents effective environmentally friendly behaviour. With a donation, a person does not act for direct benefit towards the environment but gives the means for such actions without personal participation (Stern, 2000a). Both types of behaviour have very different outcomes in regards to their 'strength' or effectiveness for the environment. In terms of felt deservingness, the rewards for environmentally friendly behaviour stand in no connection to the effort the behaviour might have cost.

The intention to perform environmentally friendly tasks also has a strong connection to environmentally friendly behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2005), especially if the intended action fails, which is connected with the option of rewards. If the task fails, people might be discouraged or feel that environmentally friendly behaviour is futile (Pelletier, Dion, Tuson, & Green-Demers, 1999). The usefulness and determination of intended actions also mirrors people's knowledge and attitudes or values towards the environment (Kaiser et al., 2005; Stern, 2000a). The better the knowledge about suitable actions (Stern, 2000a), the more effective is the action and the stronger is the relationship between intention and environmentally friendly behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2005).

The question about what are the most common reasons for environmentally friendly behaviour is not resolved, as is the question about which values are contributing most strongly to it (Casey & Scott, 2006; Stern, 2000a). The identification of values faces inconsistencies, as does the identification of reasons. Studies about these topics have been mainly concerned with one case or one category of behaviour, such as recycling, and less about individual reasons (Casey & Scott, 2006; Robbins & Greenwald, 1994). Qualitative studies about environmental values are less prominent due to the focus on socio-demographic approaches that use social-psychological research models such as the VBN and TPB, which are designed for quantitative analysis (Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Robbins & Greenwald, 1994). In short, qualitative studies that align with others are rare in the field of environmental values research, which tends to concentrate on the verification of statistical proof of environmentally friendly behaviour in large settings in the first place. Stern et al. (2000a, 2000b) even suggest that environmentally friendly behaviour and environmentalism are hardly connected to values and attitudes, but to a long chain of personal and contextual factors where environmental values have more influence on the predisposition or intention act than on the behaviour itself. Personal reasons for environmentally friendly behaviour is less understood, because there are less studies about why individuals behave environmentally friendly and more studies about how people can be manipulated in their behaviour or how their values can be put into categories. Individual and qualitative findings cannot easily be translated back to a large scale or population (Axelrod, 1994). Thus, research remains separated into large scale and small scale research that do not have many points of connection. Nonetheless, both areas produce results that can be useful to each other as they all agree that values are involved in environmentally friendly behaviour, although their mode and strength of influence varies within the theories (Dietz et al., 2005).

However, some research about aspects of environmentally friendly behaviour has been conducted as qualitative studies (Chawla, 2006). It has been argued that to understand the motivations to commit to a certain lifestyle that includes environmentally friendly rules or tries to raise awareness, a qualitative method is appropriate (Chawla, 1998; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003). Some other studies about

environmentalism as well as environmental behaviour use both qualitative and quantitative methods according to their focus (Tesch & Kempton, 2004).

While there is still no coherent theory on influences on environmentally friendly behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2005), value theory and value-behaviour models suggest that in part, values influence behaviour, even if it is an indirect influence (Dietz et al., 2005; Stern, 2000a). I therefore suggest that environmental values, which reflect the general values of a person as they are drawn from the general mindset or value construct, can influence behaviour in the same way as general values over more specific attitudes and intentions to perform certain types of behaviour. A detectable way of the expression of environmental values is through various frequencies and dimensions of environmentally friendly behaviour.

Certainly, a strong expression of environmental values would be the various phenomena of environmentalism that are displayed by committed individuals. Since this commitment to the environment also concerns lifestyle and even occupational choices, I introduce some concepts of environmentalism in the next section before reviewing research on environmental professions and lifestyles.

### **2.3.3 Environmentalism**

Environmental awareness in different guises can be traced back as far as the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the clubs and associations of people amongst the upper classes concerning themselves with urban and natural environments (Taylor, 2005a). Events like the founding of the Yellowstone National Park in 1872, which was the first National Park, fall into this era. The concern, which led to these events, is not unlike the concern raised by the effects of industrial pollution that led to the establishment of environmentalism in its present form (King & McCarthy, 2005). This concern is thought to be influenced by postmaterialistic value change (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Franzen, 2003), altruism for nature and humanity (Schwartz, 1994), and ecological knowledge (Legault & Pelletier, 2000), and seems to be characterized by a fear of loss of personal amenities and health threats (Seguin, Pelletier, & Hunsley, 1998). Concern about the degradation of the natural

environment and the potentially harmful consequences is a relatively recent phenomenon (Bamberg, 2003; Dryzek, 2003; King & McCarthy, 2005) which is usually attributed to Western societies in the 1950's. Much literature is focused on the USA, which is due to the origin of the researchers as well as the amount of quantitative data available through large scale surveys.

Environmentalism is commonly called a social movement (Hannigan, 2006; King & McCarthy, 2005; Pepper, 1996; Sutton, 2000) that began to rise during the industrial revolution. There are debates whether this movement is over, still ongoing or on the rise (Dryzek, 2003; Sutton, 2000) but nonetheless, environmentalism has created its own research area, called environmental sociology (Hannigan, 2006; King & McCarthy, 2005). The more recent events such as the emergence of Greenpeace or the first Earth Day in 1970 are useful for the understanding of the public's perception of environmentalism. The history and diversification of the environmental movement is well documented in several books (Dryzek, 2003; King & McCarthy, 2005; Wapner, 1996) and is in itself a notable field for research in several other areas. The change of the public perception and acceptance of environmental concern and environmentalism is important for the topic of environmental values in this literature review.

Not only is environmentalism an ambiguous term that changes with the individual perception of people, the same also applies to the term environmentally friendly (behaviour) (Hull, Richert, Seekamp, Robertson, & Buhyoff, 2003; Tesch & Kempton, 2004). Surrounding this term is much contested vocabulary, such as 'natural', 'intrinsic' or 'ecologic' (Sutton, 2000). These semantics aside, a general notion of environmentally friendly behaviour is "safe for or not harmful to the environment" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). This rather vague explanation is however the basis of considerable research about environmentally friendly behaviour as well as a main problem, since the question "Do you act environmentally friendly?" could be answered with yes by everyone if their perception of the environment and being environmentally friendly is the basis of their answer. A Gallup Survey question "Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?" for instance received more positive answers than there were members of environmental clubs, which the researcher

considered the prerequisite for being one (Kitchell et al., 2000). This example should illustrate the difficulty in values research not only to define environmental values, concern and behaviour, but also how to make sure that participants understand what they are asked. Considering the quantitative approach of the Gallup Survey and many other studies, research about the motivation and self-perception of a person regarding the attribute 'environmentalist' seems to call for a qualitative approach, which is then hard to generalise. I return to this topic of environmental worldview and self-perception in the next section to discuss possible influences on the lifestyle of environmentalists.

First I would like to distinguish between different groups of people and eras of state environmentalism. In a very rough distinction of the population in developed countries, people would endorse environmentalism as something good, reject it as something bad, defer it to the responsibilities of the government, or see it as a special topic for a minority group. The inclination of a current government could be similar to its people, the support of environmental protection, the rejection, or shedding of responsibility for it.

The history of environmentalism shows that governments as well as the public have gone through all of these phases (Pepper, 1996; Sutton, 2000; Wapner, 1996). The public acceptance of people who are supporting environmentalism changes according to the current governmental attitude and the ratio between the above mentioned groups in the population (Taylor, 2005a). Also, the notion of environmentalism has changed over the years (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994). It has made a journey from mainly representing the preservation of natural scenery to the anti-pollution movement and biodiversity conservation, to concentrating on sustainable and social development and climate change (Sutton, 2000; Wapner, 1996). Some of these trends in environmentalism attract a larger group of people than others, for example saving whales, and some require different kinds of actions, like recycling or protesting against pollution. One can therefore distinguish between different stages in active participation in environmentalist behaviour, which would define an environmentalist (Kitchell et al., 2000). Kitchell et al. (2000) show that some people consider

themselves as environmentalists even when they do not exhibit environmentalist behaviour, and also that some people who act according to the definition of an environmentalist do not want to be associated with the term because they do not identify themselves as such according to their understanding of an environmentalist.

There are widely accepted actions representing public environmentalism, such as recycling (Kitchell et al., 2000). Difficult or controversial topics are however picked up by environmental groups with activist tendencies that identify them as ‘radicals’ or ‘activists’, in contrast to the moderate environmentalism of the general public (Kitchell et al., 2000; Pepper, 1996) as they emphasise the need for a sea change in areas such as government, society and lifestyle (Fischer & Black, 1995). The discussion about where environmentalism ends and deep or radical ecology begins, as well as the approaches to eco- or anthropocentrism has been widely reported (Hannigan, 2006; Sutton, 2000). For purposes of this study it is sufficient to note that there are environmental groups or parts of larger associations that have the reputation for being ‘activists’ in a negative sense to a conservative citizen, by participating in illegal or almost illegal, and disturbing ‘anti-establishment’ actions. The environmental activists therefore present themselves in very different lights, depending on their actions, self-constructed identity and attitudes towards government and general society (Fischer & Black, 1995; Lubell, 2002). A similar situation appears to be true for governments, who are seen as supportive, restrictive, or ignorant of environmental actions by the public.

The public assumes positions and attitudes toward various shapes of environmentalism and their activists, and activism shapes itself to cater for and react against the public (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994; Hill, 2002). What kind of association people have with environmentalism is influenced by their social surroundings, their socially constructed values and the ability to accept proposed changes of their lifestyles, attitudes, and concerns that are associated with the term environmentalism (Hannigan, 2006; Kitchell et al., 2000; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; McFarlane & Hunt, 2006). There are many different movements in existence, which makes it difficult to agree on a singular model of ‘right’ environmental behaviour. Some extreme

movements may be endorsed by a considerable number<sup>2</sup> (Hill, 2002). Environmentalism, which is accepted as such by the majority of the western public could also be called mainstream or conventional environmentalism and is probably best described with the moderate approach of the programs of longstanding Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like Greenpeace or the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and national and international government organisations such as the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). Mainstream environmentalism can thus not only be expressed by many by behaving according to the public understanding of it (recycling, consumer choices etc.), it is also increasingly accessible without inconvenience, since recycling or environmentally friendly products are established within western societies. Public perception of mainstream environmentalism is therefore important for the self-perception of individuals regarding their own environmentalism, as society creates the normative framework for radical and moderate environmentalism (Hannigan, 2006; Hogg & Reid, 2006). Their acceptance of environmentalists within societal norms, their personal conviction and occupation and finally their feedback from peers, shapes their own perception of what they are and what environmentalism is.

A relatively small number of fervent environmental activists is however defined outside these norms and perceived as 'radical' by the media (as expression of society) (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994). Before I move on to the influences on environmental life choices, I therefore explore the differences between perception of environmentalists and environmental activists.

In a survey about why people consider themselves as an environmentalist, Kitchell et al. (2000) reported a somewhat negative attitude towards people who strongly advocate environmentalism. As noted above, while a majority of the people might label themselves as an environmentalist (Kitchell et al., 2000), activists or activist actions are seen as too extreme by more conservative environmentally-minded people, who are concerned they could be put into this corner by openly displaying a strong

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<sup>2</sup> Conservative environmental movements are popular amongst a wide range of US American population without adhering or supporting any mainstream ecological findings (Hill, 2002).

conviction towards the environment. So, as presumably with many other extreme convictions people do not want to be associated with, environmentalism in environmental organisations seems to be attracting a certain clientele that is not afraid of being labelled as ‘activist’ (Fischer & Black, 1995; Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994). Thus, the moderate part of society might be deterred by the negative and radical association of environmentalism from taking up a job within an environmental organisation, even if the levels of activism vary significantly between such organisations (Kitchell et al., 2000; Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2006). Since environmental activists are sometimes perceived as negative in their aspirations, pursuing a seemingly superfluous level of inappropriate involvement, mainstream environmental behaviour has to be distinguishable by society so that non-activist environmentalists can be identified. Otherwise people would feel compelled to state to others that they do not want to be associated with ‘environmentalists,’ which is reported in Kitchell et al. (2000).

Working for the environment but without the label of activism can be realized in a variety of jobs (Taylor, 2005b). Taking up a job at a government agency, consulting, doing fieldwork or even working in education in the environmental sector are alternatives to campaigning for radical environmental ideas, and even some environmental NGOs are not necessarily labelled ‘activists’ (Sutton, 2000). The perception of an environmental activist is of course dependent on the individual’s perception and the membership in a bird watching society might already raise suspicion in some persons while other people start getting concerned about radicalism if someone is involved in the ecocentric organisation ‘Earth First!’<sup>3</sup>. However, the public acceptance of environmentalism as a social movement has also provided an opportunity for individuals to commit to a more intense involvement in environmental activities without engaging in illegal actions or associating with marginalized or radical groups. In this situation, environmental values and worldviews can be expressed by a conscious job choice.

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<sup>3</sup> A self description of Earth First! states that they pursue a “radical” and “front-line, direct action approach”. (Earth First! 2007)

Still, it is debatable whether life histories, personal environmental ethics or simply some values make people choose a job in this category. I suggest that social influence plays a less important role than aspects such as place of living, level of education and financial situation in a decision about which job to take. The personal environmental values and vocational interest could be factors that influence the decision to work for the environment. Since environmental worldviews or values are thought to have some influence on the decisions of individuals regarding lifestyle, profession and motivation (Chawla, 1999; Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994; Lubell, 2002), the theories regarding influence on occupational choice in the environmental sector, including the vocational decisions in environmental activists, are discussed in the next section.

#### **2.3.4 Environmental lives**

Although it has been suggested that people hold strong environmental values, which they express in environmentalism (Chawla, 1999; Finger, 1994; Kals, Schumacher, & Montada, 1999; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003), occupational choice underlies additional factors, such as job security, personal development options, and social desirability, but also company characteristics and type of work (Chatman, 1991; Judge & Bretz, 1992). The participants in my research are all employed in an environment-related job. I therefore explore some theories about factors that could have influenced the decision to take up a job in the field of environmental issues.

So far I have suggested that values are socially constructed by the individual who is influenced by the closer society (peers) and the general cultural surrounding (societal norms) and adjusts these values constantly (Bögeholz, 2006; Chawla, 1999; Finger, 1994; Hannigan, 2006; Schwartz, 1992). I have also assumed that environmental values, although specific to the topic of the environment, are normal values that are mapped onto a “psychological space” (Stern et al., 1999, p. 83) where they are organised in a broad orientation (Schwartz, 1992). I call this construct general value orientation, or more specifically, an environmental worldview. The environmental worldview is defined by environmental values and their corresponding attitudes, and could be partly generated through education and experiences about, and with, the environment, and subsequently lead to environmentally friendly behaviour

(Ballantyne, Fien, & Packer, 2001; Barker & Rogers, 2004) as well as social influences (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

The above mentioned influences on an environmental worldview can be divided into three areas, namely social-influence and knowledge related (education), life-experience related, and self-perception/identification related, that could determine whether a person wants to work in a environment-related job (Bögeholz, 2006; Bogner, 1998; Kals et al., 1999). I thus first discuss the possible ways of influence through environmental education before looking at significant life experiences and self-perception of the concept of an environmentalist.

Environmental education connects with environmental value research through the view that environmental education should promote the valuing of nature or emotional attachment in students to elicit environmentally friendly behaviour (Bolstad, 2003; Gough, 2006). Environmental education is seen as one tool to deal with the lack of environmentally friendly behaviour in current society (UNCED, 1992). The education about environmental issues should enhance understanding, emotional attachment, and environmentally friendly behaviour through values or attitudes, and knowledge (Axelrod & Lehman, 1993; Ballantyne & Packer, 1996; Barker & Rogers, 2004; Palmer, 1998; Stern, 2000b; UNESCO, 2004). The general assumption is that a values-oriented education will indirectly influence decisions about the environment if the underlying values can be influenced (Ballantyne & Packer, 1996; Bolstad, 2003).

Environmental education in general could be considered a societal influence since society is taking on the educational task itself. Cultural influences and taught facts are part of society's value system that is represented in the education (Inglehart, Basáñez, & Menéndez Moreno, 1998; Payne, 2001). One approach to environmental education is divided into three aspects of learning, called 'In, About, and For' (Barker & Rogers, 2004). I explain this approach further as it represents the areas of the influences on the environmental worldview I mentioned earlier.

The first assumption sees environmental education *in* the natural environment as beneficial to the students due to the first-hand experience that produces a special kind of knowledge (Barker & Rogers, 2004; Palmer, 1998). The second assumption represents societal influence by teaching facts (Payne, 2001), suggesting that with an increase of knowledge *about* consequences of environmental issues, behaviour would start to change (Ballantyne & Packer, 1996) presumably out of a sense of responsibility similar or equal to altruistic intentions mentioned by Schwartz and Stern et al. (Casey & Scott, 2006; Stern, 2000b). Most important is the last assumption of the “In, About, and For”- approach, which sees education *for* the actual environment as a third contributor to successful environmental education that engages learners in direct action for the environment to gain skills (Barker & Rogers, 2004; Bolstad, 2003). The representation of the possible factors of influence on the individual is given in these three aspects of education *in* (perception), *about* (social influence), and *for* (life-experience). Environmental education can thus be considered as one possible influence on people in regard to their choice of lifestyle (Bolstad, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Payne, 2001).

Apart from environmental education, Chawla (2006) reports that research on significant life experiences (SLEs) has derived some suggestions why people who are not exposed to formal environmental education are behaving environmentally friendly or become environmentalists. While significant life experiences do not necessarily make a person an environmentalist (Chawla, 1999), they can still enhance environmental concern and the disposition to act environmentally friendly, as reported by Finger (1994), Bögeholz (2006), Bogner (1998) and Kals (2006, 1998, 1999). A longstanding or significant experience with the natural environment, either through environmental education-related excursions or private situations such as rural living, is thus a possible influence on the occupational choice for environmental jobs. However, although SLE’s could generally trigger someone’s vocation towards a certain type of occupation in an individual, research in this area has not yet gained enough information to generalise (Chawla, 2001).

A probably much more common influence on occupational choice would be society and culture. The self-perception or identity of a person is dependent on social influence (Côté, 1996; Dillon, Kelsey, & Duque-Aristizabal, 1999; Hogg & Reid, 2006). A person's self-identity is adjusted according to the perception of self, opinion of others (public image) and opinion of others on the self (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994). The choice of a lifestyle would therefore be subject to re-evaluations according to the feedback of society on the personal lifestyle and changes in personal values due to experiences in life. As mentioned in Section 2.2.1, Schwartz believes that the norms of society are generally stronger than a personal set of personal values when it comes to guiding decisions (Schwartz & Bardi, 2003). Another influence on values is the capacity of society to create norms for desirable and undesirable behaviour (Hannigan, 2006; Schwartz & Bardi, 2003). If the norms of the society are value patterns that are shared by most of its people (Hogg & Reid, 2006), societal norms will be the framework within which the individual will choose their occupation. These norms will be valid regarding environmental job choices as well, with most environmental job choices being within these norms (Taylor, 2005b).

If someone with an environmental worldview decides that the best way to express those values is to work in an environment related job, there are several options to choose from. These options can range from volunteer work (Tesch & Kempton, 2004) to teaching in environmental education (Payne, 1999), to employee in an environmental business, such as consultancies or engineering firms, NGO or even government (Tesch & Kempton, 2004). Although working in jobs concerned with environmental issues might be associated with well known NGOs like Greenpeace, governmental organisations such as the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) or national ministries of the environment provide environmental job opportunities on the 'other side'.

Since my research is concerned with environmental values of policy advisors in a regional government, the reasons for people to start working for the public sector instead of the private sector are of interest. Lyons (2006) notes that public servants assign a higher importance to altruistic values in surveys than their private sector

counterparts and reports further that they also differ in their work values compared to private sector employees. Although this result might not be significant, it suggests that public service attracts people with a different mindset. Before I conclude this literature review with an overview of the specific working environment on New Zealand's regional council level and the Resource management Act (RMA), I briefly discuss some theories on occupational choice and commitment.

### **2.3.5 Working for environment and government**

The number of people who decided to work in the public sector has declined steadily in western countries for a number of years (Lewis & Frank, 2002; Taylor, 2005b). This is associated with the general perception of public servants as inefficient, conservative and lowly paid (Lewis & Frank, 2002). Lewis and Frank (2002) also attribute the decision to work for a government agency on factors such as availability, location, and social influences. Government jobs are limited due to the age of current government workers<sup>4</sup>, the location where government agencies cumulate, and the associated social networks that help learning about job availability (Lewis & Frank, 2002).

Thomas, Lane, Ribon-Tobon, and May (2007, p.103) found in an Australian survey of employees in environmental jobs, that 59 %<sup>5</sup> of the respondents held government positions, while the national average is 15% of the total workforce being employed in government (Taylor, 2005b). Only 9% of the sample were working in non-profit organisations (Thomas et al. 2007, p.103). A similar result is reported by Wehrmeyer (1996), who found that less than 10% of environmental managers in the UK public sector are associated with an “environmental pressure group” (p.23), suggesting that a large majority are in government positions.

