

EXPLORING ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LIFESTYLES: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

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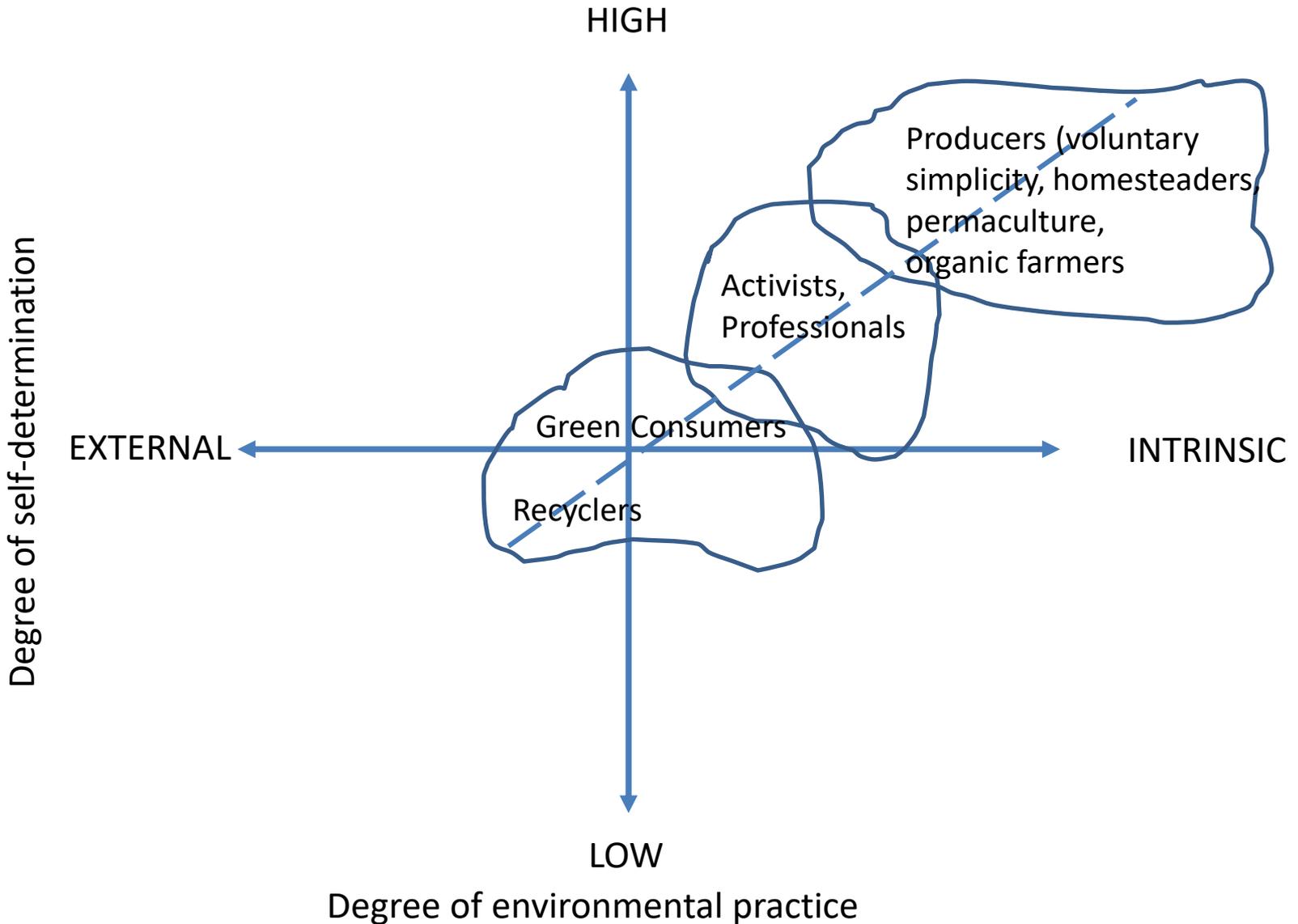
PhD Candidate

Forestry and Environmental Management

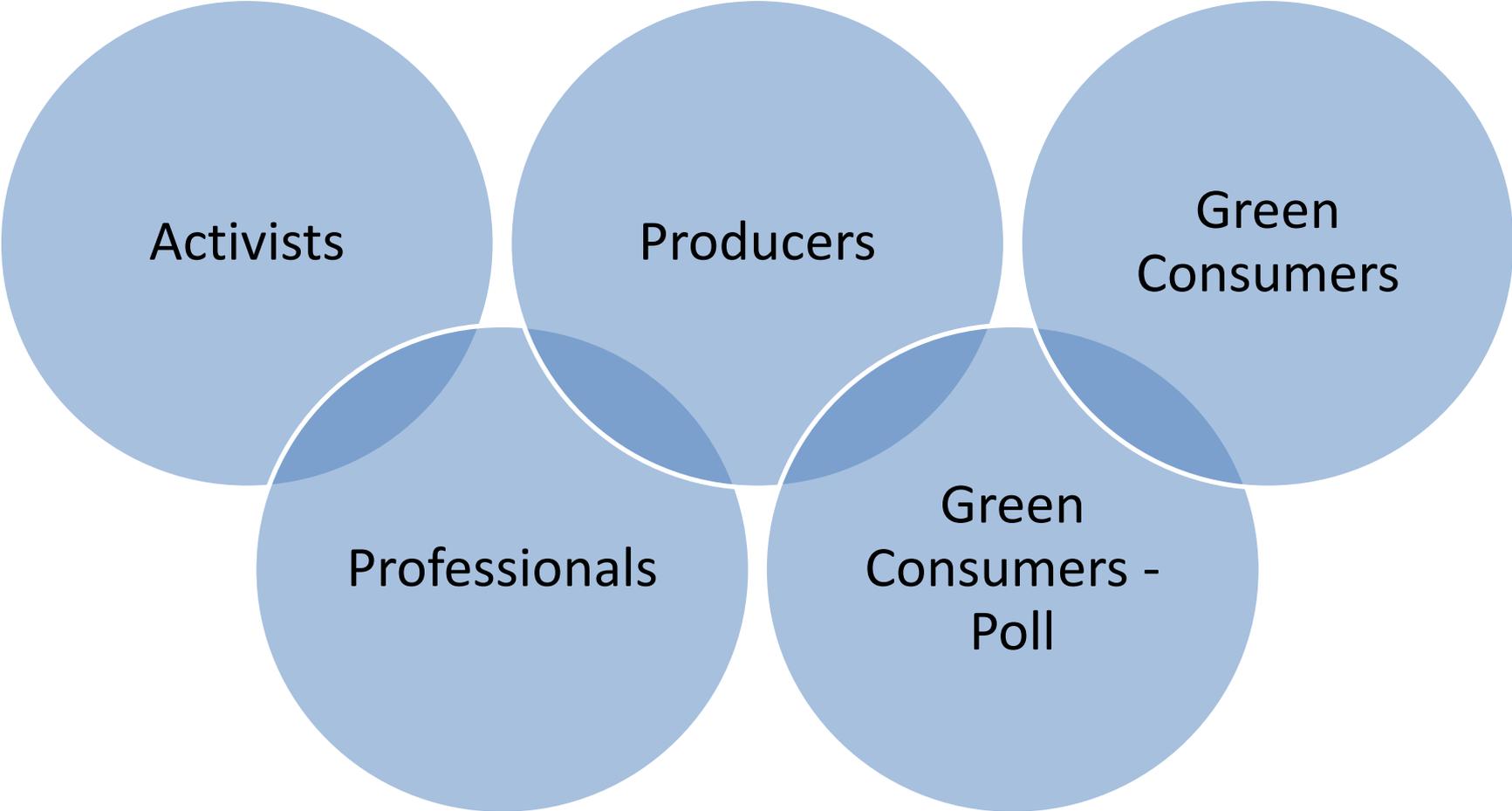
Sample Quick Facts

- *Purposive, Not random: N = 233*
- Gender: Male, 48.9% ($n = 114$); Female, 51.1% ($n = 119$)
- Age: 18 to 66 +
- Urban-rural population split: 100,000 +, 62.9%, $n = 146$;
< 10,000, 16.4%, $n = 38$; 10 to 100k, 20.6%, $n = 48$
- Environmental Lifestyle Categories:
 - Activists, $n = 25$
 - Professionals, $n = 64$
 - Producers (voluntary simplicity, homesteaders, permaculture, intentional communities), $n = 34$
 - Green Consumers (combination of environmental activities, $n = 19$)
 - Green Consumers Poll (Not activists or professionals, think of environment at least sometimes when making purchases, open to doing more, $n = 91$)
- Gender, age, income, education, location, faith-spiritual influence assessed
- 59 semi-structured interviews
- 174 surveys: 83 email; 91 online poll
- 31 consistent questions

Environmental Lifestyle Categories



Environmental Lifestyle Categories



Activists

Producers

Green
Consumers

Professionals

Green
Consumers -
Poll

What is Ethics?