A number of studies have been conducted about motivations and reasons for starting to work as a public servant (Jurkiewicz, Massey, & Brown, 1998; Lewis & Frank,

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis and Frank (2002) call this “Birth Cohort” (p.397), referring to the Baby Boom generation which is still occupying government jobs in the USA.

<sup>5</sup> Of these respondent, 17% were involved in policy and legislation (Thomas et a., 2007, p. 104)

2002; Lyons et al., 2006) and some studies have been done on the reasons people choose to become a professional environmentalist (Chawla, 1999; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Thomas et al., 2007). The choice to work for government instead of non-government environmental organisations has however not yet received much attention. Although these studies have been conducted with different methods and foci, they can be used to discuss the question whether the people who work for an environmental government agency are different from people who work or volunteer for a radical environmental group.

Lyons et al. (2006) report that altruistic values are rated higher by public servants than by private sector employees. In addition, radical environmentalists are mainly associated with social movements against the established structures (Fischer & Black, 1995) which could suggest a different value orientation from conservative to openness to change (exploratory) according to Schwartz (1992). The reluctance to be labelled as a radical environmentalist that was expressed by members of more conservative groups (Kitchell et al., 2000), suggests that these general values that generate positive attitudes to a moderate approach in environmentalism and supporting the government, are different in moderate and radical environmentalists. Forgas and Jolliffe (1994) found that the level of conservatism in student environmentalists labelled as radical is lower than in the control group of non-radical student environmentalists. If conservative but environmentally concerned people want to express their environmental values by getting active, they might choose a moderate environmental group (Kitchell et al., 2000) or get a job outside the radical-political area that represents environmental activists. Environmental jobs as discussed by Thomas et al. (2007) do rarely belong to the radical-political group of occupations but are predominantly mainstream employment in governmental, technical, administrative or scientific areas.<sup>6</sup>

I conclude thus that the reluctance to be associated with a radical environmental group is less associated with the environmental values of a person than the general values,

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<sup>6</sup> Taylor (2005b) however noted that the term 'environmental job' is ambiguous as to which jobs are genuine environmental jobs and which have developed into jobs beneficial to the environment through technology and thus have no structural input in 'changing the world for a better environment.'

the political identity, and the self-perception of the individual. If a person has a relatively conservative value orientation and strong environmental values, it may be more likely that he or she chooses a job in the environmental sector that endorses a moderate environmental value approach.

## ***2.4 Working for the Environment***

### **2.4.1 New Zealand and the Resource Management Act**

Environmental values in a New Zealand context have a special role due to the diverse environmental history that has seen a major change in the indigenous flora and fauna as well as conflicts about land and impacts of land use (Pawson & Brooking, 2002). This unique constellation of rapid environmental change and the early realisation of the ecological impact of it have made New Zealand a pioneer in environmental legislation (Young, 2001) and environmental concern<sup>7</sup> (Pawson & Brooking, 2002). New Zealand was the first country to adopt legislation that strongly promoted sustainability through the groundbreaking piece of environmental legislation with the Resource Management Act 1991<sup>8</sup> (RMA) (Frieder, 1997; Young, 2001).

The RMA is the principal legislation for decisions about environmental issues in New Zealand<sup>9</sup>, at national, regional and district level (Frieder, 1997). Since its introduction it has been internationally acclaimed as an innovative approach to environmental legislation with its strong sustainability focus and its overhaul of previously existing statutes (Memon, Perkins, Rennie, & Ericksen, 2000). With its introduction, the RMA largely replaced or amended other resource, planning, and environment-related statutes and laws (Young, 2001). This approach is referred to as integrated and holistic, as the RMA provides the rules for regional and district councils for all decisions that are concerned with environmental issues as well as rights to prosecute (Ministry for the Environment, 2006a). The impression that completely new

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<sup>7</sup> Pawson and Brooking (2002) report concerns about the ecological impact of western colonisation as early as 1900.

<sup>8</sup> The full text of the RMA can be found online under [http://legislation.govt.nz/browse\\_vw.asp?content-set=pal\\_statutes](http://legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_statutes).

<sup>9</sup> Other relevant environmental legislation is the Local Government Act 2002, the Land Transport Act 1998, and the Biosecurity Act 1993 (Environment Waikato, 2006a).

legislation had been introduced was enhanced by the previous legislation which was criticised for its “piecemeal fashion” (van Rossem, 1995, p. 15) of incoherent policies and government bodies. A first reform concluded in 1987 with the Environment Act 1986 and the Conservation Act 1987 as well as the establishment of the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), the Department of Conservation (DoC) and a Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) (Memon, 1993; van Rossem, 1995). Shortly after, the reform of the Local Government Act 1989 redefined and extended the role of regional and district councils into “multi-purpose authorities” (Memon, 1993, p. 77), reducing the former 800 district, regional, and special purpose authorities, local bodies and catchment boards to 86<sup>10</sup> (Young, 2001). The newly established councils were governing coherent regions that were oriented at the watershed boundaries to enhance effective and transparent management that was required, and consolidated the responsibilities that had been assigned to the various other bodies before (Ericksen, 2004).

Although the MfE and the councils have made efforts since the RMA came into force, surveys of the general public understanding of the roles and significance of regional councils to environmental management showed that it is generally low (Ministry for the Environment, 2000; Taylor, Pinckard, & Oldroyd, 1999). Gough and Hooper (2003), however, noticed the awareness of the public regarding the purposes and significance had increased due to the public consultation that is required under the RMA. The lack of public understanding and awareness of the RMA purposes could nonetheless result in difficulties for the staff in the councils as the public input is considered important for the implementation of the RMA for required tasks such as the writing of policy plans.

Section 32 of the RMA defines the duties of the decision makers within a council and requires them to evaluate their objectives and methods, as well as policies and plans regarding efficiency, effectiveness and necessity (Tonkin, Taylor, Boffa, & Simpson, 2000). The councils have to conduct evaluation processes for every resource

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<sup>10</sup> There were 74 local councils and 13 regional councils established (with one being a unitary authority in Gisborne) (Ericksen, 2004).

management plan, regulation, or policy, which can also result in a public consultation, depending on the stage of evaluation (Tonkin et al., 2000). The consultation process for a regional plan for instance can have up to 11 stages (Memon et al., 2000) to satisfy the requirements of the RMA. Ericksen (2004) however notes, that besides public consultation, research and analysis are equally or even more important, although the planning process is inherently political. As per section 5 of the RMA, environmental planning has to manage the use, development, and protection of resources in a way that people can maintain their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and avoid as far as possible unsustainable or adverse effects to the environment with their actions (RMA, 1991: s5). A second point of close contact with the public is the resource consents that require an environmental assessment of all development proposals under the RMA (RMA, 1991:s87). In addition, the regional councils determine in their regional plans, which activities require consent and which are permitted (Environment Waikato, 2007c).

#### **2.4.2 Regional government in New Zealand**

The regional councils are part of a decentralized government and responsible for issues that cannot be dealt with by the local councils due to size or jurisdiction (Ericksen, 2004). In the case of environmental governance, the regional council's role connects the boundaries of local responsibilities and presides over management or jurisdiction issues, thus increasing the effectiveness by acting as one entity (Press, 1995). As mentioned before, one requirement under the RMA is the writing of regional policy statements and plans that regulate various regional issues such as resource consents. Other policy responsibilities are "other legislative powers, education, research guidelines, codes of practice and other regional functions" (Ericksen, 2004, p.10). Although the regional governments have more responsibilities than the previously mentioned ones, I have not reviewed the complete roles of regional councils within the RMA but focus on the roles and responsibilities of their policy analysts and advisors since my research participants are employed as such.

The regulatory and administrative level of government agencies, which defines the scope of their responsibilities, also defines the power of employees regarding policies

and planning (Ericksen, 2004; Nilsson & Persson, 2003). The scope of the policy and planning authority is considerably different in a regional council compared to national government, which is more constrained by national politics (Ericksen, 2004). The regional plan of a council under the RMA should guide decision-makers in their decisions about consents that fall under the jurisdiction of the RMA (Ericksen, 2004). Ericksen (2004) describes three approaches that represent the two extreme ends of how a policy plan can be written, with the rational approach emphasising a scientific method that is based on facts and the participatory approach that is based on public consultation, and a rational-adaptive approach that combines the techniques of the other two methods.

Regional plans are primarily responsible for “the identification of significant regional resource issues that transcend district council boundaries” and “the development of regional policies and plans that promote integrated management across environmental media (air, water and land)” (Ericksen, 2004, p.33). In preparation of a plan, regional councils identify issues that are important and need to be considered through policy analysis and public consultation (Environment Waikato, 2007a). Ericksen (2004, p.34) lists seven steps of policy analysis and consultation in a simplified planning process chart that interlink and give feedback to each other, making this process lengthy. The development of such a plan stretches over several years and can involve 11 or even more steps of submissions, drafts, amendments and possibilities to appeal to the Environment Court (Harris, 2004; Memon et al., 2000). Also, the RMA requires regional councils to review their regional policy statements 10 years after the statements became operative (Ministry for the Environment, 2006b). The planning process, although criticised by some (Barton, 1998; Environment Waikato, 2007b), is however deemed necessary as an advisory system for decision-makers in its directional function for decisions, further policy and regulatory action (Heinrichs, 2004).

Policy advisors are largely involved in this regular occurrence of plan and policy statement writing and evaluating. Scientific knowledge is currently the most important contributor to environmental policy decision-making as the rational

approach dominates the planning process (Adger et al., 2003; Karlsson, 2004). Scientific knowledge can be from an external source or in-house scientific advisors that are employed by the council. This alone is however insufficient for policy planning according to section 32 of the RMA (Dietz, 2003; Heinrichs, 2004; Tonkin et al., 2000). Consultation of the public about policy plans and reviews that will have influence on processes such as the resource consent has been reported to be beneficial by a range of authors (Bazerman, Moore, & Gillespie, 1999; Fischer & Black, 1995; Niemeyer & Spash, 2001; Rippe & Schaber, 1999). A mono-disciplinary approach to policy advice, such as purely economical analysis, would not reflect decision-making reality, according to Adger et al. (2003) and impair the quality of policy decisions (Pellizzoni, 1999). However, if the procedures take too long or some interest groups dominate the consultation, the value of public participation as a “social filter” (Smith, 1998, p.10) is lost.

Rational decision making about policy is considered impossible due to the limited cognitive abilities of single humans who have to decide (Andrews & Waits, 1978; Heineman, Bluhm, Peterson, & Keary, 2002; Heinrichs, 2004; Karlsson, 2004). Policy is developed by collaboration of multiple actors such as scientists, economists, policy analysts, politicians, and the public. In the case of regional councils in New Zealand, councillors as elected representatives make final decisions about policies and related issues as in many other cases where the final decision lies with politicians (Heineman et al., 2002). Policy advisors consider a variety of information sources to enable the decision makers to reach consensus. In this role, the policy advisors are crucial to the outcome of the final policy decision as they prepare the information and recommendation that the decision will be based on (Heineman et al., 2002). I thus discuss the role of a policy advisor in my last section of this chapter.

### **2.4.3 Policy advisors**

Policy advisors are the information brokers in the decision making process (Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000). In order to achieve a decision, information on alternatives and options that are available to the decision makers have to be evaluated for significance to, and impact on, the issue. This is especially important for potentially far-reaching policy

decisions with a potentially wide impact. Fischer (1980), Heineman et al. (2002) and others emphasise that the cognitive ability of the individual decision maker is limited, as one person is not capable of understanding and evaluating all the relevant information to an issue and form a purely rational decision about it. The inability to come to a purely rational decision and the fact that decision makers need the assistance of a group to reach decisions is further discussed in this chapter.

In order to avoid decision making that follows a rule of thumb or decisions that are based on biased preferences of the decision makers, policy advice needs to be objective and exhaustive (Heineman et al., 2002). This has of course implications on the perception of the role of a policy advisor or analyst who is thus required to be a rational and objectively working actor in the policy decision (Fischer, 1980; Heineman et al., 2002; Heinrichs, 2004). The early success of economics in modern policy analysis has enhanced this positivistic view on policy advisors, who ideally compiled information and recommended the most logical decision in a purely rational manner (Fischer, 1980; Heineman et al., 2002). Although these expectations are not realistic and have lost some support in policy analysis literature, statistical data and a scientific or positivist approach are still the most important tools in policy analysis (Andrews & Waits, 1978; Connelly & Smith, 2002; Fischer, 1980; Heineman et al., 2002). Despite this positivist approach, the policy process is dominated by the social construction of common rules that is done by the involved parties to the decision. Decision makers have to balance the input of political actors, who try to advance their value-based opinions. The recommendation of the policy advisor is only one part of these considerations.

The political dimension of the policy process gains importance through the uncertainty of science. The assumption that better or more valid scientific data produce a more logical policy decision is common, not only in environmental policy (Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000). However, environmental science, as other sciences, faces problems such as uncertainty of facts or statistical errors. Gough and Ward (1994) refer to the fact that “environmental decision making is characterised by uncertainty at all stages of the decision process” and that information is “often very costly to

collect” (p.i). This situation presents a problem to policy advice, since it is not only expensive if empirical data are needed but at the same time potentially erroneous if the empirical data also has a high level of uncertainty. The uncertainty of empirical science in policy cannot be negated but policy advisors can give a weighed and evaluated review of the scientific data in a recommendation as part of the policy advice. The policy advisor is thus the interpreter of scientific data and their uncertainty to the actual decision maker, making the advice subjective. This presents a potential political conflict to the decision makers as the scientific evidence of an argument can be attacked by other political actors with their value-based opinions. In a case of inconclusive evidence, the political process becomes even more important and is based on the values represented by the political forces, making the policy decision more complex.

In any case, decisions about the actual issue are not made by the policy advisor but on a more senior level (Heineman et al., 2002). The policy advisor is concerned with the evaluation of information in the decision process and filter of information to the actual decision maker (Heineman et al., 2002). This position carries a considerable level of influence considering the tendency of people to decide about issues upon recommendation (Heineman et al., 2002; Heinrichs, 2004; Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse, & Kouzmin, 2003; Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000). A fair decision must be able consider all relevant information. The policy advisor as part of a group of people involved in the decision can compile the information according to different views. This role could have an interpretation monopoly. Simultaneously, a pre-evaluation and remodelling of arguments can put unconnected information into context. The requirement of policy advisors to be objective is therefore also justified by ethical concerns about a fair consideration of all perspectives on an issue.

It has been accepted in policy research for some time that a policy advisor as a human being cannot be detached from her or his own values (Andrews & Waits, 1978; Fischer, 1980). The interconnectedness of values and decision-making puts the policy maker into a position of an ethical actor who has to create objective recommendations but work from his or her own set of values. Craig and Glasser (1993) even suggest

that these values sets are considered as part of a values-based policy development process. This suggestion stems from the notion that committed policy advisors or employees in general represent similar values to the ones endorsed by the organisation they work for (Chatman, 1991; Craig & Glasser, 1993; Finegan, 2000; Heineman et al., 2002; Lyons et al., 2006). The values that influence the recommendations are constructed within the work environment. Different recommendations of involved policy advisors may be discussed and merged, which produces a collective recommendation with a newly constructed value base. In the case of policy advice, this commitment of individual policy advisors and social construction of advice could translate into recommendations that already represent the organisation's values. Craig and Glasser (1993) recommended consideration of values of policy advisors for international environmental policy after they had found values in policy advisors that were stricter or similar to the ones endorsed by the governing organisation. The environmental values of the policy advisors could thus contribute to the policy on a qualitative level that is difficult to assess with empirical methods such as economic tools like the Cost Benefit Analysis.

An organisation-specific value representation in policy advisors promises an easier policy process due to the similarity of values and thus opinions on what and how policy should be done. Also, commitment that leads to such a similarity grows with the duration of the employment and attachment (Chatman, 1991; Dose & Klimoski, 1999; Millward & Hopkins, 1998). Experience in the formal and structural requirements of the organisation could be considered another if not stronger factor for the policy process. A senior policy advisor in an organisation could thus have similar values and experience in the formal requirements of the policy process that enable him or her to give very suitable advice for the respective purpose.

Heinemann et al. (2002) however see some difficulties in a close attachment to the organisation by the policy makers in terms of objective analysis. While they acknowledge the impossibility of truly rational and objective advice, they point toward the possibility of bias toward the organisational values which could result in careful or less radical and effective policy. Heineman et al. (2002) see a potential

isolation of policy advice or organisation-centred bias towards purpose built policy advice that keep the status quo of already established policy. This situation can be enhanced by a good social structure amongst the policy advisors or “policy networks” (Connelly & Smith, 2002, p.139). Heinemann et al. (2002) see a difference in research being done to legitimise pre-existing views or to validate new ideas or suggestions. The former is regarded as “social conservatism” (p.36) that leads to the status quo situation and reinforces positions in later stages of the policy process, while the latter is used for orientation or “enlightenment” (p.37) in the early stages of policy. Connelly and Smith (2002) and Heineman et al. (2002) both suggest using external sources such as policy analysis from outside, political pressure or public consultation to avoid an isolation of the policy process.

While the values-based evaluation of policy advisors can be helpful, they can also be protective of organisational interests or structures against stakeholders such as the public. In the case of regional governments under the RMA, such a status quo situation is less likely due to the requirements of section 30, 32 and 39 that regulate most of the external input. Policy advisors could thus produce recommendations that are biased toward the values stated in section 5, but their recommendations could be adjusted by external input. Under the RMA, regional councils have to “recognize, define, and measure” (Taylor et al., 1999, p. 48) the state of the environment. However, they possess some freedom about how to perform these duties, by being able to choose their own staff or contractors for it, although this does not imply that they do not need in-house scientific staff (Taylor et al., 1999). Regional councils are required to work efficiently and effectively and have therefore to weigh the costs and benefits of decisions in a financial as well as in the socio-economic and environmental context (Tonkin et al., 2000). Councillors and their staff are thus required to adhere to a strict set of rules and the stated goal of the RMA “to promote sustainable management of natural and physical resources” (Harris, 2004, p. 59). Taylor (1999) notes that the commitment as well as the qualification of regional council staff is notably high, which he also rates as important, since efficient policies and plans are crucial to successful environmental resource management. The commitment of the staff, including policy advisors, can have the effect of closer

adherence to the organisation's mission statement and values by the staff (Finegan, 2000). Since policy advisors are not value free, similar values to their organisation have the advantage that the policy advice, which is influenced by the individual values of the staff, could have a greater similarity to the organisation's values, making the process easier. However, as Heineman (2002) mentions, a high proximity of policy advisors to the organisation's values requires a greater external input, such as policy analysis or public consultation to rationalise what he refers to as "status quo" (p.36). In another view, the similarity of values could improve the working conditions of the staff, due to a homogenous social community, and reduce tensions between decision makers and advisors in the policy process. A similarity in values of policy advisors and employing organisation would thus have a positive effect on the policy and associated staff.

## ***2.5. Summary***

In this literature review I have discussed the establishment of value theory and its subsequent integration into social psychology and social science amongst others. The research about values has proved to an uneven and varied field that has produced a range of theories. For the purposes of my research I have explained my understanding of the nature of general and environmental values, as well as the models that are used to detect or explain them. I agree with the value theory of Schwartz (1992) that values are spatially organised in distinct but adjacent areas that can be roughly divided into two bipolar orientations that represent egoistic, altruistic, conservative and exploratory characteristics. I also follow Schwartz's idea of values as a social construct that are derived through constant adjustment by the individual through gathering social feedback. I only agree with Schwartz's environmental value concept insofar that they are based on altruism, but concur with the extension by Stern et al. (1993) that names egoistic, biospheric, and social-altruistic intentions as categories of environmental values. Based on these considerations, I summarised that environmental values are thus the means for developing a position towards the environment that is derived out of the personal value construct of an individual, which is influenced and changeable by social influences.

In addition to the value theories I reviewed the phenomenon of environmentalism, theories of environmental identity, and occupational and lifestyle choice, concluding that environmental values can influence occupational choice. Individuals with environmental values and an altruistic-conservative general value orientation may be more likely to take on a secure, non-radical job in the environmental sector to satisfy their environmental values as well as satisfy their more conservative self-perception. However, occupational choice also depends on many other factors and many public servants in environmental sectors may not hold strong environmental values.

My literature review was then completed by a section on the specific situation of environmental legislation in New Zealand (RMA) that affects the role of regional government responsibilities. Since my research concerned the environmental values of policy advisors in a regional government, the final section discussed the requirements of the job of a policy advisor. This section focussed on the role the policy advisors play in creating recommendation to the actual decision makers finding that advice is a social construction of value-based individual recommendations that influence the inherently political process of policy making.

This chapter has provided a context for the rest of this study. It has shown that environmental values are general values that concern specific areas of interest and are fostered by a general altruistic value orientation. Environmental values can be expressed as environmentalism and even by a career in the environmental sector but that does not automatically lead to identification with the description 'environmentalist'. Individuals that are employed in the environmental and/or public sector as an environmental policy advisor may not have different value orientations than other professions, but can express and use their environmental values as part of their job. In addition to that, policy advisors, although expected to be objective in their advice are working within a legal framework that is inherently value based, with these values being environmental values.

The next chapter describes the approach that I took to examine the connection between the work of environmental policy advisors and their personal environmental values.

## **Chapter 3 - Methods**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

In this chapter I describe the theoretical approach to my research, the method I used for analysis, and the sample of participants.

The first section discusses that considering a social constructivist perspective in this research, an interpretive approach to this research is appropriate, followed by a section with an overview of the research methods, design and sample. A fourth section introduces the method I used for analysis and the last section addresses the reliability and validity of my research as well as ethical considerations.

My research questions were:

- Do environmental policy advisors believe that their personal environmental values influence their work?
- Does their policy advisory work influence their personal environmental values?

Based on these questions, I looked at the participants' view of themselves and their job in terms of environmental values, as well as their identification with their employing organisation. In order to learn about their personal motivation I decided to use an interpretive approach.

### ***3.2 Theoretical Framework***

#### **3.2.1 Interpretive approach and constructivism**

My analysis and research is based on an interpretive approach that uses social constructivist theory as the basis of the interpretation of data.

Interpretive analysis attempts to explain phenomena by looking at the individual's understanding of them, and develops theory out of analysis (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) rather than try to prove a previously developed theory with quantitative methods (a positivist's approach) (Cohen et al., 2000). This interpretive approach has been criticised for being unscientific due to the difficulty of producing objective data and the lack of external validity and reliability (Banister et al., 1994; Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). As will be discussed later, validity and reliability can be achieved in qualitative research, however not under the same circumstances as for quantitative research.

The tools for interpretive analysis can be the same as for quantitative research, like interviews and questionnaires, while data sources that allow an in-depth portrayal of the issue, such as essays, drawings or unstructured interviews and a range of other sources, are predominantly qualitative and interpretive tools. There is however no one correct way of interpreting data (Janesick, 2003), considering that the knowledge is socially constructed by the researcher with the participants (Stake, 2003), which makes interpretive analysis subjective but not less credible.

Social constructivism sees individuals being influenced by society in their knowledge, values and understanding of themselves, as well as society creating perceptions of reality that impose rules on the individual regarding behaviour, morals and ethics (Cohen et al., 2000; Collin, 2002; Gerstenmaier, Mandl, Neil, & Baltes, 2001; Kukla, 2000; Neimeyer, Levitt, & Neil, 2001). A person is thus constantly adjusting his or her worldview due to feedback from society, perception, and rules. This feedback is needed to construct a meaning of the individual reality by interpreting the results of social and personal processes into knowledge and meaning (Kukla, 2000; Ruggie, 1998).

A constructivist paradigm as the basis for research assumes that there are multiple realities for the researcher and the participants, which are created in co-operation of participant and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). An appropriate method for

studying the relative realities of the participants would be an interpretive approach (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kukla, 2000; Merriam, 2001). One strategy of interpretive research is qualitative analysis, which is also an alternative to positivistic or scientific studies where quantitative analysis is the usual basis of the research (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Behaviour in a positivistic approach is seen as a passive reaction to mainly external stimuli while the notion of behaviour in constructivism is based on the individual motivations and reasons for behaviour (Banister et al., 1994; Gerstenmaier et al., 2001), which requires naturalistic or interpretive inquiry (Cohen et al., 2000; Neimeyer et al., 2001). Neimeyer et al. (2001) point out that a constructivist approach to research is rather defined by its philosophy than the actual methods that are used. However, since the underlying philosophy sees the individual and his or her constructing of meaning as the focus of inquiry, qualitative methods are of greater use (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Neimeyer et al. extend their statement therefore with “[a constructivist’s method] is more concerned with the viability or pragmatic utility of its application than with its validity *per se*” (p. 2651).

In conducting interpretive research, my approach to the data gathered from interviews and questionnaires was based on open-ended questions that enabled the participants to express themselves in their own words and develop a train of thoughts about the subject without being disturbed or distracted by limiting, pre-designed questions. An interpretive method for the analysis of the data can display and explain the statements of the participants and connect the meaning of the results with the underlying constructivist theory. Following from these data collection methods, data were analysed with thematic content analysis and phenomenological analysis tools.

### **3.2.2 Phenomenological analysis or thematic content analysis**

I have taken an interpretive approach to explain and describe environmental values in environmental agency employees. In this description, interpretive methods are used to attempt the explanation of responses the participants made about their values towards the environment, their worldview, and job. Also, the motivations for actions, resulting from these values are interpreted. I focus on individuals’ construction of knowledge

on the basis of their social and life experiences and their use of these experiences to develop an evaluation of their current situations (Cohen et al., 2000; Collin, 2002; Creswell, 1998).

A definition of phenomenological research is given by Creswell (1998) as the “type of study [that] describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon (or topic or concept) for several individuals” (p. 236). An analysis, that organises interview data “in relation to specific research questions” (Banister et al., 1994), such as environmental values or worldviews, is called thematic analysis. Both definitions can be applied to my research. In addition, with only a small number of participants, interpretive methods can be applied, using phenomenological and thematic analysis as interpretive tools for the understanding of the participants’ values.

### ***3.3 Research Methods***

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was the first part of my data collection. In the analysis, the questionnaire plays only a minor role, as it cannot be used for statistical analysis and has mainly closed-ended questions that do not contribute to qualitative analysis. The main task for the questionnaire was establishing the personal contact and environmental concepts to the participants in order to talk about them in the following interview. This introduction was therefore done by closed-ended questions that asked whether the concept was known, how the concept was valued and whether it was followed.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts (see Appendix A). The first part asked whether 10 concepts relating to environmental politics, such as sustainable development or precautionary principle, were known to the participants. The second part asked how important the participants would rate these concepts and asked about the frequency of use or incorporation of the concepts into the respondent’s behaviour. The questions were closed ended, giving options of ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for the first part, and

a rating scale of four answers for part two and three ('unimportant' to 'essential' and 'rarely' to 'always' respectively).

The questions in the first part were created by myself and circulated amongst fellow researchers to clarify their validity. Questions about these principles were chosen in order to create an overview of the acceptance of them within the group and adherence to them by individuals.

The second part of the questionnaire was taken from the NEP (Ecological) scale as published in Dunlap et al. (2000, p. 433) with two questions (numbers 7. and 13.) directly from the NEP (Ecological) Scale, two abridged questions (12. and 13.) and two inspired by the style of the NEP (Ecological). These six questions were asked in their closed-ended form with five options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree as used in the NEP Scale.

The last question was taken from the March 1999 Gallup poll as published in Tesch and Kempton (2004, p.68) (first question in table 1.), asking the participants whether they considered themselves as environmentalists. This question should determine the participants' understanding of the term and their association with it.

### **3.3.2 Interview**

As a very common tool for research, interviews play a major role in qualitative research (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Merriam, 2001). The different approaches to data collection by asking people can be defined by the methodological approach, the degree of structure, and the number of participants (Cohen et al., 2000). Simple one-on-one interviews may be the most common interviews (Merriam, 2001) compared to more complex group interviews. Interviews can be conducted in a highly structured manner with closed-ended questions or as a conversation (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Cohen et al., 2000; Merriam, 2001) that is only partly structured or not at all.

While highly structured interviews have the advantage of producing reliable data, less structured interviews can be used to follow up questions that arise during the interview and provide greater insight into understandings. Due to the constraints of their structure, interviews that are highly structured are conducted like a questionnaire and leave no room for additional questions (Cohen et al., 2000). Semi-structured interviews still maintain some structure, which can be a list of previously worded questions or a general structure of topics that are of interest for the interviewer. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews can be conducted as a conversation and, depending on the degree of structure, allow some freedom to cover unanticipated aspects that surface during the interview (Cohen et al., 2000; Merriam, 2001).

For the purpose of my research I devised a plan for semi-structured interviews with one person at a time. For this 30-minute interview I devised questions that asked about a certain area of interest. These questions could be used or not, depending on the participant's response and the general flow of the interview, but were also a reminder if a topic did not emerge by itself. This approach is also suggested by Banister (1994) in order to follow the participant's trail of thoughts and avoid simple yes/no answers.

I have interviewed professionals with tertiary education who were asked about their views on topics that are dominating their work. In interviews with adults, it is more likely to encounter sophisticated responses of people "who have worked out the meaning of their lives" (Shipman, 1997, p. 40) which should improve the transparency of their statements. However, when asked about their values, which are inherently abstract, even highly educated adults may have problems with a clear articulation (Craig & Glasser, 1993) that could impede the interpretation.

### ***3.4 Research Design and Sample***

#### **3.4.1 Sample**

This research focussed on the environmental values of those involved in decision-making in a regional council, such as policy advisors and councillors. The nature of

the interpretive approach to the research about environmental values influenced the decision to approach the policy advisors instead of the councillors, as the latter hold a political mandate and might feel greater hesitation to talk freely. Policy advisors are not elected but employed by an organisation to assist with the policy decision, whereas councillors are elected into their positions by the local population. A local regional council was chosen for easier access to employees in comparison with central government, and local proximity. The obligation of the regional councils to produce regional policy statements and plans that apply to a whole region with a more diverse range of environmental issues in comparison to district councils were also factors in sample choice.

All participants were employed at a regional council and were mainly involved with policy making at the level of policy advice. This means that amongst other things they are evaluating the data and opinions from scientists, public consultations, external and internal sources, and studies on a subject that requires the creation of a policy, as well as suggesting the wording of the actual policy. These evaluations or suggestions are passed on to the councillors, the actual decision makers, as one of the sources they need to make a final decision on the matter. In this position, the policy advisor can have influence on the decision due to the task of evaluating relevant information. A perceived if not required duty is however to include supporting as well as opposing information, regardless of the preferred outcome of the decision. Since the policy advisor does not make the decision, impartiality to decisions made by the elected representatives (councillors) improves the working relationship. This situation however does not prevent the possibilities of creating convincing arguments for the favoured outcome.

For the purposes of my research I contacted a regional council in order to get access to policy advisors. The group of participants consisted of seven people. Since I was interested in value influence and change, I welcomed the different levels of experience in the people that were willing to participate, since the duration of their employment, as well as their educational background, was varied. The duration of the participants' employment at the council varied from two to over ten years, which only

partly indicates their level of experience of an the environmental advisor, as some of them had worked in similar positions elsewhere. The majority (6/7) of the participants were male and the educational background of all participants was at least one tertiary degree, mostly in environmental sciences and related fields such as geology and planning. However, some participants were from a social sciences background. Being policy advisors, the participants were mainly preparing information and policy analysis for the actual decision-makers. They were also involved in policy and planning projects that covered various areas of the Resource Management Act (RMA) authority.

Since the number of participants was small and the identity of individual persons has to stay anonymous, the participants were given a letter-number identification ranging from R1 to R7 in attributing their responses. Further means of identification such as gender, duration of employment and specific projects have been purposely withheld fro reasons of anonymity. This number is sufficient to make a comparison possible while keeping the number small enough for in-depth interviews and provide rich qualitative data.

### **3.4.2 Design**

My research was conducted in two parts with a questionnaire, which was mailed to the participants prior to a follow up interview, in order to make contact and introduce concepts of environmental values (see Appendix A). After the analysis of the returned questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was conducted over 30 minutes to find out about the values and motivations of the participants regarding their work for the environment.

As described earlier in Section 3.3.1, there were two parts to the questionnaire, the first part listing commonly used concepts of principles that are related to environment, such as sustainable development, and the second part reproducing questions from other researchers. The second part asked questions that were adopted from the NEP scale or slightly varied for the purposes of the research, which also included a question whether the participants considered themselves as environmentalists. The

questionnaire data was mainly used to inform the interviews, where a deeper understanding of the respondents' views could be gained. However, in some cases, the distribution of responses has been used to display similarities in the views within the group. Therefore, the information from the questionnaire's closed-ended questions is presented where it was needed to help put statements of the participants into context, rather than analysed for itself. However, most questions were used primarily to get an indication of participants' views that were then followed up directly in the interviews and as such helped shape them. Because of this, only a minority of the questions are pertinent to the presented results. The answers to the only open-ended question of the questionnaire, "Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?" were incorporated into the interpretive analysis of the interview and treated as a beginning statement since this answer was given in advance to the interview.

Since an interview was an adequate way to gather information without inconveniencing the participants with the request to write long statements or fill out extensive questionnaires, the decision was made to hold a 30-minute interview per participant and audiotape it for later transcription. The interview that followed the questionnaire was semi-structured, but in a loose way. Some questions were worded beforehand and brought to the interview to introduce topics that I wanted to talk about. Depending on the participant, only some questions were necessary as the participants responded very readily with details and seldom needed prompting. The list of questions about areas of interest that emerged after the analysis of the individual questionnaires, did however guide the interviews, making them comparable as the responses were about the same topics (see Appendix B).

Previously set questions concerned the personal histories of the participants, how they came to work in their current job, their qualification, their view of their own environmental values, and performance and value use in their job. During the 30-minute sessions some topics were discussed more thoroughly than others, which led to interview transcripts that contained variable amount of text on the previously set topics. In addition, some participants had strong opinions on other topics, which were then discussed as well. The structure of the interview was thus very variable and

dependent on the individual response of the participants to the questionnaire and interview questions.

The discussion about qualitative versus quantitative analysis methods regarding their use under different paradigms has raised the issue of complexity in social science research (Banister et al., 1994; Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Lincoln, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2001). Methods that are capable of displaying this complexity of influences on decisions, behaviour, emotions, and values can be used within a quantitative or qualitative research approach, depending on the underlying theory. In assuming a social constructivist theory as the basis of the research, the use of qualitative analysis methods is appropriate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Using an interview based transcription text is a very common decision (Fontana & Frey, 2003) and methods like the thematic content or the phenomenological analysis are commonly used in such a situation too (Banister et al., 1994; Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 1998). Each interview was fully transcribed, with the transcription made in plain text, indicating only emotions such as long pauses or laughter. I have not used discourse or focus groups analysis but thematic content analysis and since there were only two people present at each interview and the audiotapes were still available, elaborate transcription indicating overlapping statements and pauses was considered unnecessary.

### ***3.5 Analysis***

As mentioned before, my approach to analysis used thematic content analysis and phenomenological tools. Creswell (1998) suggests that the analysis of the transcript is done in two phases, with the first phase for noting relevant topics right next to their place in the transcribed text and in the second phase, trying to assign these topics to themes. After the analysis of the transcripts, themes are taken separately and connections between them are sought. This approach is similar to the thematic analysis, which tries to accustom the preconception of interviewees and the

researcher's expectations and research questions by identifying the themes that emerge from the conversation (Banister et al., 1994).

For my analysis I used three approaches to the data. The phenomenological techniques as described by Creswell were employed to identify the topics of the transcribed interviews. Topics of interest were written next to the text on one side and in a second and third reading, emerging themes were noted on the other side of the text. The themes are represented in the headings of chapter 4. A coding of the data in regard to re-occurring themes was used in the thematic analysis as a second method to discover themes. This was done by identifying themes that represent areas of significance to the respondent and grouping responses into the appropriate theme. Once such a significance was identified it was also looked for within the responses of the other participants. These themes were then explained with regard to the statements of the respondents about themselves and their reality (Creswell, 1998). An additional quantitative content analysis of word frequencies in the interview was not done due to the narrow topic, which had words re-occurring at a high rate because of the previously designed questions. However, the frequency of answers to the questionnaire was used in association with the statements and explanations of the participants about their answers to the questionnaire. The participants wanted to explain their answers and extended their statements to put their answers into context. The interpretation of the statements was done in reference to the social constructivist theory, assuming that the participants' reality is constructed by their social surrounding and hence, their values are a result of their job reality.

One problem of transcribing data from audiotapes to written computer files is the potential loss of data (Banister et al., 1994; Cohen et al., 2000). Since I could still access the audiotapes and listen to inconclusive passages, and having conducted the interviews myself, the loss was however less important for my interpretation. The credibility of the interpretation should thus not be affected by the transcription.

### ***3.6 Reliability, Validity and Ethics***

#### **3.6.1 Validity**

Validity in interpretive approaches is characterised by accuracy of the reproduction of data, the transparency of the interpretation and a plausible theoretical construct that supports the conclusions (Merriam, 2001). As mentioned in 3.2.1, validity within a social constructivist approach has a different importance (Neimeyer et al., 2001) and thus could be measured on a different scale to quantitative analysis (Merriam, 2001). “Reality is what humans define is real” (Shipman, 1997, p. 4) and one question is whether the researcher can distinguish between genuine meaning and his or her preconceptions of the outcome. If the constructed reality of the participant is distorted by the researcher’s attempt to interpret personal aspects into it, the validity of the research is corrupted. A preconception of the results might however also serve as the hypothesis (Shipman, 1997) without influencing the interpretation.

Three types of validity are internal, external and construct validity. Internal validity is concerned with the question of genuine reality of the findings and whether the findings are displaying it (Merriam, 2001). External validity, similar to reliability, is concerned with generalizability (Cohen et al., 2000) which in qualitative measure could be translated into comparability to other cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Construct validity deals with the thoroughness of the study and whether it covers the relevant areas to be called representative (Cohen et al., 2000).

In qualitative research, internal validity might be achieved by a range of methods, which are unfortunately not all feasible within the scope of a small research project. A commonly cited method would be triangulation, which is the use of more than one method, source, researcher, or theory (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to use some of the mentioned methods I decided to use the thematic content analysis with more than one participant for a group analysis of written and oral statements to provide data triangulation (Janesick, 2003). A second effort towards internal validity is the examination of the study by peers by doing a member check, which has other peer researchers read parts of the results and share

their ideas (Janesick, 2003). I have done an investigator triangulation by circulating my ideas for research design in order to get feedback about my approach to the topic and had other research peers comment on the questionnaire design and the transcripts of the interviews.

For the construct validity I have made efforts to keep the sample of people representative of their group by only including participants that work in a similar situation with a comparable set of tasks and restricted the interview topics to relevant areas of the research.

The external validity can be achieved by the comparison with similar studies that involve the NEP scale (Corraliza & Berenguer, 2000; Dietz, Fitzgerald, & Schwom, 2005), environmental policymaking (Craig & Glasser, 1993), or qualitative analysis (Chawla, 2006; Craig & Glasser, 1993). This research is unique in its setting and participants. New Zealand has a different kind of environmental legislation that has not been copied by any other nation (Ericksen, 2004). The situation for the employees who implement this structure is therefore unique, too. However, similar studies about policy advice and value research produce comparable results, due to the commonly shared constraints in policy advisors and values research. By describing the participants' unique situation within a New Zealand context, comparisons can still be made to other cases. Other aspects of the research, such as environmental values can also be compared without this context.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to the word dependability as a substitute for the term reliability. This term represents the notion of thorough research design in quantitative research that produces sound and repeatable data that can be generalised onto a bigger sample (Cohen et al., 2000). Data from qualitative research has to withstand a similar scrutiny in regard to its congruity.

The quality of the actual conduct of the research is thus the determining factor for the presence of dependability or reliability. A high standard of research methods application is needed for both approaches, quantitative and qualitative.

Qualitative research is concerned with topics that are not necessarily repeatable due to their qualitative nature. A comprehensive research design can provide enough information to repeat the research, even if that would not lead to similar results. Quantitative reliability in this kind of analysis is thus difficult to produce because of a small sample and the in-depth analysis that is in conflict with the ability to generalize results (Cohen et al., 2000). If asking for opinions of people, circumstances that led to a statement are difficult to reproduce and may produce a different outcome for a variety of reasons (Bell, 2005). However, reliability is also represented by a sound base of data that supports the conclusions and appropriate methods for analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is sound base can be achieved by the previously mentioned high standard of research methods that provide enough information to put the results into context.

The small sample of my research means that it could not be used for a statistical analysis in order to show reliability in terms of generalization. By using a plausible and transparent method for analyzing my data, I can however create a credible interpretation that withstands critique. The unique situation of my participants is explained and their answers put into context. Since I conducted the interviews myself as well as used the audiotapes in conjunction with the transcripts for analysis, reliability is also assured for the actual data in the transcripts. The research design and discussion about methodology should have provided a context for the reader to relate the results to comparable studies.

### **3.6.3 Ethics**

In this study, I asked people about their personal views on issues such as their job, their performance in this job and private behaviour at home and possibly work. Giving information like this makes the participants potentially vulnerable to others, which is why an ethical conduct was necessary that ensures the participants' anonymity towards readers of the research.

Using a qualitative approach to analysis, which is presenting literal quotes from participants during the interviews, makes the presentation of the data more sensitive. Since an identification of the participants has to be avoided, there will be no further information on biographical data, gender, or age. In addition, statements that are

concerning individual work projects will have to be abridged in order to avoid identification through the association to these projects.

Although I do not anticipate any harm from talking about environmental values and the job as a policy advisor, the participants might feel uncomfortable to give such information or regret having participated. To cater for this possibility, the participants were given a letter, explaining their right to withdraw or refuse participation at any stage, before an informed consent could be given. Contact details of researcher and supervisor as well as the letter remained with the participants for this purpose, informed consent forms that had been signed were collected ahead of the interviews. They were returned together with the questionnaires but were stored separately from the data collection.