- The study of moral values
 - Reflection on how best to understand, clarify, prioritize and practice
- Ethics is always personal and social
- Environmental ethics explores moral values at the people-nature interface
 - What has moral standing?
 - Who decides?
 - How do we respond?

Environmental Ethics: Not Complete

- An environmental ethic is only complete when it is both an “ethic of action” and “an ethic of character – one that provides guidance on what attitudes and dispositions we ought and ought not to have regarding the environment

Ecological Virtue Ethics

- Practicing ecological virtue ethics has two primary benefits:
 - First, there are specific positive environmental outcomes – the intermediate ends; and
 - Second, habitually exercising the virtues develops character contributing to the flourishing of practitioners, communities, and nature – the ultimate end

Environmental Lifestyle Defined

Any self-reported combination of ongoing social, professional or at home actions-behaviours participants believe make a positive contribution to environmental protection or the human-nature interface

Ethical Orientation Defined

A tendency toward moral thoughts and feelings that represent a “moral style” consistent with a particular ethical theory or theories.

Attitudes are Moral

F. G. Kaiser / Personality and Individual Differences 41 (2006) 71–81

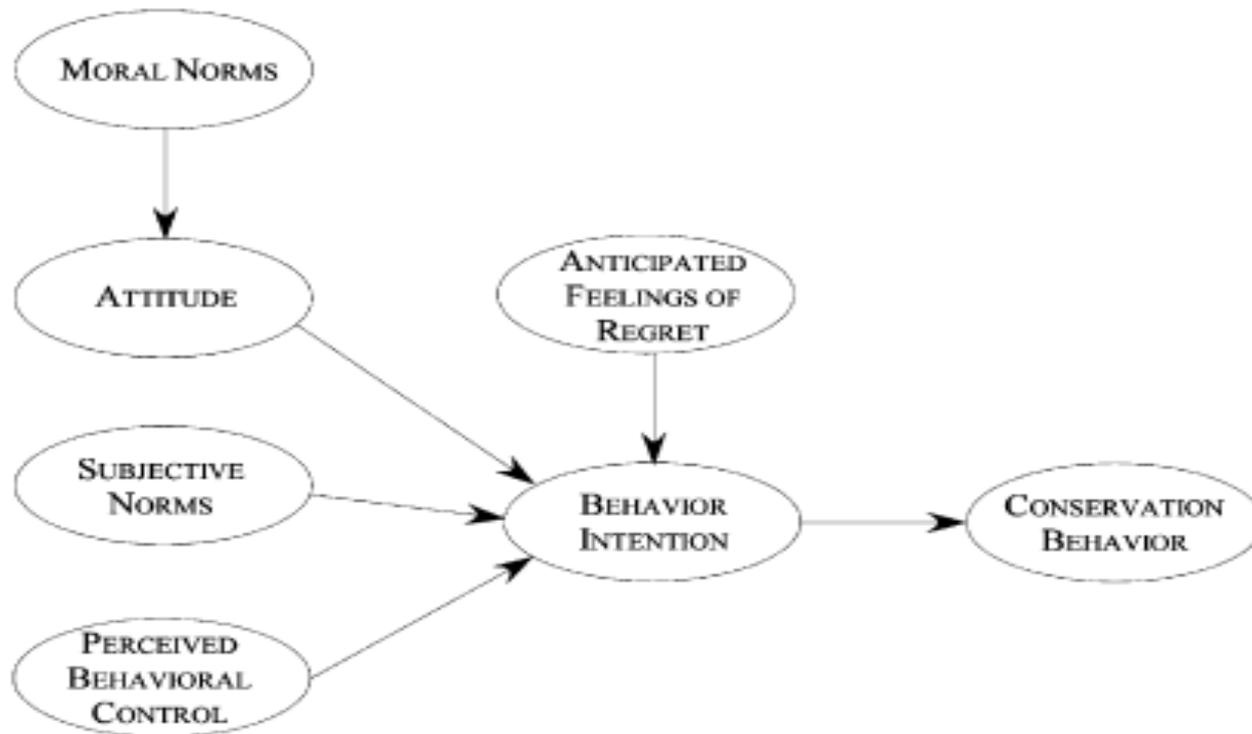
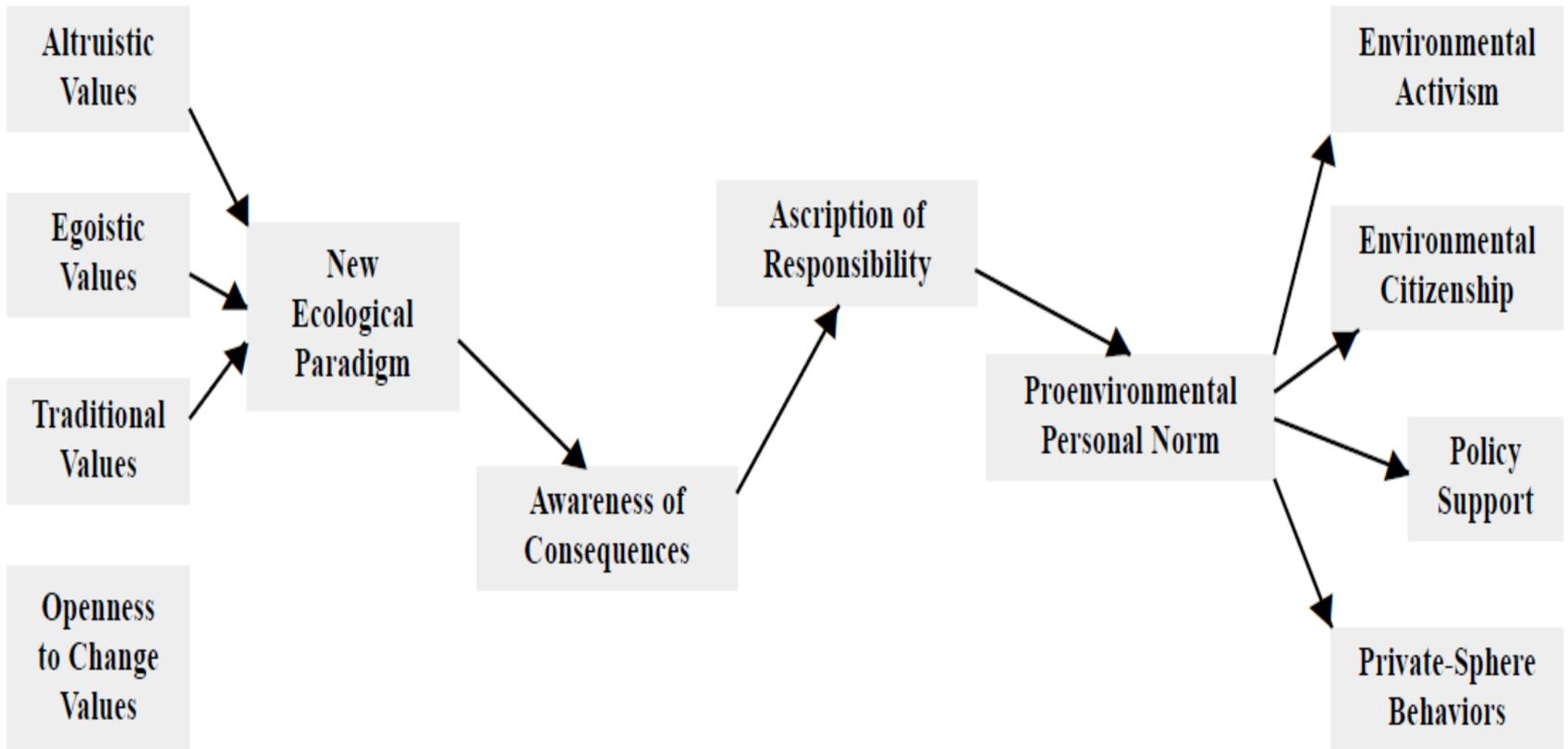


Fig. 1. The morally fully-extended general version of the TPB in conservationism.

Value-Belief-Norm Model



Values (altruistic, egoistic, traditional, openness to change), beliefs (New Environmental Paradigm, Awareness of Consequences), Norms (Ascription of Responsibility, Pro-environmental Personal Norms)

What's Ethical Orientation?

Tendency to lean toward one or more (ethical style):

Utilitarianism: Actions-consequences, net benefit calculations, not very context sensitive. Asks: What is the greatest good for the greatest number?
Environmental: reduce suffering in sentient animals.

Deontology: Actions-means, duty to follow universal moral laws and principles; rights, equality. Asks: What if everybody did that? Environmental: universal principle is respect for nature.

Virtue: Well-being, character traits and practical wisdom. Context sensitive. Asks: not what should I do, but what kind of person should I be? Excellence, habits. Environmental: ecological traits (caring, moderate, humble), practical wisdom (attentive, perceptive).

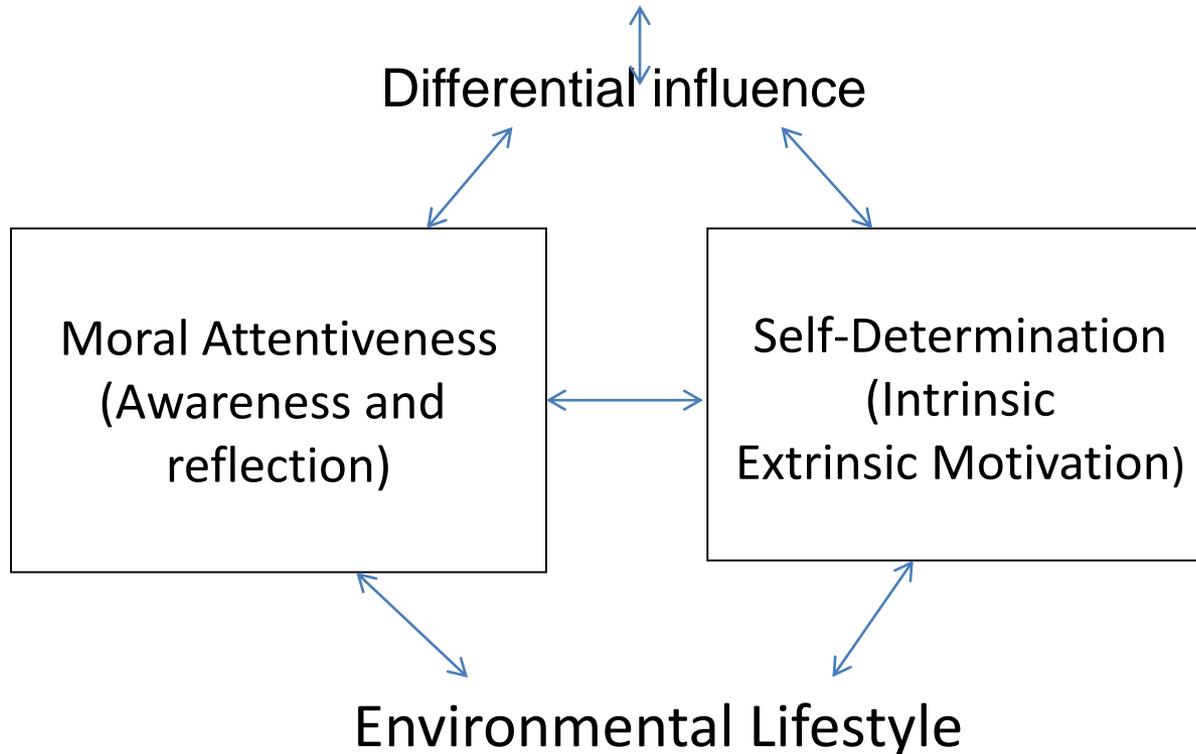
Care: Relationships; similar to virtue. Asks: how does what I do enhance or undermine my relationships? Environmental: being responsive, sensitive to people-nature relationships.