### ***3.7 Summary***

In this chapter I have presented my theoretical and methodological approach to the research.

My research design included a preliminary questionnaire and a follow up interview with policy advisors in a regional council about their environmental values and their views on how these are influencing their work.

I have used a social constructivist approach to the analysis of the data. For this approach, an interpretive method is appropriate. I chose a thematic content analysis or phenomenological analysis that connects emerging themes from the interviews and uses these to explain the statements.

The validity and reliability of this research and the methods for triangulation as well as ethical issues were discussed at the end of this chapter.

This methodological approach led to collection of data from the participants. This data is presented and analysed in the next Chapter.

## **Chapter 4 – Results**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter presents the main findings of my research. It is divided into three major parts; the participants' views of themselves and their view of their job within their work environment, and their understanding of their own environmental values as the first part; the second part focuses on the understanding of being or not being an environmentalist and acting in an environmentally friendly way in daily life; while the third and last part portrays the participants' view of their role within a regional government and their view of their work duties. Quotes are taken directly from the participants' interview transcriptions or the written statements of their questionnaires and are identified by an individual number for the respondent ranging from (R1) to (R7). Some results from the questionnaires are used to show the distribution of answers to relevant themes.

### ***4.2 Environmental Values in the Work Environment***

#### **4.2.1 Concepts of the job and identification with the organisation's values**

All participants were working within a regional council that is concerned with fulfilling the requirements under the Resource Management Act (RMA). The mission statement of the organisation is thus similar to the purpose of the RMA:

- (1) The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- (2) In this Act, sustainable management means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while—

- (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
- (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment. (RMA, 1991, s5)

An understanding of their job requirements is part of the participants' identification with their work organisation and its values (Chatman, 1989; Finegan, 2000). The way they see their job responsibility reflects their personal set of values as well as the employer's expectation in regard to the organisation's values.

The following quotes show that the participants identify with their organisation by stating that they would not be working there if they did not like it. Participant R5 explains it in this way: "If I didn't believe in what I was doing I wouldn't be here. I think I wouldn't stay in a job which didn't demand a certain amount of that [environmental] thinking anyway (R5)." The participant emphasises the environmental aspect of the job, which "demands" a mindset that aligns with the environmental message of the organisation. Environmental values can thus be assumed for the participant who states that environmental jobs are the preferred occupation because of this prerequisite.

A similar explanation for working at the regional council was given by another participant: "I wouldn't be here if I didn't think I was being effective and making a difference. I'd be doing another job (R6)." The focus of this statement is on the personal gratification that is part of the job. R6 sees the job at the regional council as an opportunity to make a "difference." The similarity to the previous statement can be found in the latter part of their responses where R6 and R5 stated that without the benefits to the environment, they would not be working in their current job.

Another participant spoke about the connection of the organisation to the environment and the positive outcome for their personal environmental values by saying: “I would be able to save the world, save the region, and I definitely feel fulfilled with the work I am doing here (R1).” The perceived fulfilment that is gained from working at the regional council is coming from the environmental aspect. The reference to saving the region shows the environmental connection. In saying that saving the region is part of a fulfilled working life, the respondent implies that the organisation’s goals to manage the region in a sustainable manner and their personal goals align.

The other four participants also reported a high level of satisfaction with their current employment. Upon being asked whether they had been employed elsewhere before, two of the seven participants did mention previous employment in different areas. Others mentioned that they had found a job within the council straightaway and stayed for reasons other than just having found some job, but having found the preferred job. This respondent recollected: “I studied hydrology and this was my first job. It was opportunity, good timing, I guess it could have been a consultancy or anywhere else, but the preference was not a consultancy (R7).”

An environmental consultancy usually advises its customers about environmental strategies in their field of working and assists with consent approval for projects such as buildings or resource use. The field of environmental consultancy is very varied. One common ground with regional council policy advice work would possibly be the fact that the consultants advise about working with the rules while policy advisors advise about making the rules. This respondent recalled working for a consultancy as contrary to their personal beliefs:

That's why I wanted to work for [the regional council], because I felt that, by working for a consultancy, your bottom line is making money for that consultancy. So if a developer asks you to do work, even if you don't necessarily agree with what they are doing, you have to make money for the company and I didn't like being in that position (R1).

This statement was followed by a reference to the perceived job satisfaction that was expressed earlier in this section by R1. The fulfilment that is felt by working for the regional council was not felt during the employment at the consultancy since they felt focus of the private company was economic while the regional council was seen to pursue different goals.

The overall impression from the responses was that the employees felt comfortable in their workplace and motivated to act in accordance with their employer's values. The participants agree on the environmental focus of the job and that a certain kind of environmental mindset is required or helpful for this kind of occupation. In addition, the decision to work for a regional council was related to the environmental aspect of the work under the RMA. After the interview, one participant remarked that the interview was like a check-up after years on the job to see if it was still fun, which it was for them.

This kind of identification was mentioned in all of the interviews with the participants being pleased about their choice and work environment. As mentioned in the literature review, a committed employee, who has chosen the job out of preference, is likely to agree with the organisation's values and even adjust to them (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Dose & Klimoski, 1999; Finegan, 2000; Finegan & Theriault, 1997; Millward & Hopkins, 1998). In an employment situation, Millward and Hopkins (1998) distinguish between relational and transactional psychological contracts, which are an attachment to the employer that is perceived by the employees in variations of strength. The transactional contract is a weaker identification with the employing organisation while the relational contract attaches the employee closer to the organisation and its values. The participants, in their role as employees, showed through their responses that they have agreed to a relational contract rather than to a transactional one, by referring to their job as the preferred option and to the organisation's values as similar to their personal values or better fitting than other organisations.

Some participants did not actively seek this kind of employment but as this statement shows in retrospect, that committing to the current job was regarded a good choice:

I think I planned on having a job that had something to do with the natural physical environment. I didn't say must be in a regional council. In fact I was probably thinking more that central government was where I would achieve my aspirations, but in reality it is not - now, I know (R4).

This response shows that although the job offer might not have been the preferred option, the participant developed a strong attachment to the job that is now described as positive. A job commitment might change from a transactional to a relational contract when the employee realises that the job fits personal aspirations or preferences. This transition from detached to attached (relational) employee might be faster if the employee was convinced that the job was a good opportunity beforehand.

On the subject of occupational choice, as explained in the literature review section 2.3.4, environmental values could be a reason to pursue a career in the environmental sector, including the government. This does however not imply that the main reason for working in an organisation is a concern for the environment. This respondent explains the motive for working at the regional council with incentives that are mainly not related to the environment:

I don't think my primary reason for being here is to protect the environment. My primary reason for being here is that I find the work interesting, stimulating, I enjoy the sorts of people that are here, it is a fulfilling job to do, and it's good that it has good outcomes. I don't think I am necessarily here to satisfy some environmental fervour (R2).

Although the other participants refer to some personal concern for the environment in their previous statements, this respondent is explicitly saying that the primary

motivation was caused by the job requisites rather than the environmental outcomes. Being an environmentalist may not be a prerequisite but could be helpful in terms of job satisfaction within the organisation. The contentment of R2 about doing something for the environment while working in an interesting job is indicated in their mentioning “good outcomes.” However, environmentalism as a prerequisite for an environmental policy advisor is not mentioned by any of the participants. This could also be due to the general assumption that policy advisors are supposed to be detached and objective (Heineman, Bluhm, Peterson, & Keary, 2002).

Overall, the participants reported about their current employment that they were satisfied with the job and the direct outcome of working for the environment, in the form of environmental protection. While this satisfaction is mentioned with the reference to their reasons for working in their job, environmental values can be assumed to play at least a partial role to pursue a career within the environmental public sector. Although there is no official requirement for the participants to be an environmentalist, some environmental concern seems to be present. I introduce further perceptions of the participants regarding the environment and their perception of environmentalism later in section 4.3.

After reporting the initial reasons for working in a regional government in this section, I present the views of the participants on their job responsibility. In the following section, the participant’s responses to their tasks and job requirements are explained as well as recurring topics that are ubiquitous in the day to day work.

#### **4.2.2 View of job responsibility toward community and environment**

All participants were employed by a regional council and content with their current job and the associated tasks. They supported the stated values of their employer regarding environmental protection and social responsibility, as required by the RMA.

When asked about their opinion of the RMA as a guiding framework and determinant of their responsibilities, one participant commented: “The RMA forms the basis of all our decisions. I think [it] is a pretty good piece of legislation ... like that balance, that

economic, social and environmental [balance] comes through very well (R1).” The reference to the RMA as a good basis for the day-to-day decisions about policies shows the acceptance of the RMA as the general framework that provides specification of the limits within which decisions are made. The reference to the balance of different needs within the definition of sustainability could be a sign of incorporation of the organisation’s mission statement into daily work use. If R1 includes the mission statement in the information that is given to the actual decision makers, the organisation’s values will automatically be included.

Besides the RMA, science is a second framework that is required to back up claims about ecological, social, or other consequences of policy. This participant noted: “What we have to do as staff is make recommendations to councillors based on hard facts and hard science (R3). This comment is singular in the methods that would be allowed to inform policy decisions. The participant seems to identify with the role of the detached policy advisor. This picture indicates that ecological consequences have to be researched with the appropriate scientific measures. Another participant however sees this knowledge in a careful way, as its facts are not universally valid.

I just think that most of our decisions are based on imperfect knowledge and there is always the chance of getting it wrong. When I am advising our elected representatives it is a case of putting as much of the information in front of them but telling them why the decisions have been reached and what could go wrong (R6).

In this statement about the uncertainty of scientific knowledge, the participant acknowledges that science is a major contributor to policy advice but advises against the belief in one universal scientific truth. The strategy of putting all the evidence in front of councillors (elected representatives) could lead to two implications. First, there could be a sign of perceived ability to influence the decision. By explaining why the advisors favour a particular conduct there is a chance for advocating a special cause, the councillors can still decide differently but the advisors feel they have

shown the councillors the best way of conduct. A second implication would be the caution that advisors can ask of the councillors when it comes to the decision. By this, they are transferring the responsibility for making the decision about uncertain scientific data to the councillors.

The understanding of their tasks here is that policy advisors are gathering and processing information in a way that can be used by the decision-making authority. This process is characterised by the legal framework and conclusions from the scientific data. The importance for the actual decision lies in the accurate presentation of the facts. This was emphasised by this participant:

One of the things about being a policy analyst and a policy adviser is that you have to be incredibly fair in the advice you give to council, give them balanced advice. But I am always at pains to tell the whole story and hope my personal values do not skew that advice (R4).

Although this statement referred yet again to the requirement of impartiality, the use of the word “incredibly” could be seen as a remark to the impracticality of being completely impartial. As Heineman et al. (2002) state, true impartiality in policy advisors is not achievable but is nonetheless expected as a standard. Looking at the further comment, the difficulty of this is emphasised. The participant stated that personal values do not influence but cannot actually control this situation and the solution to this problem is sought by preparing exhaustive information or telling “the whole story.”

The strong identification of the participants with their organisation, expressed through the commitment to working there, is also the underlying theme of statements about their responsibilities toward the community and the environment. Both people and the natural environment are identified as the groups or entities that need assistance, regulation or recognition as will be seen in later quotes. This balance, as the participants call it, is also directly required by the legal framework (Ericksen, 2004). Economy as a concern is mentioned in connection with social compatibility of

environmental protection measures, but not as a concern itself. This suggests that the general understanding of issues such as sustainability and environmental integrity is following an ecology-focused instead of economy-focused approach. This ecology-focused approach does not prioritise economic growth over environmental issues but only social compatibility. This concern about social consequences of environmental resource management is part of the RMA section 5.

In order to display the work values that are held by the participants I discuss their views on the examples of economic growth and social responsibility issues in the next two sections. Both topics were part of the questionnaire that was distributed before the interview. The responses to the questionnaire were used mainly to structure the interview, but are also briefly reported where the data aids to the analysis of the interviews.

#### 4.2.3 Understanding of work-related values

##### 4.2.3.1 Sustainable economy

The answers to the questionnaire’s questions about prioritising economic growth and sustainable use of resources need to be read within this informative context. In the following table, the actual distribution of answers of the participants to statements of the questionnaire is shown. The numbers represent the number of participants who held that view.

**Table 4.1**– Questionnaire answers for importance of economic and sustainability concepts

	unimportant	moderately important	important	essential
Prioritizing economic growth	1	3	2	1
Sustainable use of resources			3	4

These views were further probed by the questions below that translated their views into actions.

**Table 4.2**– Questionnaire answers for prioritizing economic growth and sustainable use of resources

	rarely	sometimes	often	always
I prioritize economic growth over environmental protection.	3	3	1	
I consider the sustainable use of resources as important for our society and I support its incorporation into economic and environmental considerations.		1	3	3

While there are similarities in the two sets of data examining values and behaviour, when these views were followed up in the interviews, the problem with rating the concepts was cited by participants unanimously as the lack of context. In the interviews, the participants explained their choice of importance and inclusion of economic or sustainable considerations with longer statements on the subject. This participant elaborated:

We [as society] can't just ignore economic growth. I think, I waver between moderately important and important. Sometimes I think we place too much importance on it at the expense of other things and I feel it limits our view on sustainability. We focus on striving for economic growth, but at the same time because of the sort of economic system we're in, we need to limit economic growth. It is quite important for our societal wellbeing, although I think it is over emphasised in terms of its importance (R5).

With this response, the participant raised the concern about the structure of society that “needs” economic growth, which was here referred to as a direct competition to

sustainability. Although the need of the society for economic growth and the corresponding benefits of higher economic status are acknowledged, the participant still feels uncomfortable about the direction the focus on economic growth has taken, and adds that concern for the economic growth is “over emphasised.” In the following statement, another participant developed a similar understanding on a necessary restriction for economic growth in order to make it sustainable:

...it is the difference between I guess looking broadly and in principle overall, and looking from a personal case by case situation so certainly overall, my views on economic growth has to be tempered in order to have sustainable growth to protect the environment (R2).

The thought that economic growth should not be prioritised is connected with the concept that excludes a mutually beneficial relationship between environmental protection and economic growth, and thus sustainable growth would have to replace economic growth. The view of an incompatibility of economic growth and sustainability is also mentioned by this participant:

I consider our economic system as a subset of our social existence which is wholly dependent upon the biosphere, natural world. They are all subsets of the other. If you are starting to prioritize a matter or an element in your decision making that is dependent upon human well being and upon the quality of their natural world, you start to get perverse outcomes that aren't sustainable (R6).

Although coming from a different angle for the overall concept, the statement ends with the reference that an imbalanced system is not sustainable, making the prioritising of economic growth unsustainable. Also, there is an emphasis on the prioritising aspect of the question. The respondent, as do the previously mentioned respondents, did not speak for abolishing economic concerns but for integrating or restricting them since economic concerns are a part of the whole.

Another participant sees the question as whether economic growth should be prioritised on a different level, referring to the implications on the work of a planner, rather than the ethical dimension of a general prioritising of one concept over the other.

The general thought here is, we look after the environment and allow economic development. So with prioritising economic growth, I am not deciding [about resource consents] depending on who makes more money or not. So I view that as unimportant in my day to day work, but as resource managers, we have to make some resource available for development and some for the environment (R7).

While the actual distribution of resources is planned by the regional council and then implemented through resource consents, the policy advisors are not involved in these consent hearings. Their tasks, as the participant explains, is deciding how much of a resource, like water, is provided for economic or environmental issues. The advisor's decision about economic growth versus environmental protection is thus restricted to giving advice about the most sustainable distribution of resources. A similar approach is taken by participant (R1) below, who connects the ethical dimension with the organisational values, which include the protection of resources against exhaustion and destruction.

There is a difference between economic growth and always making more money and economic sustainability and actually being able to make enough money to survive. It is very hard to make judgement calls on how much money people should be earning when you are just a planner. I guess the reason why I probably seem to be more picking up on the economic and social concerns [as problematic decisions] is because for me, the environment is a given, as the regional council it is our role to protect the environment (R1).

The participant expresses in this statement that the inherent role of the regional council is to protect the environment. If the focus of the council is clear and influences decisions towards this direction anyway, the problematic topics are the social impacts of environmental protection measures and the potential economic decline if environmental protection measures are too strict. By saying this, the participant identifies the difficulties in balancing the requirements of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Participant (R6) below, who mentioned the incompatibility of economic growth and environmental protection earlier, agrees with participant R1 in regard to the social aspect of not prioritising or inhibiting economic growth, but sees the people of the region rather than the environment as the main purpose.

We work for the people of the region and future generations, we don't work for the environment here. We have got to make sure that natural world is in a viable state that will support the social and economic systems that we have (R6).

Economic growth could thus be seen as a difficult topic to the policy advisors. They have to manage “the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing” (RMA, 1991, s5(2)), which requires the balancing of the purpose of the regional council to “safeguard” (s5(2b)) the environment but also keeping the economical basis of the society viable. The participants’ statements then reflect the assumption that economic growth can only be environmentally friendly if done in a sustainable way.

Other parties in the decision-making process that come from outside the council, such as stakeholders, affected parties of a policy or constituents of councillors, may however have views contrary to section 5 of the RMA. The participants rate the importance of economic growth over other concepts relatively low, but they presumably know which other parties to the decision process are strongly influenced

by concern for the economic impact of environmental protection or the opposite concern for the environment. However, the distinctive position that the environment is not merely a resource and that human activity is potentially harmful to the basis of its economy and subsequently to their communities aligns with the section 5 and is also strongly featured amongst the participants. The participants represent a careful position towards avoiding excess in either environmental protection or economic requirements and place a strong emphasis on the social responsibility component of their work.

#### 4.2.3.2 Social responsibility

This concern for the community takes a different turn when it comes to public consultation as one of the tools for policy advice, next to scientific data and legal requirements. While the consideration of economic necessities might be rated different, the rating of the imbalance of social responsibility and the necessary compatibility of policy is shown below as almost unanimous.

**Table 4.3**– Comparison of the social responsibility concept in importance rating and frequency of use

	unimportant	moderately important	important	essential
Social responsibility			6	1
	rarely	some-times	often	always
I consider my social responsibility in my environmental decisions.			7	

As expressed in some earlier answers, the participants see themselves not only as representatives for the environment but are also aware of their social responsibility towards the public when it comes to a conflict over environmental protection and economic and social wellbeing.

This thinking was expressed when one participant in said: “The Resource Management Act says that we have to maintain people’s social, economic, cultural wellbeing and that has become really apparent to me, that this balancing act is very difficult (R1).” Besides the statement about social responsibility, the participant also mentioned the goals of the RMA to “maintain people’s social and cultural wellbeing.” This is a direct reference to section 5 and part of the participant’s perception of what is important for the organisation. Another participant explained where the concern is coming from: “The evaluation for RMA issues that the council has to do is around social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing, sustainability pillars and around costs and benefits, Section 32 (R4).” This statement refers to public consultation, as public consultation is part of the evaluation required under section 32 of the RMA.

Section 32 of the RMA regulates the practice of the council regarding environmental resource management decisions. It was planned to ensure a good practice that evaluates social, economic, and environmental aspects that are listed as costs and benefits, effectiveness, efficiency and necessity of the respective management decision (Tonkin, Taylor, Boffa, & Simpson, 2000). This includes the writing of policy, regional plans, and other aspects of the council work and includes public consultation as a means to determine attitudes of affected parties. Another participant refers directly to how the public consultation is required by the rules: “We have our plans and policies, which are our guide; and documents, which largely guide our social responsibility and that has been brought through by the public opinion and consultation (R7).” The response refers to how the regional council determines issues with the public that fall under social responsibility.

The participants’ views of social responsibility seem to be largely connected with the legal framework they are working under. Like the economic growth statements, the social responsibility questions were answered with the reference to the RMA as the guiding framework. One explanation of this conformity seems to point towards an adjustment of values. This participant is talking about experiences in the job that changed previous views on social compatibility with environmental protection:

For me personally it was a real eye opener to see how us managing the environment has such significant social, economic, costs and consequences and so I guess where I previously would have said I was a hardcore environmentalist at all costs, I can now see that all costs isn't really a good option at all, because there is huge social costs (R1).

This statement could be seen as an explanation to why the participants seem to have the same ideas on social responsibility and economic growth, if this topic is to an extent part of the learning process upon taking on a job in that area. It shows that the work environment is influential on their values and views of social responsibility since this topic is predominantly work-related. Depending on the background of the participants, social compatibility of economic and environmental measures might have been part of their tertiary education, for instance in an environmental planning degree. However, the strong reference to the actual legislation and mission statement in section 5 for both issues suggests that the values mentioned in section 5 and the RMA are part of the participants' professional values.

This section should have shown that in addition to the commitment that is expressed by the employees, they responded similarly on contentious issues such as sustainable economic development and social compatibility with environmental protection. These views on economic interests and social issues also seem to reflect the participants' perception of the organisations' values on these issues. A consensus of views amongst the employees and between organisation and employees could also represent an agreement amongst their values (Finegan, 2000).