Ethical Orientation Exploration

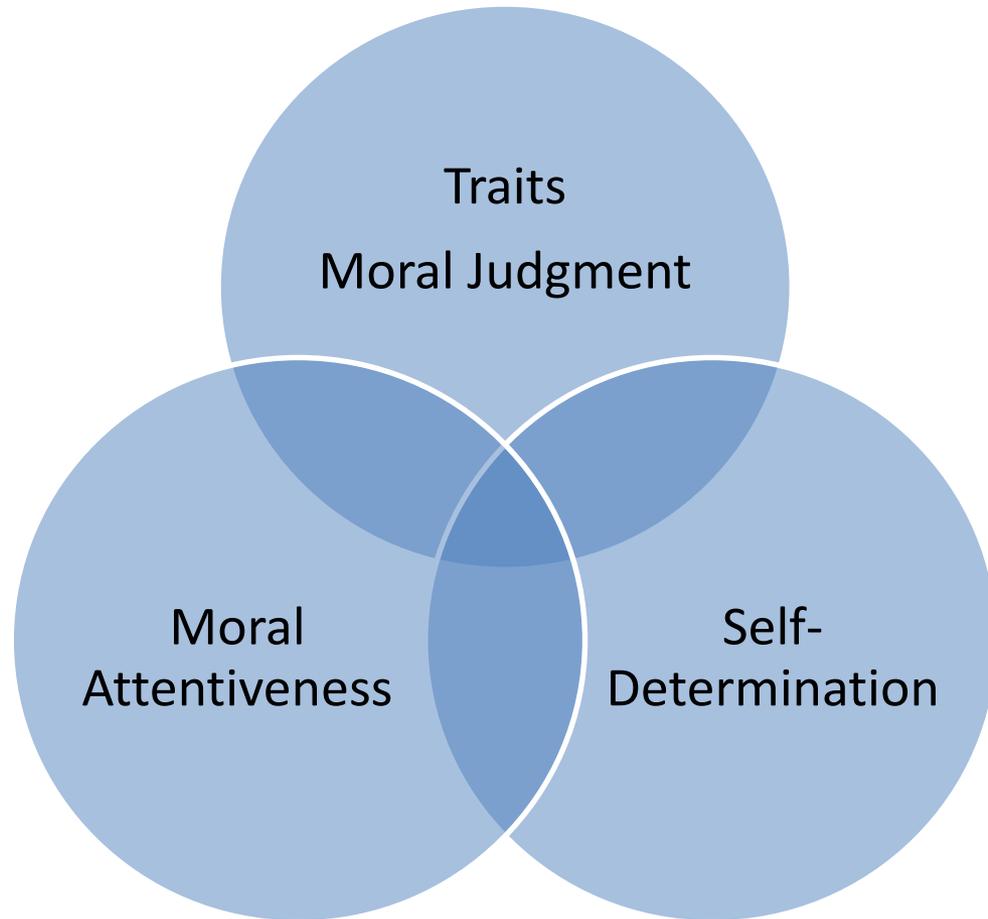
- Character Traits scale
- Moral Perception: see environmental situations as moral
- Moral Judgement: moral reasoning vignettes; moral decision making
- Intrinsic motivation: enjoy-bored, act voluntarily, pleasure-pain, self-sacrifice
- Moral Emotions: feel guilt, guilt motivates, act from love, wonder, awe or fear, anger, anxiety; feel loss-grief
- Ethical Motivation: consider nature, justice people-nature, do no harm people-nature, love-respect nature
- Consumption: consumption style, desire-material things, overcome barriers, support-family-friends, fear-courage
- Environmental Worldviews: environmental journeys, life well lived, nature's value, relate to nature, conscience
- Role models, have or are

Exploring Ethical Orientation

Environmental Journeys: Values, Beliefs, Norms
Ethical Orientation:
Utilitarian, Deontological, Virtue: Traits and Moral Judgment



Measurement Variables Overlap



Environmental Lifestyle



Ethical Orientation - Character Traits

- Resourceful
- Responsive
- Principled
- Generous
- Dependable
- Humble
- Trustworthy
- Effective
- Sensitive
- Frugal
- Honest
- Influential
- Respectful
- Caring
- Results-oriented
- Attentive
- Loyal
- Law-abiding
- A winner
- Relational

Environmental Lifestyle Trait Differences

Environmental Lifestyle		Law-abiding	Resourceful	Effective
Activists	Mean	4.96	6.12	6.12
	N	24	25	25
	Std. Deviation	1.628	1.236	.881
Professionals	Mean	5.06	6.16	5.90
	N	64	64	63
	Std. Deviation	1.511	.781	.995
Producers: Farmers, Voluntary Simplicity, Permaculture	Mean	4.28	6.24	5.53
	N	32	34	34
	Std. Deviation	1.486	.855	.992
Green Consumers	Mean	4.84	6.32	5.47
	N	19	19	19
	Std. Deviation	1.708	.885	1.264
Green Consumers Poll	Mean	5.64	5.78	5.97
	N	91	91	91
	Std. Deviation	1.269	1.052	.948
Total	Mean	5.15	6.03	5.86
	N	230	233	232
	Std. Deviation	1.506	.980	1.001

Moral Reasons

- Considerate Nature:
 - Justice nature-people
- Love-Respect Nature:
 - Do No Harm

Right Thing To Do
Future Generations
Responsible
Duty
Make World a Better Place

Participants acting from principle, not for principle

Environmental Lifestyle Moral Awareness

Indicator	Activist	Professional	Producer	Green Consumer	Green Consumer - Poll	Significance
See moral situations						$p = .000$
Daily	73.9%	63.2%	62.1%	44.4%	24.7%	
Sometimes	26.1%	36.8%	37.9%	55.5%	75.3%	

Moral Reasoning

Moral reasoning one measure using vignettes:

Utility: “Ending clear cutting will do more harm to workers and communities than it will benefit forests.”; “If we do not clear cut, the cost of forest products will go up negatively affecting the economy.”