The requirements to determine social impacts and economic interests of projects that have to be balanced according to the purposes of the RMA under section 5, is set under section 32 of the RMA.<sup>11</sup> Besides the technical evaluation regarding the existing rules, scientific justification for action and legality, costs, benefits, and

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<sup>11</sup> The title of section 32 is "Consideration of alternatives, benefits, and costs." This evaluation of policies is further regulated under section 39 (1)(a).

necessity also have to be determined amongst others, by consulting the stakeholders (Tonkin et al., 2000). The difficulties and opportunities that arise out of the public consultation as opposed to the technical evaluation are discussed in the next section.

#### **4.2.4 Professional values and public opinion**

While there was a relatively stronger agreement within the participants regarding social responsibility, public consultation was a contentious issue. Some of the participants, while acknowledging the need to have public consultation, saw it as difficult to deal with. The concern for the public on the social responsibility topic and the view on public consultation could however be reconciled by a feeling of responsibility for the best outcome, which is sometimes prevented by extensive public consultation according to some participants. The will to do the best job for public and the environment could therefore be the trigger for the following statements.

I think we haven't always been as sharp as we could be about public consultation, it's [the] process we've designed [that] tires the public out. We don't see a lot of new information come out in that process, that hasn't come out in the pre-consultation and in fact what happens is once you get into the formal legal process that we work under, people retreat back to their positions. So you may have come to a community consensus to get to your draft, you move to your hearing, and the people you thought you had a consensus with go back to argue their industry perspectives and positions. By the time you get to the appeals process, it's really only the people that can afford lawyers who are hanging in there, or a few stubborn members of the public, and the public voice is lost. So the way public consultation works in New Zealand now, you lose the public. They've been lost for three or four years by the time the policy process comes out, then they're disconnected from it (R4).

In this long statement, the participant explained where they think flaws lie regarding public consultation. The major problem in getting to a conclusion on issues, according

to the participant, is the long process required by the RMA as the affected parties will get lost on the way. This behaviour is blamed on the rules of the RMA (section 32) that requires an extensive evaluation process with public consultation at several stages of the process. The undertone of this statement was that currently there is too much consultation done that is not helpful anymore and may distort the actual will of the public. Although the participant is critical about the process, the need or usefulness of public consultation is not doubted. On the contrary, the regret that the public voice is lost on the way is clearly stated here: “Public consultation is an influence, but it is not as big a driver as some of those economic and legal things, because it is not given the same weight (R4).” In this remark, the same participant states that, in addition, public opinion is ranked lower as an influence on environmental policy. This statement shows that the participant regarded the influence of the consultations as relatively unimportant compared to other considerations. However, read in the context of the previous response, public consultation seems to demand considerable resources on all sides given the relatively minor input on decisions.

Similar things were said by another participant, questioning the practicality of gathering and then using information from public consultation.

The principle of the public having a role and having the ability to have input into decisions is important. The practicality of it doesn't often turn out that way I guess. But, I'm not sure that the outcome is sometimes worth, or the benefits of the input, create a better outcome overall (R2).

The different experiences with public consultation might be an influence on these opinions. If the participation in such consultation processes has convinced these participants of the faults in the system, they will be critical about it.

Apart from their critical view on the process that may not use appropriate measures for an effective or fair public consultation, the usefulness of this information and the general degree of useful involvement were discussed. Some participants questioned

whether extensive public consultation produces useful information besides the political guidance.

The public simply don't have the scientific understanding or time to make sensible decisions, but that said, there is a significant role for the public to play in swaying the politicians in giving the flavour to the way that science is applied. On the one hand, it is extremely important in terms of public opinion, but not in terms of actual day to day management of the environmental issues. The public don't have the skills or the knowledge and nor should they, they are not the environmental [educated] (R3).

This statement suggests that the environmental experts should be trusted with their work instead of passing it on to be repeatedly scrutinised by the public , as the evaluation procedure suggests. Whether or not this implies the reduction of public consultation is not clear, as the public opinion is referred to as important for political direction. It could however be read as a call for reduction of public consultation within the process or shortening of the process, since the statement also acknowledges the role of the public in giving political directions. The voice of the public should thus be part of the political decision-making of the councillors but should not interfere with the work of the council employees above the mentioned beneficial input.

The participant R4 adds the thought that consultation of the public is still an important means of identifying a political direction for the regional council:

I [am] thinking at a greater level of detail about the actual intervention. It is to a good degree reflected in the priority of programmes the council embarks on so we put more money into in this region. So opinion is as a decision maker, and as a policy adviser at that level public opinion is really important. If the public said water quality is not important, then I would restructure my advice to council in terms of what priority they gave to projects. Public consultation though

becomes beyond that in terms of the absolute content of your intervention to deal with a particular issue, which you have given priority that now becomes less important (R4).

Participant R4 has thus introduced a distinction between public opinion and public consultation. While the public opinion is relevant for the political direction for the regional council, the public consultation, that was earlier mentioned by this participant as a process that “tires the public out,” seems to be viewed more critically in terms of usefulness. This aligns with the comment of R3 who felt that public consultation, although relevant, should not interfere with the day to day management. The reasons for this opinion were given in this response: “There is a lot of misconception and misinformation and people form opinions, based on one little news snippet. And if we went about making our decisions about long term environmental management based on that public opinion we’d be stuffed (R3).” The same respondent saw the competency of the public as critical in an earlier statement in this section. A distinction between the public as a source of political direction and as a barrier to efficient day-to-day management seems to be shared by respondents R3 and R4. Another respondent also shared the opinion about the “interfering” side of public consultation:

I think [public consultation] is very important in terms of planning things, but even there are a lot of the people that become involved because they have fairly extreme views and they are not necessarily representing the bulk of the public. Dealing with these extremist views takes up massive resources in time and money, because the extremists are trying to get their views into public policy area or onto the consent decisions. My experience of that situation is that they don't help the situation. Sometimes they do though, because it makes you think beyond the square or makes you think and then reach a little bit more, it makes you reconsider their views (R2).

The power of the public to intervene in already running projects or to sway politics into a different direction becomes thus a real issue for staff who are engaged in a contentious project. However, public opinion could also be useful in the same way by expressing a favourable opinion of the same priority as the organisation's view and thus support projects. While the participants do not want to ignore the public and their issues, they however want to work efficiently, which seemed to be understood to be easier when less public consultation is used as a means to distort the process.

The ability to use public opinion as an argument to re-route council decisions into the preferred direction is however seen as relatively low because of the considerations of other aspects that are required by the RMA in the process of decision-making. These constraints are mentioned in the following statement.

We do use the perception survey data that we have for instance and also we use the feedback from consultation, but also given the legal balances that the councillors have to pay. In our role as policy advisers we have to give free and frank advice. The law requires the councillors to say okay, well public consultation is just one stream of information, I have to look at all these other legal requirements (R4).

In this statement, the participant explained some aspects of the actual working process of the policy advisor. The RMA regulates the public input in several sections such as section 32, section 39 (1a-g), and Schedule 1 Part 1(c15). Another, probably most dominating factor are the legal requirements, the councillors and the policy advisors have to follow, such as sections 30 and 59-71 in regard to regional policy statements and plans. So, even if the policy advisor agreed with the public, the councillor is required to also regard other results of the public consultation process, the wording of the RMA, economic and the social consequences. The participants, even if they disapprove of some of the structures or processes of the planning, have to deliver all relevant information for a fair evaluation under section 32. The participant R4 talked about the options of the situation: whatever the public opinion is, and regardless of the

policy advisors opinion, the policy advisor will include all the other opinions of a public consultation because it is legally required by the RMA.

The position of a policy advisor has thus little latitude and it might be difficult to pursue a preferred outcome without the political pressure from the public opinion or activists. The following response clarified the role of the participants:

We are required to put out the policy documents and receive submissions, [that are] coming from different perspectives, through our planning process, write them up and make a recommendation to council, how to deal with that issue. You either need to accept one view or the other or find some middle ground between them (R5).

In this response the participant mentioned the balance between the different requirements that need to be obliged. Public opinion has to be mediated and brought into a shape that can contribute to the actual decision. Public opinion, which was largely regarded as problematic in earlier quotes, can however also be convenient for the participants, according to this statement:

Sometimes it is really good having extreme views [in a consultation] because sometimes you have very ultra conservative developers, who want us to do something that it's very hard for us to deny. It is then very good to have the support of people who don't want the developer to do something that is going to destroy their landscape, even though we don't have the rules to stop that in some cases (R2).

The response shows that this participant deemed public pressure helpful to support the environmental cause by translating into political pressure due to publicity. This could contribute to the advancing of difficult environmental issues. The public opinion in its variety is also referred to as divergent from the participants' views as the last response has shown. Environmental extremists and conservative developers seem to be identified as outside of the value area that is endorsed by the participant by referring

to them as the extreme ends that balance each other for a good environmental outcome.

While bound by the requirements to have public consultation, the participants however agreed that the public opinion does not have as much influence on their actual work as that is based on scientific facts and information. While the public opinion will be part of the information they present to the decision-makers, the earlier mentioned legal requirements and the scientific facts are at least equally influential, as this statement explains.

I look to the science to assist me with what natural systems are capable of, I look at the public consultative process and also social science and economics to look at what type of policy mechanism will be effective to going down a track where I know I have got broad support. And if we haven't got broad support [from the public] we need science to show people that if we don't do something, that you need to put more science justification (R6).

The position that is assumed by the policy advisors here ensures that the legal framework is adhered to and that the council's decisions are based on a sound basis of scientific, economic and social science data, while the public opinion contributes to the political direction, and in the case of submissions to the base of the data for the council's information. The value of submissions of the public is however not denied. As this participant explains, some information that contributes to other categories than the compiling of public opinion can be directly used in the scientific evaluation.

My science is based on a very small snapshot in time. You can't get that breadth of knowledge that these [private] people have without studying something for a long, long time. So, often the science [we base our decisions on] is limited to our small snapshot, and whatever conditions happen to prevail at the time when we were looking at [one place]. It will be not as accurate as we'd like and actually the people

who have been observing [one place] for the last 50 years are right.  
That happens (R3).

The overall attitude toward the role of the public puts the participants into assuming a stewardship role not only for the environment but also for the public to make sure that their political instructions from the public are implemented in the best way possible. Legal constraints are cited for the relative inability to regard public opinion to a greater degree. The participants cannot grant the public opinion a greater importance as the evaluation of information is regulated by the RMA. This is seen as a problem in regard to representation if the public interests in some cases but is not necessarily seen as correlating with the participants' view of their stewardship role, as emphasized by this statement:

I think that decisions on environmental issues should be made by those with the greatest understanding of the environment and its function but those decisions should be informed by the public opinion - not the other way round (R3).

While public opinion is seen as helpful for political direction and support for contentious issues, the process of the actual consultation and the volatility of the public are seen as problematic. Although the public values might be the same as the participants' values, their definition and view of their work requirements might be inhibiting a greater identification with the public or with environmental activists from the public. Also, the public values could be different to the policy advisor's:

Just because a whole lot of people come in on one side doesn't mean it is right in my view. There might be a whole lot of submissions asking [for a certain way] but at the end of the day if I don't agree with what they are saying for whatever reason, my recommendation to council wouldn't necessarily be to accept what they are saying but only to report it (R5).

This statement aligns again with the earlier responses that define the policy advisor's role to the information gathering and mediation part and the councillors as the ones who decide according to the information and public opinion. As a closing remark participant R3 summarised:

To my mind that's the right balance between the hardcore science and the public opinion and that's what politicians are there for is to reflect those two extremes. That's not what staff at a science level are there for. We're there to be pure about the policy or science and the facts and the law and the rules (R3).

This section showed that public consultation is viewed in a similar way by the participants in terms of working reality, when public opinion is used politically to interfere, and in terms of guidance authority for the political direction of the council. Since the contact with the public and evaluation of public consultation is strongly formalised through the RMA, individual adjustments to the way of conducting or recognising public opinion are only possible in the small frame of summarised advice to the councillor. The participants pointed out that public opinion is not regarded as the biggest influence and that they will position themselves against, for or indifferent to dominant public opinions in their reports to council. Depending on their own position their advice could be the expression of their own values. It seems however more likely that an evaluation report that also includes scientific, political and legal advice is more influenced by the perceived organisational values that the participants seem to have taken in, for instance on sustainable economic development. The positioning towards the public opinion in advice to the council could therefore portray the work values of the advisors that were adjusted to the organisational values of the council.

In order to contrast these work values in comparison to the personal values later in this chapter, I now introduce views of the participants regarding their personal environmentalism and environmental values that they developed previously or during their work for the regional council.

### ***4.3 Environmentalism and Value Guidance***

#### **4.3.1 Identity as and the definition of an environmentalist**

If environmental values can also be expressed by working for the environment including government, it would be important to ask the participants about their position towards environmentalism to examine their notion and expression of their environmental values. Apart from the views about their job, the participants were thus also asked about their concepts of themselves in terms of environmentalism with the question Do you consider yourself an environmentalist? This question was used instead of the question Do you have environmental values?, because, as already discussed in section 2.3.1, environmental values cover a varied area and can be defined in different areas. Since being an environmentalist implies that the environmentalist holds some environmental values, the environmentalist question was used. Although the majority of participants answered this question with yes, their definitions about what constitutes an environmentalist differed.

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word environmentalist as “One who believes in or promotes the principles or precepts of environmentalism; also, one who is concerned with the preservation of the environment” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). Some participants used a similar definition, for example, “My personal definition of an environmentalist is a person who considers the impact of activities upon the environment and seeks to avoid, remedy, mitigate those effects even if that requires a degree of self sacrifice (R4).” The mentioning of “sacrifice” could relate to the difficulties to integrate environmental strategies into the personal or even professional life, although the participant is already working in an environmental organisation. The commitment to environmental protection is thus prominent in this definition. The theme of supporting or finding ways to remedy environmental problems was also used by this participant: “I think the environment has been undervalued in the past and we are not living sustainably. I consider myself an environmentalist because I seek to be a part of the remedying of that (R1).” Both participants use wordings that are directly related to section 5 of the RMA. The felt responsibility of both participants for the environment could also be influenced by their expert knowledge about the context of

environmental problems since they are employed in an environmental organisation. Knowledge about environmental issues is suggested as a contributing factor to environmental concern (Barker & Rogers, 2004) and may be able to lead to a different view of how people see their new role as actors in a situation where they can use their knowledge. Instead of feeling concerned and helpless or overpowered by the facts, environmentally knowledgeable persons, such as the participants, could gain self-esteem and a sense of empowerment to act in their role as protectors for the environment. The following statement points to the possibility that this knowledge does not necessarily lead to excessive or radical environmentalism, but to a moderate approach.

[I am an environmentalist] in so far as I have a higher than average level of understanding of the environment and while I consider that it is appropriate to modify the environment up to a point, I always make my decisions in an informed manner in an effort to ensure that use/modification of the environment does not compromise its function or sustainability (R3).

The response used the same reference as R4 about modifying actions towards a more environmentally friendly way of action, although the wording suggests that the emphasis seems to be more on the professional actions. The reference to the “higher level” of knowledge about environmental issues implies that the knowledge that was learned makes the participant an environmentalist and not the personal values, suggesting that people who know enough about environmental issues act environmentally friendly, because they know how. It could however also be read as environmental knowledge being a reason for environmentalism.

In a further explanation of the initial comment on environmentalism, participant R4 establishes a distance between extreme environmentalism and a ‘practical’ version of it. Environmentalism seems to be based on knowledge as explained in the statement of R3 and is used by R4 in their professional life.

I am not a “wild green” – I am the kind of environmentalist that accepts that some compromises are necessary to achieve sustainability and that decisions are a balancing exercise and at the end of the day a value judgement – when faced with a judgement on an issue where environmental issues come into conflict with social or economic wellbeing, I will tend to look first at what is in it for the environment or society as a whole rather than what is in it for me or the economy (R4).

Again, the theme of distancing oneself from the radical arm of environmentalism shows in the second statement when the participant states, “I am not a ‘wild green’”. The distinction between radical environmentalists and conservative environmentalists seems to be important, as well as the explanation that the conservative environmentalist takes a sensible approach to environmental protection. This sensible or practical environmentalism behaviour could be a dissociation from the radical approach that stands for less conservative demands such as a pristine environment without human intervention. The focus on sustainability and social wellbeing as part of the environmentalism of the participants does not deny that the environment needs attention but also acknowledges the social implications of environmental protection measures.

Other participants did not include this distinction between radical and conservative environmentalism. One of the answers to the environmentalist question was a short yes, which was explained later in the interview with this statement:

I think it is because of my belief system. So I firmly believe that we, I have got to look after the environment as a whole. Certain parts which we have absolutely destroyed in this country which were quite precious bush and wildlife [are lost], so now we really need to look after those things (R5).

In this statement, the theme of stewardship for nature is mentioned. Although there is no direct reference to a concept of stewardship, such as is found in Judeo-Christianity, the use of the phrase “to look after” suggests an attachment to nature in terms of responsibility for nature. The phrase “environment as a whole” seems to reference sustainability, a concept that is not included in the traditional view of Judeo-Christian views of stewardship of nature but only in later interpretations (Enderle, 1997; Richard & Michael, 2000). The most explicit statement seems to be that of participant R1 who actually mentions God in a later response about environmentalism: “I think God’s given us [the world], we’ve been told to manage the world. He has given it into our control.” Besides these two, the other participants did not explain environmentalism in a Judeo-Christian stewardship context.

However, a similar notion of stewardship and ecological responsibility was used in this participant’s answer to the environmentalist question. For example participant R6 stated: “I consider myself and humans to be part of the environment, not a part above it. I consider human economic and social systems to be dependent upon the health of the natural world (R6).”

The difference to the response of R5 and R1 is the emphasis on humans being part of the environment and not above it. It is debatable whether a stewardship approach must be seen in a way that puts humankind above the creation or equal to creation (Richard & Michael, 2000), however, a moderate approach could see humankind in both positions and capable of fulfilling the stewardship role. The stewardship principle was however not endorsed by all participants, as can be seen in the distribution to the corresponding question that was used in the second part of the questionnaire. The connection of a stewardship approach and environmentalism in policy advisors might thus be a less important concept and used as a means of explanation of individual environmentalism rather than a belief.

**Table 4.4**– Responses to the question about human stewardship

	strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
Humans have the right to modify the natural world to suit their needs.		2	1	4	

In order to see whether there might be a connection of environmentalism and stewardship principle, the distribution of answers to this question was compared to the answers of the participants about identifying themselves as an environmentalist. The two participants who did not identify themselves as environmentalists answered with ‘unsure’ and ‘mildly agree’ to the stewardship question but did not elaborate that point further in the interview. This result suggests that the reference to a human stewardship of the environment is part of a set of concepts that are used for the explanation of environmentalism rather than an integral part of the environmental beliefs of the participants.

For the participants who did not identify as an environmentalist, the common theme was the focus on the identity that defines environmentalism. For example, R7 wrote in the questionnaire “No, I’m a scientist” as their answer, which went without further explanation but indicates that the assignment of the label environmentalist is not only refused but another label preferred. The participant saw the description scientist as more fitting which shows that policy advisors do not automatically see themselves as environmentalists, just because they are working in an organisation that is concerned with such issues. R7 extended their response later in the interview:

I feel [that an] environmentalist is probably someone like a tree hugger. I guess they are probably the people who may be into biodiversity, doing it for goodness, such as I cycle for economics, I compost, because otherwise I have to pay someone to take it away. I do my own gardening but that’s more just from a holistic point of view, and not because I’m anti the big establishments or that sort of

thing. I guess it is people who something aches in them regularly about what they see and how they feel, such as I feel about numbers (R7).

Two themes show in this text. On a prominent place, environmentalists are compared to “tree huggers” and “anti establishment” which shows that, although the participant lists a range of environmentally friendly actions, in their view, environmentalists are connected with radical and non-mainstream behaviour. Whether or not the participant does not want to be associated with them by others (Tesch & Kempton, 2004) or feels that a different description fits better is not clear. Environmentally friendly behaviour as the second theme is however ‘excused’ by the reason of economy. The participant does engage in environmentally friendly behaviour that could cause people to apply the label of an environmentalist but does not see them as criteria for being an environmentalist. The reference to numbers as the participant’s interest as a scientist seems to enhance the distancing from the term environmentalist. The participant’s definition of an environmentalist here would seem to include a strong attachment to the natural environment, combined with the urge to help with its protection.

The other negative answer explained an image of an environmentalist as someone who is actively involved with environment in their private time with while for them working for the environment does not make an environmentalist per se, saying: “I do not spend a lot time reading or being involved in environmental issues outside of work (R2).” The definition of an environmentalist is here focussed on the private area. For this respondent, to be an environmentalist one has to be active outside of work, an environmental job thus does not make an environmentalist.

In summary, the participants used different approaches to the definition of an environmentalist but agreed on the terms that concern for the environment combined with action for it makes an environmentalist. A common theme was also the understanding that environmentalists change parts of their lives or behaviour to become active for the environment in contrast to the mainstream public. An environmentalist is thus a person with a shift in interests that may or may not

dominate his or her life. The radicality of environmentalism is explained along with the simultaneous distancing from it by the participants. Although the statements suggest a higher relevance of the natural environment to the participants, radical environmentalism is rejected on the grounds of not being sensible or pragmatic. While the participants had different understandings of themselves as environmentalists, they were unanimous stating that they were not to be seen as radical environmentalists.

Since their definitions included professional and private measures that could define an environmentalist, I now discuss the participants' responses about environmentally friendly behaviour in the following sections.

#### **4.3.2 Private environmentalism**

As could be seen in the last section, the distinction between private and professional environmentalism is not always clear since the participants refer to both private and professional behaviour as part of their definition. In this section I refer to responses that were given to further questions about environmentalism in order to separate the participants' views of what is private and professional environmentalism and what they do for the environment. Assuming that the environmental behaviours are an expression of the participants' environmental values, I discuss the participants' adjustments of their behaviour towards environmentally friendly actions as an expression of their understanding and values towards the environment.

Some of the responses of the participants in this section refer to their answers to the questions in Table 4.5, which formed part of the questionnaire.

**Table 4.5–** Questionnaire Answers for importance of environmental concepts

	unimportant	moderately important	important	essential
Equal rights for all life forms	4	2		1
Sustainable development			3	4
Interdependence of the ecosystem		1	2	4
Biodiversity conservation		2	3	2

In Table 4.5 the participants’ ratings of importance of four concepts are displayed. As explained in section 4.2.2, the participants were asked how important they felt the concepts were to their decisions in private and in professional life. ‘Equal rights for all life forms’ was rated unimportant in most cases as the actual recognition of all life forms for environmental decisions was further explained in the interviews as a concept attributable to more radical people. Participant R5 for example said: “Well this is very hard line isn't it?” Sustainability and the recognition of ecosystem interdependence and biodiversity may have been considered less extreme concepts as participants reported the incorporation into their decisions as can be seen in Table 4.6

Table 4.6 shows the number of participants who felt they used the concepts in their behaviour. The distribution of answers shows a similar pattern to the previous table but while the concepts were rated important, the frequency of considerations was lower, except for the ‘equal rights’.

**Table 4.6–** Questionnaire ratings for frequency of use

	rarely	some-times	often	always
I consider the rights of all life forms as equal (in regards to environmental decisions)	2	3	2	
I incorporate sustainable strategies into my decisions.		2	4	1
I incorporate consideration of ecological interdependence into my decisions about environmental issues. <sup>12</sup>		2	2	2
I support/perform actions towards maintaining biodiversity.	1	2	1	3

Upon being asked if and how they incorporate environmentally friendly behaviour into their lives, some participants felt that they could or should do more. This question was asked for both professional and private life. One participant identified the question to asking about environmentally friendly activities outside the job: “In my private life I do own a gully section and I am restoring that, and I have been involved in native bush planting (R6).” This participant earlier identified themselves as an environmentalist who had a holistic view on the environment. A later response was obtained from the participant in connection to the questions regarding incorporation of sustainable strategies as displayed in table 4.6:

I must admit I did bias this [sustainability answer] towards my work life, because I am not perfect and I am always trying to do better in my personal existence, and that [animal rights] was obviously directed [at behaviour] as a citizen, I try to do that in my private life as well (R6).

Participant R6 made a clear distinction between relevant topics regarding work and private life. The sustainability topic is identified as a work related issue while the

<sup>12</sup> One participant did not answer this question and it was not discussed during the interview.

animal rights were attributed to private action for the environment. The noteworthy theme however was R6's comment "I am always trying to do better" which implies that the current behaviour is not environmentally friendly enough for them. Another participant reacted in a similar way. The failure to live up to the standards of their own understanding of responsible environmentalism is also a disappointment for this participant:

It was really good to have this [questionnaire] and to think about how does what I actually do in my home life match up with what my principles are for work? I've got a vegetable garden, but that's about the extent of my kind of limiting my footprint on the environment (R1).

The participant questioned as well whether the values that are determining their work behaviour are also lived up to in private. This suggests that the environmental values at work are regarded as stronger than their private values by the participant. While at work the environment is put first, the principles for private life are laxer. Environmental values that are influenced by the work values might have some influence on this view. Subsequently, the statement was extended by a similar response telling of environmentally friendly actions that have not been taken due to personal convenience.

I could carpool, but it would reduce my flexibility a lot so I have said no. That is where I have prioritized my personal convenience above the environment as such. With recycling I'd be prepared to pay [fees for collection] but there are definitely some things about sustainability that I'm still pretty lax about (R1).

The participant seemed to be disappointed by the self-assessment. While there are some actions that are identified as easy to do, some behaviour, such as carpooling was deemed too inconvenient but still desirable to do. There seems to be a discrepancy between demand of the conscience and delivery by the private person, which could be

an expression of environmental values. Also, the use of the footprint<sup>13</sup> reference to limit the impact on the world shows a higher level of knowledge about concepts and procedures that are available to promote sustainable behaviour. The participant also refers to the possibility to carpool, which is not realised for personal convenience. The use of the concept ‘prioritizing personal convenience over the environment’ however shows that there is awareness of more options for environmentally friendly actions. This critical evaluation of private action is shared with another participant who refers to missed opportunities for private environmentally friendly action.

I’ll make sure that there are no weeds on my property, I plant native trees and those sorts of things on my own property. I’ve missed a few opportunities to go out and actually help in other places recently, but I am also a member of a group outside the organisation [regional council] which is talking about the environmental issues (R5).

R1 and R5 are both concerned about their environmental actions outside their job and that they could have performed better, although they are already performing environmentally friendly tasks. The question whether their job has made them more aware of possibilities to act environmentally friendly could not be answered from the statements. The availability of the knowledge to do so is however apparent considering their job in a regional council and their qualifications.

For some participants, the environmental orientation of their job seems to be acting as a relief from feeling too guilty about lesser private enthusiasm for environmental activities for some participants, as the following statement indicates:

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<sup>13</sup> The ‘ecological footprint’ concept was introduced by Rees (1992) and adapted by several organisations and countries to disseminate information on sustainable behaviour strategies. The Ministry of Environment of New Zealand defines an ecological footprint as “how much land is required to supply your living and lifestyle needs - that is food, housing, energy/fuel, transport, and consumer goods and services” (Ministry for the Environment, 2006a).

My job is certainly about protecting the environment, but it is not a big part of my home life, even though I recycle my rubbish and separate our plastics and all that. But I don't call that necessarily environmentalist. I just think that's the way we live these days (R2)

Participant R2 referred to recycling as part of the normal life in New Zealand or possibly the western societies in general, and in so doing doesn't identify this behaviour as typically environmentalist. This view could have contributed to a lack of identification with being an environmentalist. The difference between a job that is protective of the environment and the private life is again visible as a theme. R2, who did not identify as an environmentalist, saw the job as the main contributor to environmentally friendly behaviour. While recycling could be seen as a common behaviour, the actual private life was rated less environmentally friendly by R2, R1 and R5. This could be due to different views on what constitutes an environmentalist and what would be extraordinary environmentally friendly action (Tesch & Kempton, 2004). While recycling is considered a societal norm, although quite recently accepted, other actions were considered a typical environmentalist action. As this participant, the other non-environmentalist, explains: "I am not a weed buster going down to someone's gully pulling out weeds and planting native trees. I don't go there or [do] that sort thing. (R7)." Since New Zealand has an ongoing problem with invasive alien plant species, this action could be considered specific to New Zealand's environmentalists due to the unique ecosystem and widespread concern and action for native plants (Wall & Clarkson, 2001). This distinction between environmental activism and their own environmental action is however not exclusively used by the non-environmentalists. R7, who noted that they were "not a wild green", has a similar approach to private environmentalism, as a second participant below. Both stressed their distinction between their professional and private lives in taking environmental action:

I have charities that I give money to for environmental projects, but likewise I have more Christian charities that I give money to. I can't go out every weekend and plant 100 native trees or something

like that, I suppose I derive enough personal satisfaction from the achievements I get doing this job. I don't feel the need to push the issue in the other aspects of my life (R4).

Participant R4 responded to the distinction between work and private life that are influenced by different environmental standards and the further explanation of this approach by saying that the environmental aspect of the job gives the work the major environmental focus and relieves the pressure to also be environmentally friendly in private. Participant R5 agreed to this perspective.

I am not in one of those [environmental] groups, I give money to those sorts of groups, because [environmental issues have] been a focus of my work here for a long time. We need my support here [at work]. Outside of work I tend to step back from it a little bit, I am interested [in the environment], because it is also my work. It could become almost all consuming. (R5)

Apart from the reference to the work as a dominating influence on environmentally friendly behaviour, a second theme was used. R5 is keeping at distance to the “all consuming” potential of environmental issues in the private and professional life. Like R4, R2 and R7, the job is the main contributor to environmentally beneficial actions while the private life is less dominated by the issue. However, the verbal distancing from environmental groups as done in the statements of R4 (“can’t go out every weekend”), R5 (“not in one of those groups”) or R7 (“I don’t go there”) could also point towards a demarcation against the label of being an environmentalist.

The overall evaluation of their private environmental action seems to suggest that the participants feel that the contribution that they make by working for the environment relieves them from the responsibility to act according to their knowledge and values in private on a larger scale. This statement confirms this.

Is it a trigger, I think the career path that I have taken has made me more environmentally-conscious, because, my upbringing wasn't in a strongly environmentally-aware way, but I think the reason why I probably score middle of the [environmentalism scale] is because of my science. The knowledge I have of the environment also tells me that the environment is actually pretty robust (R3).

Assuming that the participants' knowledge about the state of the environment and how to behave environmentally friendly and their values would create a inner moral obligation to act accordingly, this obligation could be satisfied partially with the actions that are done at work.

Private environmentalism could be assumed for all participants even if it is gradual. The focus on the professional aspect of their environmental actions however suggests that the participants express their environmental values mainly through work but simultaneously remain concerned about their private actions for the environment. As noted in the earlier sections, the professional values are aligned with the RMA while the personal view of being an environmentalist shows that private environmental values exist but might be partially absorbed in the more dominant work values. However, there appears to be a high level of congruence of private and professional values regardless of a possible domination through the organisational values. Possible tensions between private and professional values are discussed in the next section about value adjustment.

## ***4.4 Value Adjustment***

### **4.4.1 Factors of constraint**

Although the differences between professional and private environmental values in the participants might not be substantial, tensions within the job and between private and professional values could take place. This section discusses the participants' views on compromises between personal views and work requirements, as

professional environmental values are incorporated into decisions by default, while private ones can be excluded intentionally.

The participants discussed holding back personal environmental views for several reasons that are all related to the major concern about the influence of their actual advice. External constraints on this advice such as the legal framework and scientific data are mentioned if the scientific base of a suggestion is not valid or the advice is not within the legal specifications of the RMA. Some processes and interventions of politicians might also be seen as an external constraint. Lastly, the expectations on policy advisors to remain objective and detached from their personal opinions in their work could be felt as an internal constraint, that the participants impose upon themselves.

The external constraints on personal values are mentioned in the following statement, which indicates that the direction of decisions is pre-destined by the framework. The participant identifies this direction as already clear and expects to behave accordingly: “I guess the reality is we work within a policy framework, so in some ways that decision [on environmental issues] is made for us (R7).” The emphasis on the framework that is paramount for the decisions of the policy advisors suggests that this is the major constraint for the participants.

Another point outlined in the statement below refers to the external constraints of political decisions that have to be implemented. Since the final decision-makers are politicians, decisions against the personal environmental values of a policy advisor are possible.

Sometimes if you write policy, the politicians will tell you to go down this track, you might not always agree with it, but it's desirable to go master it, that's the way you need to take it.

Potentially a conflict arises, but then it's a political organisation, we need to follow the guidance of the politicians. We don't always agree with the decisions that the politicians want us to come out

with, but then they're the decision makers in this organisation and they actually have the final say about the policy and there can be sometimes a tension between staff and councillors, but I don't think it is that great in this organisation. (R5)

Two ideas surfaced in this statement. The external constraint of working in a political organisation was mentioned in the latter part while it was described as "desirable" to "master" situations where private values and work disagree. Another participant reinforced this idea by explaining that a policy advisor has to give objective advice and cannot bias it towards a certain outcome. In cases of outcomes that the advisor does not favour, the objectivity should still not be abandoned.

One of the things about being a policy analyst and a policy adviser is that you have to be incredibly fair in the advice you give to council, to give them balanced advice (R4).

The view of the objective policy advisor (Heineman et al., 2002) can be understood as an internal constraint as the participants have other opinions but hold them back due to their understanding of their job. Another two participants described the internal constraints as part of the job that is regulated by external factors such as politicians.

When you work in an organisation like this you can't let [yourself] go, if I did I'd get fired. I would then lose my ability to influence the process from inside. In such a case you admit that it's a shame that happened, [and ask] what if information I gave the councillors wasn't compelling enough to make them make the decision I thought they should have? How do I do that better next time? That's then the technical challenge for you is then to make your argument better for the next time (R3).

The participant suggested a way to cope with refusal in an advice-giving situation. The participant suppressed their personal opinion and sought a positive way to deal

with the unwanted outcome by trying to achieve it the next time. This approach of being realistic and knowing one's boundaries is expressed in the necessity to keep adverse convictions to oneself. A similar sentiment was expressed by another participant:

Reality is that this is a political organisation that needs to make decisions that are in line with the general public's view of the world. They always have to be acceptable to politicians who are representing the general public view, often decisions are a little bit conservative for that reason (R2).

The suggestion made here could be a form of adaptation, making advice "acceptable". The system in which the policy advisors work is quite rigid. People who are trying to fight the system from within may have only a small chance of succeeding. However, if the policy advisors want to change decisions from within, it seems they have to be patient and adapt to the system. By restraining their own opinion and trying to convince the decision-makers with the tools they have, policy advisors stay in the system and review their advice. Participant R3 indicated that if the policy advice based on scientific information was not good enough to be convincing, then a new version has to be made in order to make the politicians see the situation with different eyes. This participant acknowledged that the role of the policy advisor is also defined by the decision of others:

You have to look at the broader picture. I have never had an experience where I haven't got something that I can't look back on and say well they didn't accept this bit of advice but at least they did this much. You have got to take what you can get, you have got to be pragmatic about it. (R4)

The ultimate decision lies with the councillors. The policy advisors have to communicate their objective advice to the decision-makers to form an opinion, while the gathered information has also been the base for an opinion of the policy advisors.

Participant R4 expanded on the objective role of the policy advisor: “I think, your values do affect the way in which you give advice but you desperately try not to make that in fact obvious (R4).” Policy advisors thus try to present advice in a rational manner that emphasises the external constraints like the RMA. As R3 explained, if the advice was not followed, the presentation or content can be changed for a second try. These statements suggest that policy advisors have their own values influencing their opinion and either successfully advise according to their opinion or are willing to try several times. The difference in the organisational values compared to professional and private values is of interest in this situation. If the values of the organisation are similar to the values of the policy advisor, the actual difficulty in accepting a compromise in the intended decision outcome of the policy advisors might be small for them, since the final decision could still be close to the intended outcome. Policy advisors whose professional values align with the organisational might then have a good chance of having their advice taken, as their opinion and their advice is in line with the organisation. The private values could also contribute to the policy advice. Due to the obligation of the policy advisors to stay objective, private values however might be less strongly represented,

Lastly, decisions that are made may not always be in line with the policy advisors’ personal or professional values due to institutional structures, as described in this statement:

Institutional structures and institutional expediency, short term thinking, that frustrates me. I am quite comfortable and perfectly able to change my thinking if convinced on the evidence that I had been making decisions based on wrong assumptions, wrong science (R6).

The external constraints here are seen as institutional pit falls and “short term thinking”. Mishaps in decision-making in the view of the policy advisor are not blamed on the organisation and what it stands for but on the structural shortcomings that translate into external constraints. The organisation’s values are not contested,

but the view of their position within the decision-making process is seen as constrained. Participant R2 explained these structural constraints with the legal process:

We need to take into account that whatever we put out there in terms of policy has to survive the legal process, it's got to survive the Environment Court processes when someone appeals our decision, which on big decisions they invariably would (R2).

Besides the legal process, science was identified as the basis of advice for the policy advisors. Their work thus includes preparing advice on the basis of scientific facts that takes into account the legal requirements and has been evaluated for its effectiveness and necessity. This advice is done by the policy advisors with their values and opinions on what is important and potentially right. The process of giving advice is thus not objective or detached as this statement shows.

If you are smarter about the way you do things you can influence [the decision-makers]. And I suppose partly cause I've climbed the ladder a bit more and I have become a little bit more senior, I can access people that I couldn't before, to influence them, to make changes. But the rest of me knows that there is process and so I moderate my advice. Every now and then I get irritated at adverse decisions. But I have to bite my tongue [and review my advice] to make it better. (R3).

The participant described the internal constraints, when personal opinions and values have to be restrained. Instead of leading an open fight against decisions that are made against their advice, the policy advisors, as mentioned earlier, "desperately try not to make that in fact obvious (R4)" that they have their own views on the topics. They give all information that is needed for the decision-makers to come to a decision. However, policy advisors can decide about the format of advice that might help the decision going the preferred way. This act of compiling advice out of scientific data,

legal rules, personal view, and public opinion that have to be balanced is part of the reconciliation process of the participant's value system. Their view of how they give advice, how they see themselves working, gives clues about the process of adaptation to the working environment and its values.

#### **4.4.2 Strategies of reconciliation**

Within the working environment, employees have to develop their own understanding of which values are endorsed by their organisation and what they mean for their professional behaviour (Finegan & Theriault, 1997). They also have to find a way to connect their private views and professional commitments into a system that can be used for guidance in work decisions. The reconciliation between private values and the corresponding professional values that are adapted from the organisation could contribute towards a strategy of rewarding work behaviour. In this section, data is presented that indicates this kind of reconciliation-strategy. Giving advice in a balanced and fair way that nonetheless features a recommendation based on personal values and views is the main characteristic of this strategy. This theme corresponds with the previous section where participants already mentioned that playing against the system and giving skewed advice could lead to the loss of their job or just a disregard of their advice.

The balancing act of composing an advice statement is described by several participants with reference to their personal views as one influence and other sources such as scientific data, public opinion, and political and legal realities as another influence. The participants spoke of this balancing act in a variety of ways, for example:

Mediation to me is another connotation when we get into a conflict situation, and you bring in someone to bring you together, which is what we are doing to an extent, but a mediator - I suppose we are doing it to a degree (R5).

Although the participant initially did not agree to the description ‘mediator’, this stance was modified later in the statement and mediator is accepted as a fitting description for aspects of the policy advisor’s work. By supplying information to the decision-makers, policy advisors could be seen a mediator for the different sources of information that need to be balanced against each other in order to represent their relative importance. This negotiation of information is part of the formation of the later advice.

The process of mediating different views for advocating a desired outcome of a decision was explained differently by this participant: “When I am advising our elected representatives, it is a case of putting as much of the information in front of them but also telling them why the decisions have been reached and what could go wrong (R6).” The participant emphasised that all information is used for the advice. However, the reasons why a certain recommendation was reached the important part that indicates where the decision-makers should go.

Participant R7 preferred the word ‘guide’ as a description of how advisors deliver information. Considering the different motivations of councillors and advisors, advisors might feel they need to make councillors understand implications of decisions in a similar way to their own views.

I give advice and information to my councillors who are the elected representatives and it is their decision to make, because they’re the ones who are to be re-elected and so they have the feel for the community. We can give them information and guide them, show them the implications or effects of whatever decision they make (R7).

Thus, if policy advice would be a purely objective exchange of information, there would also be no evaluation of preferred options. Even if these options are not followed, considering the similarity between the personal and organisational values, the preferred options could be well within the acceptable range for an advisor. The offered opinion on the preferred option is likely to have merit, due to the affinity of

policy advisors with the organisation, is listened to, and has a high probability to be accepted if the organisational conventions on values are followed. In order to achieve this acceptance, the policy advisors, as mentioned earlier, may adjust their personal views to fit the perceived values framework of the organisation.

If the decision-makers are aware of all relevant information and possible consequences of decisions, they may be more likely to follow the suggestion of the policy advisors, since their pre-evaluation is likely to be in line with the organisation. Another participant calls this process ‘persuasion’:

In order to get the decisions that you personally would like to see you have to tell the whole story. I suppose as an advisor you have your personal values, but you have to tell the other side of the story with equal fairness in order to persuade the councillors that your values are correct. Then that's the nature of the policy advisor's job (R4).

According to this participant, in order to make the councillors accept the merit of one's personal values, the “whole story” needs to be told to illustrate the logical consequence. A similar stance was taken by R6 in an earlier paragraph. The way the information is presented lies within the discretion of the policy advisors who have an opportunity of influence on the decision at this stage. The evaluation beforehand means that they decide, which information to bring up and which to rate irrelevant. The potential influence of the policy advisor's values into decisions on how to advise is explained with being “smarter” as R3 stated in section 4.4.1.