Deontology: “Follow condominium rules because I owe it to my neighbours.”; Do what my neighbours are doing as a good member of the condominium community.”

Deontology-Virtue: “In principle, it’s better to press the light, and then cross.”; “One should obey all traffic laws.”; We should be patient and wait for the light,”; When we act impatiently we model inappropriate behaviour others will follow.”

Virtue:” Persevere and find alternatives as a good member of the condominium community.”; “Not give up too easily; find creative solutions to avoid environmental harm.”

Environmental Lifestyle Moral Reasoning

Demographic	Vignette Deontology D-c-d	Vignette Virtue D-e-f	Vignette Deontology-Virtue A-c-d-e-f	Vignette Utility C-a-b	Vignette Integrity B-e-f
Environmental Sub-group	$p = .000$	$p = .050$	$p = .000$	$p = .000$	$p = .011$
E-Activist	$M = 2.04$	$M = 6.44$	$M = 4.09$	$M = 1.48$	$M = 6.70$
E-Prof	$M = 2.33$	$M = 6.18$	$M = 4.03$	$M = 2.13$	$M = 6.15$
Producer	$M = 1.88$	$M = 6.28$	$M = 4.11$	$M = 1.69$	$M = 6.44$
Green Consumer	$M = 2.08$	$M = 6.13$	$M = 4.29$	$M = 2.05$	$M = 5.97$
Green Consumer - Poll	$M = 3.40$	$M = 5.77$	$M = 5.12$	$M = 3.42$	$M = 6.35$

Age, Gender, Faith-Spiritual Results

Demographic	Vignette Deontology D-c-d	Vignette Virtue D-e-f	Vignette Deontology- Virtue A-c-d-e-f	Vignette Utility C-a-b	Vignette Integrity B-e-f
Gender	$p = .002$	$p = .001$			$p = .057$
Male	$M = 2.94$	$M = 5.79$			$M = 6.13$
Female	$M = 2.35$	$M = 6.27$			$M = 6.44$
Faith-spiritual		$p = .002$	$p = .007$		
Yes		$M = 6.28$	$M = 4.81$		
No		$M = 5.87$	$M = 4.26$		
Age		$p = .057$	$p = 0.21$	$p = .028$	
18-24		$M = 5.30$	$M = 4.77$	$M = 3.13$	
25-35		$M = 5.84$	$M = 4.31$	$M = 2.65$	
36-50		$M = 6.18$	$M = 4.23$	$M = 2.65$	
51-65		$M = 6.20$	$M = 4.59$	$M = 2.42$	
66+		$M = 6.20$	$M = 5.41$	$M = 1.75$	

Ecological Character

- A person with ecological character has “attributes that will identify which ecological virtues are appropriate to right action and will use “virtue rules – rules that embody the substance of the virtues – collaborative discourse with others, the counsel of mentors, the study of role models, and moral wisdom”

Role Models

Indicator	Environmental Activist	Environmental Professional	Lifestyle	Individuals	Online	Significance
Role models have						p = .000
Yes	87.5%	70.3%	81.8%	55.6%	20.9%	
No	12.5%	29.7%	18.2%	44.4%	79.1%	
Role models am						p = .000
Yes	86.4%	62.9%	58.8%	72.2%	44.0%	
No	13.6%	37.1%	41.2%	27.8%	56%	

Role Model-Moral Awareness

Indicator	Role Model Have τ	Role Model Am τ
Traits		
Utility		.138, $p = .015$
Sensitive, caring: Care		.115, $p = .048$
Respectful, caring, generous: Care-virtue		.162, $p = .005$
Generous, humble: Virtue		.153, $p = .008$
Principled	.113, $p = .068$.223, $p = .000$
Law-abiding	-.239, $p = .000$	
Trustworthy, honest, dependable: Integrity		
Resourceful		.218, $p = .000$
Effective		
Motivation		
Considerate-nature		
Love-respect-nature		
Reasoning; Decision-making		
Utility (C-a-b)	-.297, $p = .000$	-.285, $p = .000$
Net benefit calculation		
Deontology (D-c-d)	-.284, $p = .000$	-.241, $p = .000$
Apply principle		
Deontology-Virtue (A-c-d-e-f)	-.217, $p = .000$	
Virtue (D-e-f)	.203, $p = .001$.241, $p = .000$
Integrity (B-e-f)		
Depends on context		-.207, $p = .051$
Moral Awareness (see)	.300, $p = .000$.268, $p = .000$