However, the way policy advisors work within the system of a regional government combines personal views and professional requirements. The influence of the personal values is thus not denied. Policy advisors do not try to disregard their personal views but develop strategies of reconciliation with their professional and personal values in order to be able to use them in their work environment. This thinking is also used by participant R2:

I think you can't help but have to use your personal experience of what you think is the right way to go. I'll certainly give all kinds of views, the whole range of my life's experiences as well as all the professional experiences to get the best possible decision (R2).

This participant is referring to the personal factors that can influence the work as an advisor. For the best possible decision outcome, all resources are used, even personal experiences. In the case of environmental decisions this could also be personal experience from private actions for the environment. While the use of private experiences and values might be possible, it does not take over the professional conduct. The reconciliation strategy of the policy advisors is thus careful, as participant R4 explained:

Professionally, you have to put aside some of those personal values and make sure that even if it sticks in your throat, that you are giving the full story in terms of the advice to council, cause they will see through it (R4).

The suppression of personal values could however be seen as conditional, as participant R4 was speaking of "some personal values." If the nature of those unsuitable values might contribute to an unsuccessful outcome of the advice, they might have to be suppressed. Nonetheless, some values might be suitable for the policy advice. Although they are following the rules of their working environment, environmental policy advice is then also influenced by the personal environmentalism of the policy advisors.

Figure out why [the environmental situation] is bad, get in amongst it, and help change it, that's environmentalism. I guess for me the way I satisfy that is [staying in] that middle zone and making changes slowly and make them happen (R3).

In this statement, participant R3 referred to the opportunity for the private environmentalism to influence the work. Instead of pursuing the environmental cause outside of work, changes are made from within the system, but slowly. The reference to “slowly” and “middle zone” suggests that an inconspicuous way of pursuing these goals promises more success or is a realistic estimation. Patience was also referred to in this statement: “I am not frustrated by [slow process] because I agree that people have to be taken on a journey. You can't just [demand that] everything's going to get fixed right now (R1).” The participant's low frustration could be seen as faith in the system. Instead of being frustrated when decisions are made slowly, R1, who identified as an environmentalist earlier, acknowledges that environmental protection through a regional council might take some time but is confident that environmental protection will happen eventually.

Although the constraints mentioned in section 4.4.1 suggest that the job of the environmental policy advisor is highly restricted, this section has shown that the policy advisors see their job as a position of influence. They refer to their personal experience or values, and their professional values as guidance for their advice, although differently weighed. Referring to the private values is done consciously with regard to the view of policy advisors as being objective in their recommendation. This strategy reconciles both types of values, the ones that represent the participants' views of their job responsibilities and the private environmental values that are represented by the participants' environmentalism outside of work. The reconciliation of both types of values can then be used to work towards a decision outcome, which is rewarding for the professional and private individual. This approach is helpful in the way that it does not seem to affect a positive attitude towards their job. Heineman et al. (2002) attribute this kind of behavior to resident policy-makers, who stay close to the employer's value set and act within the range of organisational options. This loyalty of permanent employees is also found by Finegan and Theriault (1997).

The loyalty and the earlier mentioned job commitment could be the result of adapting closer to the organisational values, according to Millward and Hopkins (1998). Private environmental values and professional values in the participants appear to be

relatively close and intertwined due to the close thematic connection of work and private environmentalism. However, while this section has shown a strategy that is used by the participants to reconcile differences in these values, the potential of change towards a greater similarity in professional and private values is possible and is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.4.3 Adapting to perceived job responsibilities and values**

Job satisfaction, commitment, and personal attachment to the employing organisation are factors that influence the adjustment of personal values to reflect the values of the organisation (Finegan, 2000; Millward & Hopkins, 1998). In the previous sections, I have presented the policy advisors' views of their responsibilities as employees, on their own environmentalism, as well as problems and constraints they may face in doing their job. These circumstances influence the participants' strategy of work. Assuming that a rewarding work situation is partly generated by successful work, such as accepted recommendations for policy decisions, and a supportive social atmosphere in the work environment, the previously mentioned strategy of value reconciliation in policy advisors might contribute to this job satisfaction. This section presents data that support the assumption that the participants not only use strategies to reconcile their values for a rewarding job experience, but they also adjust their values and views to the professional value system that is influenced by the legal framework of the RMA they are working under.

In the previous section, some participants spoke about patience with the system they are working under. This long term view requires some faith in the power of the system to initiate environmental change eventually. The response of participant R3 reinforces this trust:

Those agencies that used to frustrate me are now starting to buy into it and are now starting to make some changes, but it is going to take a long time, it will take another five or ten years before it really starts having an impact (R3).

In this statement the participant recalled that some events involving other parties have been frustrating, due to the lack of willingness to change towards more environmentally friendly behaviour. However, the notion of long term development demonstrates that the participant has made an impact that generates change. This change is the rewarding part of the work and even though it will take some time to see the effect, the participant is convinced that these changes will happen eventually.

I don't expect some of the changes that we have made and that I have been involved in to really come about for another generation or maybe 50 to 80 years. In that respect perhaps I won't see it in my lifetime, but perhaps I know that the conditions that have been causing that have been halted, and we're on the way to reducing it, but you don't get that instant gratification on a job [like this] at all, it's very, very rare. (R6).

This participant explained the requirement to be patient as inherent to the job, since a policy advisor could not expect “instant gratification” for the projects as environmental change takes longer times to show. Participant R4 extended this patient view with a comment on compromises.

I see policy as an evolving thing, and a long term process and so you take what ones you can get and you are pragmatic [in accepting] that sometimes you are not going to get everything that you would have liked (R4).

In the response R4 mentioned that not only do environmental policy advisors need to be patient about the eventual change but also have to take a pragmatic view on what is possible to achieve. Policy as an “evolving thing” in a “long term process” will then eventually have setbacks for the policy advisors in terms of advice that is not followed. The faith in the eventual protection or improvement of the environment seems to ease the acceptance of occasional differences between decision outcome and advice. Participant R4 expanded on their previous response:

There is a bit of me that is a pragmatist that takes a step back and looks at the broader picture. I have never had an experience where I haven't got something that I can't look back on and say, well they didn't accept this bit of advice but at least they did this much (R4).

Participant R4 is content with the working situation which can be seen by the positive attitude towards refused advice by saying "at least they did that much." The acceptance of the rules that come with the framework of the RMA and the trust in the system suggest that there is an accord of the rules and the individual's views. Participant R7, who previously emphasised the importance of the framework they are working under, supports that this assumption: "I don't strongly disagree with that framework (R7)." In section 4.4.1 participant R7 saw the necessity to follow the rules as paramount to the policy advisor as these correspond to the framework they are working under. The extended statement is an acceptance of rules as much as values. The participant agrees with the values of the framework and indicates that this decision was part of the agreement to start working at the council, as the framework's values had been there beforehand. This suggests that the participant has agreed to work under these conditions beforehand, and even if there is a disagreement between the personal and organisational values, the contract for the job and the requirement to continue following the organisational guidance is present.

While the previous statements showed that the initial adjustment of values might start with the identification and adjustment to the organisational values, the following response suggests peer influence as another factor of value adjustment.

I have a lot to do with the ecologists. I have worked closely with them from time to time, I suppose I have been influenced by their peers, and various other places. I am not a scientist, if I want science I go to the scientists and ask them about it and I can take on board what they are saying and translate that into the policy (R5).

After the employee has agreed to work under a certain set of rules that represent values of the organisation, the co-workers are another influence with their private as well as their professional values. In this case, the participant refers to the ecologists who influence through their expertise. The participant is not an ecologist but gets the information from the ecologists and thus builds the recommendation about the ecological aspects of a policy. This task is called “translating” by the participant who has taken on these views subsequently. That these views are likely to be ‘environmentalist’s views’ is suggested by this participant: “I think in some parts of the organisation you almost kind of need to be an environmentalist to be doing the job (R2). The influence by other colleagues who might be environmentalists themselves in the social work environment and the influence of information given by specialists in a work situation could thus be contributing to the value adjustment. This development of values fits within the assumption that values as a social construct are changeable through persuasion, social influence, and new knowledge.

These previously mentioned influences are necessarily assigned to particular events or persons. Instead of referring to significant learning experiences during their work (Chawla, 1999), influences were left unidentified by the participants, with the most accurate description of an influence being the ecologists’ influence in the statement of participant R2. The awareness of one’s values being changed is however present, and the following statements refer to this awareness on several occasions: “I would suggest if you got me ten years ago you might have got a different result, it might be related to age. You become a realist (R6).” This view is shared by participant R1, who said: “I think that my thinking has evolved through my work.” Both statements refer to the change in values with the work in general being the influence. The reference to age as a sign of longer time on the job suggests that the senior employees have adjusted to the organisational values to a larger degree due to the longer time within the organisation. A statement of R6 confirms this in saying “it is like the maturing of attitudes.” The participants are aware of their adjusted values and do not reject them but see the process as normal and even helpful for working in this environment. They also acknowledge the influence this newly formed set of values as well as their private values has on their work.

I think your own values influence it any way whether you actually know it or not. I can't see how you can escape that. If you just write [policy] purely on facts and leave out any other sort of inputs, it's not going to work. Experience can influence your thinking, invariably you are going to end up favouring one particular option over another, your personality does get somehow imprinted on what you are doing (R5).

The participant in this response summarised the value and experience based aspect of policy advising. R2 saw a purely facts-based policy as limited and experience as useful and inescapable anyway. The additional knowledge that comes from the experience of working within the organisation can be used in a beneficial manner for the work itself. Recalling some earlier quotes of participants R4, R3, and R2, who all noted that experience and values influence their decisions and that this is positive, I conclude that value adjustment and use is a social process that happens during the work itself, through interaction with and learning from peers.

The working environment of the policy advisor would however contain a range of different people, starting with the councillors, lawyers, the previously mentioned scientists in ecology or other subjects, and colleagues. All these influences and the values of the organisation as perceived by the participant have a potential to influence the employee.

From this statement, the conclusion can be drawn that not only are policy advisors aware of their value adjustment but they are also aware of the sometimes unintentional use of their whole set values, private and professional. However, this research could not determine to what extent values influenced decisions of policy advice and whether the values identified as private have a significant influence on the work of the policy advisors.

#### ***4.5 Summary***

In this chapter I presented the results of my research. Unless otherwise stated, the statements were taken from the transcripts of semi-structured interviews that followed a questionnaire about common environmental topics and their importance. The lack of contradictory statements and clear and thorough formulation led to the assumption that the participants had the opportunity to think about some of their possible answers beforehand, even if they did not know the questions for the interview.

The responses in the first part about their view of their job responsibilities showed that the participants all had a similar understanding of the requirements for their job and the corresponding values and environmental values. A high level of job commitment was exhibited by the participants in statements about responsibilities of their jobs. The responses were congruent with the values of the regional council as stated in section 5 of the RMA, and often refer to or use the wording of this section.

The definitions of the term environmentalist in the second part were equally similar to each other. The participants found that environmentalists should show a strong commitment to environmental issues even outside their work and act upon it. Five out of seven participants described themselves as an environmentalist, but did not want to be associated with radical environmentalists, by saying that their own approach was influenced by their knowledge and the lesser private enthusiasm due to their environmentally themed job. The commitment for the environment was also carried into the job, which could be used as a vehicle for performing environmental action. However, environmentalism and the associated values were predominantly seen as private issues. Environmentalism in the participants could thus be an expression of private environmental values.

In the third part of this chapter, constraints of the participants' work and their strategies to reconcile these tensions were presented. The adjustment of their views and values was found to be part of this strategy. The commitment to the job and the inherent environmentalism of the organisation, that fits the private environmentalism of the participants, were identified as factors in the adjustment of values in the participants. Some of these values might influence their work, which is mainly the

evaluation of information and recommendation of policy to the actual decision-makers. The participants were aware of the similarity in their values and the organisational values and thus referred to them but avoided the obvious use of their private values. While they acknowledged that there is a demand of policy advisors to stay objective and evaluate only facts, the participants' strategy was to reconcile objective evaluation of facts, their work experience and values for the best possible outcome in their view.

The results of my research thus suggest that policy advisors in a regional council fit their already similar values within the organisation's values. They are aware of the influence of experience and values on their work and aware of the adjustment of their values at work due to peer influence and education. They intentionally use these experiences together with their other resources, such as scientific facts and legal frameworks, to generate recommendations that they deem to be potentially successful and in accordance with the organisation's values.

## **Chapter 5 – Conclusion**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

In this chapter I present the conclusions to the main findings of my thesis. After a short introduction about values and their significance to this research I answer my research question using the headings from chapter 4. Therefore I draw conclusions on environmental values of policy advisors within the work environment, views on environmentalism and subsequently value adjustment to the values of the work environment. The final section contains outlooks and suggestions for further research.

### ***5.2 Research Question***

The focus of my research was on environmental values in people with jobs in the environmental sector. For my research, I contacted a regional council in New Zealand that works under the RMA. Staff of these regional councils are working in a job with a high focus on environmental protection. The motivation to work in this kind of job could be due to personal environmental values. Accordingly, I formulated my research questions to the situation:

- Do environmental policy advisors believe that their personal environmental values influence their work?
- Does their policy advisory work influence their personal environmental values?

Based on these questions, I looked at the participants' view of themselves, their responsibilities and their job in terms of environmental values, as well as their identification with their employing organisation, in this case a regional council.

*Do environmental policy advisors believe that their personal environmental values influence their work?*

The findings of my research suggest that the participants private environmental values merge into their professional values. Policy advisors are aware of their professional environmental values and feel that they act according to them in within the constraints of their organisation. In addition to those findings, my results point towards the possibility that environmental values create a sense of belonging in the participants who see their job as part of a community of people working towards environmental protection.

*Does their policy advisory work influence their personal environmental values?*

The question of influence on environmental values through the participant's work can be partly answered through the findings of the first question. If the participants have a strong sense of belonging and commitment to their job, they are likely to adapt to their organisation's values (Finegan, 2000). More importantly, the collaboration that is needed to provide competent policy recommendation is a social process where values and the corresponding advice are constructed through discussion, evaluation and persuasion. This experience of recurring policy analysis is likely to have an impact on the individuals' set of values as they are constantly revising or improving policies, plan or advice.

In the following sections I expand the conclusions on these results and finish with suggestions on further research or use of the findings.

### ***5.3 Environmental Values in the Work Environment***

#### **5.3.1 Value fit and occupational choice**

Values are part of human decisions and thus also part of work decisions, including occupational choice, and this is also true for environmental values. In this section I portray my conclusions on the identification of the participants with their employing organisation, their perception of their job responsibilities and their general work values.

Research on values has found them to be stable concepts of norms and beliefs that are derived from social experience and interaction and are organised in a relational structure of interconnected values (Rezsohazy & Neil, 2001). This structure acts as an overarching guideline or worldview for everyday behaviour and decisions. The worldview of an individual can shape the understanding of what is socially desirable and influence attitudes toward social concepts such as lifestyle, religion or government (Schwartz & Bardi, 2003). Values can thus influence occupational decisions, amongst other things.

Environmental values are part of this value structure and can have some impact on individual lifestyles and behaviour, which has been described by research about environmental values and behaviour (Dietz et al., 2005). While it is not clear whether environmental values determine occupational choice, it is however likely that people socialise with groups that have similar values, which may then also be true for environmental values (Forgas & Jolliffe, 1994).

As discussed in section 2.3.4, some suggestions were made on the influences that determine whether a person starts working for an environmental organisation (Chawla, 2006). If socialisation with like-minded people is desirable for individuals, persons with environmental values could be inclined to join other people with similar values in private or at work. Since occupational choice is largely dependent on other factors and other values (Lewis & Frank, 2002), environmental values might be one factor of many.

The participants of my research identified strongly with their work at the regional council and the mission statement from section 5 of the RMA. The use of quotes from the RMA to explain their work values and the positive statements about their reasons to take up work for the council asserted this impression. The participants liked working in a government position, and had planned on working in a similar position in most cases. This indicates that the work in an environmental and governmental position is not randomly found but employees have actively looked for this type of

job. This leads to the conjecture that the participants' set of values or worldview would be a certain 'type' that is likely to find government jobs attractive.

A further notable impression was the distancing of the participants from other environmental jobs that suggested a dislike of commercial jobs such as consultancies and an even stronger demarcation from more radical or activist environmental groups. These definitions of their identity, namely a pro-governmental attitude and an anti-radical environmentalism stance, seem to be the determinants of their motivations at work and in private. The combination of environmental responsibility and government position seems to be contributing to the participants' positive attitude and commitment towards their job as it fits with their values and perception of themselves.

The first conclusion from the results is thus that the participants can express their environmental values while working in a job that fits their values, which are assigned to conservative or security concerned categories by Schwartz (1992) and Lewis and Frank (2002); and further that the participants' expression of their environmental values is unlikely to influence them towards working for radical groups or commercial enterprises. This occupational preference stems from their values that are incompatible with radical or commercial jobs, making them prefer governments, charity or non-profit organisations with benevolent attributes.

### **5.3.2 Job commitment**

The positive job commitment that was exhibited by the statements relates to the value fit of the participants' professional and private values with the organisation's values. Opinions about economic consideration and social responsibility were congruent with the requirements stated in section 5 of the RMA. The consideration of these factors is directly required by the legal framework (Ericksen, 2004) and the participants appeared to have incorporated some of these requirements into their value construct.

Concern about economic decline through environmental protection was mentioned in connection with social compatibility of environmental protection measures, however, the participants were not purely concerned about the economy. This suggests that

their attitudes towards issues such as sustainability and environmental integrity is following an ecology-focused instead of economy-focused approach within the organisation and its employees. The employees did not prioritise economic growth over environmental issues, instead they were concerned about the social compatibility of environmental protection. This concern about social consequences of environmental resource management is again part of the RMA section 5. Overall, the responses of the participants showed a commitment to their employing organisation that manifested in the support of the organisation's mission statement to a degree where references became literal. Finegan (2000) points toward this possibility of close attachment to the organisation by employees. The familiarity of the participants with their organisation's mission statement could have developed due the compatibility of their values with the organisation's mission statement and the earlier mentioned job commitment as well as the social learning processes in the work environment that provide the knowledge about the organisational values and may even influence the participants values.

Since the participants work in teams on a policy and with internal and external experts (as explained by the participants), they have to reach a conclusion on the available information within a group. Professional values and private values can come into conflict during this process. The difference between professional and private values cannot be determined reliably as people use their whole value construct to orientate in their social surroundings (Schwartz, 1992). However, people can develop understandings of values that are applicable for work and for private situations. This was shown by the participants in section 4.3.2 who referred to standards for professional and private environmental behaviour. Professional values that are similar to the organisational values are then also more suitable compared to private ones. The position that is taken by the policy advisor toward the public opinion in advising the council is thus more likely to portray their professional values.

However, an evaluation report also includes scientific, political and legal advice and involves many persons who discuss their conclusions and explain them to others. This collaborative work allows the exchange of opinions and subsequently influences by

persuasion. Within this social process of collaboration on a policy project, the participants can take or pass on new values, increasing conformity.

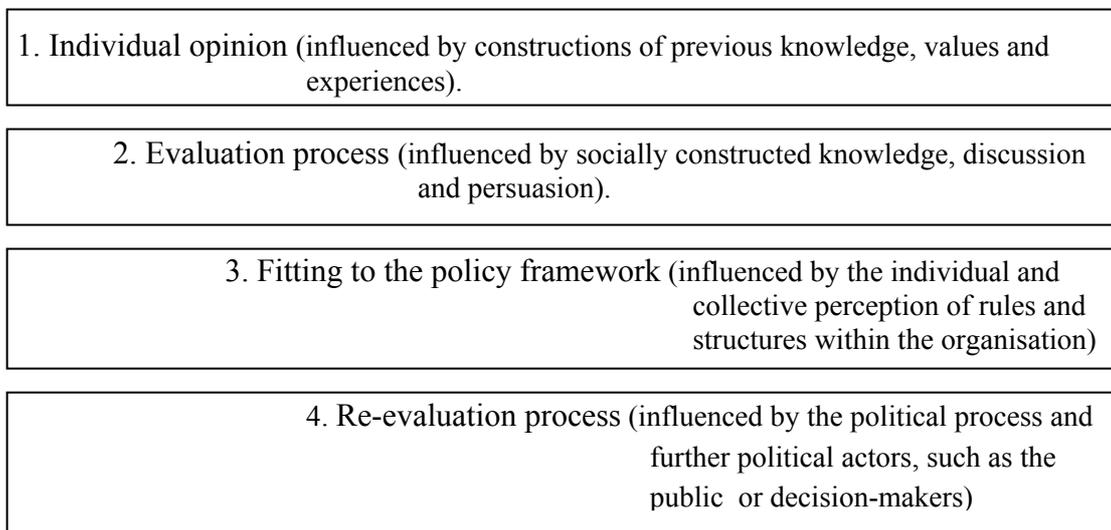
### **5.3.3 Similarity of values**

The similarity of values and opinions that derive through this work environment has some advantages. A recommendation made by a policy advisor with a similar view to the organisation is more likely to be accepted than a radical recommendation. Also, employees with similar values and opinions about their organisation are more content with their job (Finegan, 2000). Heineman et al. (2002) however relate this commitment to the problem of “social conservatism” (p.36) where policy advisors become protective of the organisation’s interests in terms of creating conservative policy. The statements about the disruptive nature of public consultation in the last part of section 4.2 support this impression of the participants. If the social environment is attractive and supportive of the employees’ opinions, outside opinions might be rejected on the basis that they do not come from the inside (Heineman et al., 2002). A similarity in work values could point towards a close connection within a group. Some statements about public consultation showed tendencies to behave according to this structure, which is described as inhibitive by Connelly and Smith (2002, p.139) when organised in “policy networks” that are very protective against outside influences.

Public consultation is strongly formalised through the RMA. This process was criticised by the participants because of the extensive measures of public consultation. Some statements then mentioned the possibility to shorten or change this process. The public input is considered to have modest impact on decisions and thus, some participants suggested a kind of stewardship role of policy makers for the public. A stewardship role of policy makers on behalf of the public seeks to exclude the external input, which is why this input is suggested by Heineman et al. (2002) as a tool to prevent conservatism. However, the critical statements in the data were few and later balanced by positive statements about the usefulness of public input as it can shift the focus of a process due to polarised views. This suggests that there is no immediate indication of social conservatism.

Public opinion is useful to the participants' work in terms of guidance authority for the political direction of the council and as political interference with contentious issues. It is notable that the input of public views is not necessarily on the same working level as the evaluation of other information as the RMA foresees a number of instances within the policy process where public consultation takes place. The incorporation of public views into the policy process is also inherently political and involves other political actors apart from the policy advisor, such as the councillors as the actual decision-makers. The participants' responses suggest that they usually develop a position towards the dominant public opinions in their reports to council according to their evaluation of the issue. A re-evaluation of their position by the political process of further consultations introduces more social influences to the social construction of the final recommendation. The following diagram shows a theoretical path of this social construction of policy that is derived from value-based perceptions of individuals.

### **Social Construction Pathway**



**Figure 5.2** – Pathway of social construction within the policy process

This diagram shows that the influence of individual values on the final policy is diluted by the social process of advising. Input of political actors and empirical information are re-evaluated in the context of the first three steps. This includes the commonly held values amongst the employees. Individual values and opinions are thus influencing the production of collaborative recommendations that is the basis of the policy decision, albeit the degree of influence may change during the process.

#### **5.3.4 Summary**

This part of my conclusion argued that the participants chose their jobs because of their values that fit to environmental issues on the one hand but also public service. This value combination lets them endorse the organisation's values to a high degree and creates a strong commitment to the job and organisation. This commitment can but does not necessarily need to lead to protective behaviour or internal networks that exclude external influences due to their tight social structure.

Due to the focus of the RMA on public consultation, social conservatism in policy advisors in New Zealand is unlikely. The policy process is dominated by team work and recommendations are collaborative. The political process that follows the social construction of advice counterpoints tendencies to "policy networks" (Connelly and Smith, 2002, p.139).

Some points of the diagram in Figure 5.1, such as the group dynamics during the evaluation processes or the influence of the political process, could be clarified by further research.

#### ***5.4 Environmentalism and Value Guidance***

Environmental values are part of the decision path, which was outlined in the previous section. In this section I conclude on the findings about environmentalism as an expression of these environmental values and the influence on the motivations of individuals within the policy process.

The participants' responses largely agreed to the view of an environmentalist being a person who acts and cares above average for the environment and does this predominantly in his or her private time. Five out of the seven participants identified as an environmentalist loosely within this definition. A notable distinction, which was made by all but one participant, was their distancing of themselves from being a radical environmentalist. The participants put a strong emphasis on the fact that they perceived themselves as sensible, pragmatic environmentalists. Radical environmentalism was seen as represented by groups that are notorious for their presence in the media or preservation of pristine nature, whereas normal or mainstream environmentalism was associated with widely performed environmentally friendly behaviour, such as recycling, energy-saving or native tree planting. However, despite these definitions, the environmentalism that was endorsed by the participants is different from the mainstream or radical environmentalism in the effect and mode of work.

Environmental values are held by the individual and are first and foremost private. The participants reported that they regarded their private environmentally friendly behaviour as average. While their private behaviour did not exceed the social standard of environmentally friendly behaviour, they felt that they compensated with their behaviour at work. Having a job that protects the environment satisfied their need to express their environmental values. However, unlike environmental activists who work and live according to these principles, the participants appear to be environmentalists predominantly at their workplace. This compensation of the felt obligation to act environmentally friendly translates the previously private values into work values. The responses even suggest that their work actually enhanced their environmentalism, through its focus and the organisation's values. Through this process, environmental values apply for professional and private life but are used with a different weighting favouring the professional aspect.

The focus on the work regarding environmental behaviour turns the participants into professional environmentalists, who are close to the definition of an activist.

However, due to their job within the government structure, advocating for environmental issues is not considered activist's work, as it is not directed at the organisation but on the contrary, works from within. The reluctance to associate with environmental activists can have many reasons that could not be explored within the scope of this research. Nonetheless, other research suggests that feelings of social affiliation play a role in becoming an environmental activist (Forgas, 1994), which makes it likely for the participants to feel a stronger affiliation to a different group.

The opportunity to increase their activity for the environment without becoming a mainstream activist seemed to have some attraction to the participants. They could act environmentally friendly, advocate for their perception of 'correct' treatment of the environment in discussions with other actors in the policy process and contribute to the long-term improvement of the environmental situation without entering uncomfortable zones of affiliation. This suggests that environmental values of the participants stem from their private identity but are expressed and followed in their professional life, shifting environmental values primarily into their professional set of values.

The responses of the participants regarding their private and professional environmentalism suggest two conclusions. Firstly, the participants' see environmentalism as a private expression of environmental values, where they integrate their environmentalism into their work and advocate for the environment in their job. Secondly, they refuse identification with environmental activists. Overall, the participants felt supported by their work environment in their values. The comments on the work environment being supportive of an increase in environmentalism leads thus towards the final section about value adjustment.

## ***5.5 Value Adjustment***

### **5.5.1 Factors of constraint**

The last part of my findings was concerned with the mechanisms that could lead to the similarity in the work values of the participants. The diagram of the social

construction pathway shows that policy advisors are exposed to many social influences during the stages of writing a policy recommendation. The process of collaboration and the structural requirements can also produce tensions. The participants were asked about factors of constraints within their jobs in order to learn about these constraints as well as their strategies to cope with them.

The main theme in the responses about the constraints was the requirement to stay detached and to give objective advice. Heineman et al. (2002) and others point out that policy advisors' decisions and recommendations are inherently value-based and cannot be truly rational advice. The statements of the participants asserted the impossibility to stay impartial but mentioned this requirement as the main source of tension between their values and work. The process of policy advice was thus portrayed in an impartial manner. Some participants emphasised that their major sources of input into their decisions were scientific evidence, while others told of the difficulty to stay impartial or to avoid having their personal opinions influence their recommendations.

Other reported constraints were from external structures, such as decision hierarchies, processes and the legal framework. The tensions were regarded as annoying but part of the system the participants worked in. Experience was cited as one way to circumvent frustration. Some participants also mentioned that they agreed with the direction of the external constraints and did not regard them as detracting. Such statements asserted the impression that the respondents had similar values to their organisation and may have adjusted their values during their career at the regional council. This adjustment was also confirmed by participants who recalled having different values and aspirations when they started working in their job.

Notable was that the internal constraints were identified as concealing opinions and values in order to comply with the rules and part of their job, while external constraints were regarded as temporary setbacks that could be rectified at a later stage. This perception of external constraints suggests a high interest in introducing individual views into the decision outcome by the participants and a low level of

discrepancies between their and the organisation's values. The participants feel comfortable with their employer and their work and concentrate on the outcome that they perceive most desirable according to their individual values. Recalling the shift of environmental values from private to professional from the last section, there is the possibility that value-based intentions are derived from environmental values.

### **5.5.2 Social value influences**

The strategy the participants use to overcome difficulties with the system that causes the tensions is an indication for the actual adjustment of their professional values. In section 5.4 I described the incorporation of environmental values into the participants' work lives. In addition to this introduction, the values need to be adjusted to fit the policy framework and avoid the aforementioned tensions.

In order to advise successfully, which would result in an accepted recommendation, the participants learned how to prepare recommendations and adjust them to the structures and conventions of the organisation in order to get them accepted. Experience was cited by most participants as an indicator for successful advice. The senior participants also pointed out that the higher-ranking positions in the policy advice team had more argumentative power. This is important regarding the social process of advice development, since a higher-ranking employee might have more influence and thus could influence others with his or her values and opinions about an issue. The opportunity to influence the social policy process increases at the same time as the adjustment of the professional values.

It is also notable that the participants talked about how they adjusted the content of their advice to fit to the expectations of the system but not about how the system changed their opinion. Their responses were concerned with the adaptation to the system from getting experience in the system. Comments on changing their opinions about a topic were given in connection with the receipt of new scientific information or public opinion. This scenario of changing opinions again displays the social component as a change happens through the communication of new and convincing information.

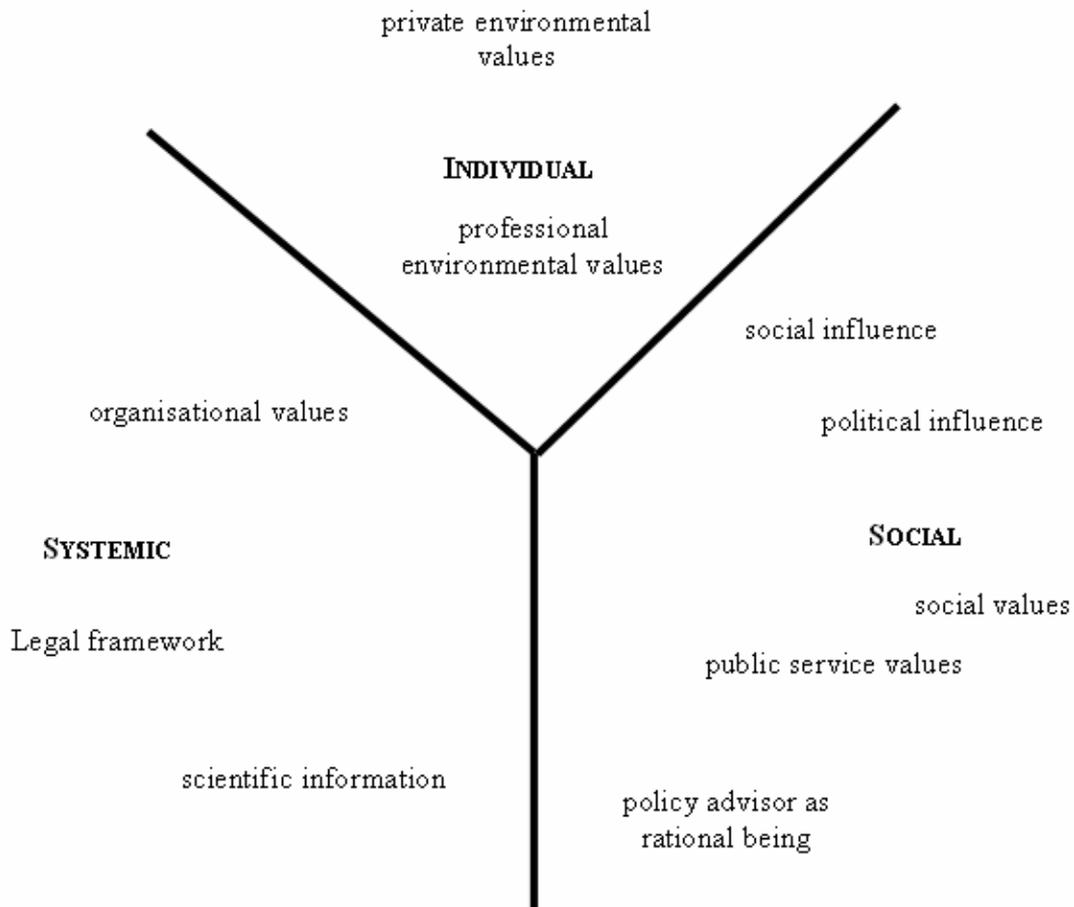
The distinction between adaptation to the system's requirements and adjustment of opinions could thus be explained with the social component of the work environment. Since the participants are working in teams and discuss their advice with other staff, value adjustment through social discourse is likely. A homogenous group of people who work efficiently and contently in a highly restricted job might have a considerable influence on the values of their members. I thus presume that a change of values happens in a social context, and persuasion into accepting new values could happen predominantly through colleagues by discussing new knowledge. The experience of easier achievement of successful advice through adjusted values could contribute to or strengthen the adaptation to the organisation's values.

This section has discussed the social component in value adjustment in the participants. Working within the system instead of against its structures is the main strategy of the participants in order to get their recommendations and subsequently their values influencing the final decision. The combination of mutual persuasion, adjustment to the system and pursuing individual goals makes the participants successful in their job and subsequently improving environmental protection. The last part of this section summarizes these strategies.

### **5.5.3 Reconciliation of work and values**

The participants exhibited a strong commitment to their job, similar values within the group and signs of value adjustment to the values of their organisation. In section 5.3.3 I introduced a diagram that summarised the theoretical order of the social construction of a policy recommendation that displayed different stages of decision-making and types of influence. This decision pathway is not necessarily linear. Depending on the complexity of individual issues this pathway could become circular and occasionally skip a stage. The work of the policy advisor becomes an ongoing social process due to this recurring process of the development of advice. The values of the policy advisors are constantly exposed to influences within this process and are thus likely to change.

The diagram below displays the influences in the work environment of a policy advisor according to Schwartz' value theory (Schwartz, 1992). Similar to Schwartz' model in section 2.2.2, values are arranged according to their relative compatibility. The participants' individual value concept arranges the position according to the personal ethical equilibrium within this value 'map'.



**Figure 5.3** – Spatial value map, adapted from Schwartz (1992).

A note of caution: this map is based on the responses of seven people in this study. While the theory of Schwartz can be used as the theoretical basis of my research, there is insufficient empirical evidence for more than an indication of the spatial positioning of the values.

## ***5.6 Conclusion and Outlook***

My research has found that policy advisors in regional councils in New Zealand have environmental values, use them for environmental protection, and adjust them to work more efficiently for the environment within a public service organisation. These findings show that environmentalism in governmental institutions is possible. Policy advisors and probably other public servants show a dedication to the environmental cause that is comparable to other environmental sectors. The difference to the work of environmental activists in NGOs lies in the place of work.

Working for a regional council gave the participants the opportunity to contribute to environmental protection. The policy advisors also described their work as an enhancing factor for the perceived personal environmentalism of the participants. They felt supported in their environmentally friendly actions by their place of work.

Policy advisors have a unique position for advocating for the environment although literal campaigning would very possibly not be tolerated. However, my research shows that policy advisors know how to use the system of a government to advocate the environmental cause in a government-compatible way. The system of government that might be seen as an opponent to environmental protection rather than a supporter is worked by the participants to advance environmental protection. The values and worldviews of the participants show that they are environmentalists and do what environmentalists do, but in a quiet, unobtrusive way.

Based on these findings suggestions for further research include some questions about the values of policy advisors:

- Recalling the last section, the empirical identification of relevant values to the diagram in section 5.5.3 could be done if a sufficiently large sample is available, as well as the verification of their position, according to the method of smallest space analysis (SSA) as published in Schwartz (1992).

- The documentation of value influences on policy advisors through the social processes of evaluation could assert the impression of my findings that value adjustment happens through social processes within the work environment.
- In addition, some interesting points to consider would be the overall effect of internal environmentalism in government departments. While this research could confirm that there are environmentalists in government departments that try to advance environmental protection, there was no opportunity to analyse their actual work practice to determine the influence of their values on their work. Observation of the practice of policy advisors could contribute to better understanding of any influence.

Another aspect of the environmental values in policy advisors was discussed by Craig and Glasser (1993) who suggested that values of policy advisors should be given consideration in the policy process. Recollecting the similarity of values of the participants with the organisation's mission statement, a consideration of the policy advisors' values might contribute to the quality of the policy. However, my findings also show a considerable variation in these values based on personality, experience, duration of employment and other factors. This variety and the difficulty to determine values into comprehensible categories might make it difficult to find a formalisation for a structured input. Nonetheless, if the notion of a strictly objective policy advisor would be abandoned, there could be the opportunity to use the experience and values of policy advisors in an additional value statement that could be considered by the decision makers in their decisions together with other sources of recommendation.

Since the search for adequate policies regarding environmental protection is ongoing, experienced and committed policy advisors will be needed not only in New Zealand, but in every governmental department that is concerned with these issues. The value of policy advisors' values might be lying in their commitment to work quietly for the environment and let the others do the campaigning.

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## **Appendix A**

Dear staff member,

Thank you very much for participating in my research. I appreciate it that you take the time to help me with my project.

In order to keep it as convenient as possible I designed this questionnaire to shorten the interview time I need for my research. I would kindly ask you to answer the following questions as preparation for the one-on-one interview.

My research intention with this questionnaire is to find out about your values when it comes to environmental issues. I will use this information to prepare for the interview where I would like to ask you about how your values regarding the environment fit into your daily work and where they might not fit. This should help me to answer the question whether environmental values held by policy makers help them in their decision making.

There are two parts of the questionnaire, the first part is asking you about concepts that are used in an environmental context. I would like to know whether you are familiar with them and even incorporate them into your behaviour. The second part simply asks you whether you agree with statements that are used to determine environmental attitudes in surveys. I would like to ask you to take as much time as you need for the last question where you are asked for a statement of your own.

When you are finished with the questionnaire, please send it back to me, together with the filled out and signed consent form. I will contact you as soon as possible to arrange a meeting to conduct the follow up interview at a time and place that is convenient for you.

Please be aware that you can withdraw at any time from this research or contact me or my advisor if you feel uncomfortable about a situation. Your identity will only be known to me unless you contact my advisor and your data will be securely stored at all times.

Thank you very much for your help,

Sonja Gruebmeier

## PART 1

On this page some commonly used names or descriptions for environmental concepts and processes are listed. Do you feel you understand the following concepts or processes. (Tick the box that applies)

- Public consultation over environmental issues

Yes  No

- Prioritizing economic growth

Yes  No

- Sustainable use of resources

Yes  No

- Equal rights for all life forms

Yes  No

- Sustainable development

Yes  No

- Interdependence of the ecosystem

Yes  No

- Biodiversity conservation

Yes  No

- Precautionary principle

Yes  No

- Social responsibility

Yes  No

- Strong Government (Decisive Government)

Yes  No

Do you have any comments on this list?

How important do you believe these concepts are according to your own views/principles? (Please tick the box that applies)

- Consultation of the public over environmental issues

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Participation of the public in environmental decisions

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Prioritizing economic growth

unimportant  moderately important  important  essential

- Sustainable use of resources

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Equal rights for all life forms

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Sustainable development

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Interdependence of the ecosystem

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Biodiversity conservation

unimportant  moderately important  important  essential

- Precautionary principle

unimportant  essential  moderately important  important

- Social responsibility

unimportant  moderately important  important  essential

- Strong Government (Decisive Government)

unimportant <input type="checkbox"/>	moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	important <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments on these ratings?

Do you behave in accordance to these principles in your daily life? Please rate your behaviour on the following. ( Tick the box that applies)

- I consider public opinion in my decisions about environmental issues.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I participate in public consultations as a citizen.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I prioritize economic growth over environmental protection.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

- I consider the sustainable use of resources as important for our society and I support its incorporation into economic and environmental considerations.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I consider the rights of all life forms as equal (in regards to environmental decisions)

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I incorporate sustainable strategies into my decisions.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

- I incorporate consideration of ecological interdependence into my decisions about environmental issues.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I support/perform actions towards maintaining biodiversity.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

- My decisions are based on the precautionary principle rather than a cost-benefit or risk analysis

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

- I consider my social responsibility in my environmental decisions.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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- I appreciate a strong government that reacts fast and efficiently to changed circumstances.

rarely <input type="checkbox"/>	sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>	always <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments on the concepts you are including in your life?  
Please add concepts you find missing on this list.

**PART 2**

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- We are approaching the limit of our resources on earth the way we live now.

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- Humans have the right to modify the natural world to suit their needs.

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- It is possible to appoint a monetary value to the natural environment through public consultation.

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- Economic projects have to assess all potential risks and impacts to prevent negative environmental outcomes.

strongly disagree	mildly disagree	unsure	mildly agree	strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>				

- Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?

Please answer this question with at least one reason for your answer.

## **Appendix B**

### PREVIOUSLY WORDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel this questionnaire has covered your values?
  
2. Why do you feel/don't you feel as an environmentalist?
  
3. Do you think your values influence your work?
  
4. Do you feel any constraints on your values at work? If yes, could you describe them?
  
5. How important is public consultation to your work?
  
6. How do you treat the problem of scientific uncertainty?
  
7. Why did you decide to work here? What is your qualification?
  
8. How do you feel about working here?