Role Models

- #48: Lifestyle, male, 66 + years old, rural: Practice; if I am exposed to a behaviour, for whatever reason, I tend to keep doing it.
- Humility: Lifestyle: “(I) am at a novice developmental stage.... so it’s way too early for me to be considered as such” (#51)

Role Models

- #61: Lifestyle, female, 36 to 50 years old, rural:
...my grandmother, my mother's mother, was a huge influence in my life and I've realized that as I get older, the really huge part she played in my choices in my life. She was always somebody who was always a great gardener. She was very tied in with nature. She composted before it was cool to compost and those are things that we just grew up with in our midst, in our world. And those things really sunk in.

Role Model Traits

- Principled (9: four Activists; two Professionals; three Producers);
- Frugal (7: six Professionals; one Green Consumer);
- Humble (6 : two Activists; two Professionals; two Producers);
- Courageous (5: three Activists and two Professionals);
- Demonstrated an admirable leadership style (5 two Activists; one Professional; one Producer; one Green Consumer);
- Authentic (3 references, all Activists);
- Showed ethical caring (3: one each, Activist, Producers and Green Consumer);
- Helped participants see new things (2: Activists and one Producer);
- Thoughtful and respectful (2: Activist and Producer)
- Selfless (1)

Role Models

- #113: Individual, female, 51 to 65 years old, mid-sized city: I'd like to think so, but I'm not looking for any sort of attention to it, but I think that's what has to be done very quietly and that's what influences people. I want it to be done in a very non-threatening way so that if people see me do it they are more likely to do it than for me and go and say 'you should be, dig up your lawn'. No I'm going to dig up my lawn and hopefully you're going to see it and come ask me about it and I'm going to be happy to talk.

Ecological Virtues: A three-part system: The Golden Mean

Sustainability	Insensitive/Lacking in passion	Temperance *>	Indulgent/Gluttony/ Avarice/ Greed/Intemperance
	Detached/Indifference	Aesthetic sensibility *>	Overly receptive
	Disregard	Love *<	Excessive commitment
	Conservative/Resistant to change/Inflexible	Openness ^>	Changeable/Unreliable
	Unseeing/Apathy	Attentiveness ^>	Overly alert

Ecological Virtue Ethics: Words of Wisdom

<p>Virtues of Sustainability</p>	<p>Temperance</p>	<p>#207: Life of moderation, neither too extravagant or too spartan (not sustainable). Using only as much as one needs, not being wasteful of resources, and ever being mindful and intentional with one's consumption of resources and consumer goods.</p>	<p>Online Male 51 to 65 years old</p>
	<p>Frugality</p>	<p>#18: I am inherently frugal, but for me that's not inherently an environmental value. For me that's a value that transcends my environmental belief system. I think I just have a general sense that we should take only what we need. That living with only what we need has always sort of had an appeal to me. I've always been resistant to even advertising, or things that promote wanting to have more stuff to make you happier.</p>	<p>Professional Male 36 to 50 years old</p>

Ecological Virtue Ethics: Words of Wisdom

<p>Farsightedness</p>	<p>#100: Awareness of environmental consequences at all levels of human activity, respect for nature as the “sea” in which we human “fishes” have life, proactivity on behalf of the environment.</p>	<p>Green Consumer Female 66 plus years old</p>
<p>Attunement</p>	<p>#47: We are all connected, enjoy and give thanks to the environment, use what we need and leave the environment in good enough shape that future generations can also use and enjoy it, we can create a healthy, sustainable future on Earth.</p>	<p>Professional Male 51 to 65 years old</p>
<p>Humility</p>	<p>#61: I guess I see us as part of nature and I feel it’s wrong to carry this belief that we somehow we deserve to be able to dominate nature. I don’t believe we have dominion over everything. I just think that we’re part of the system. And part of what drives my feelings about how to live on the planet is that we have to look at where we fit. We have to consume in a way that doesn’t prevent other creatures in the system from also being able to fit in.</p>	<p>Producer Female 36 to 50 years old</p>

Prudence: Consumption Control Tricks

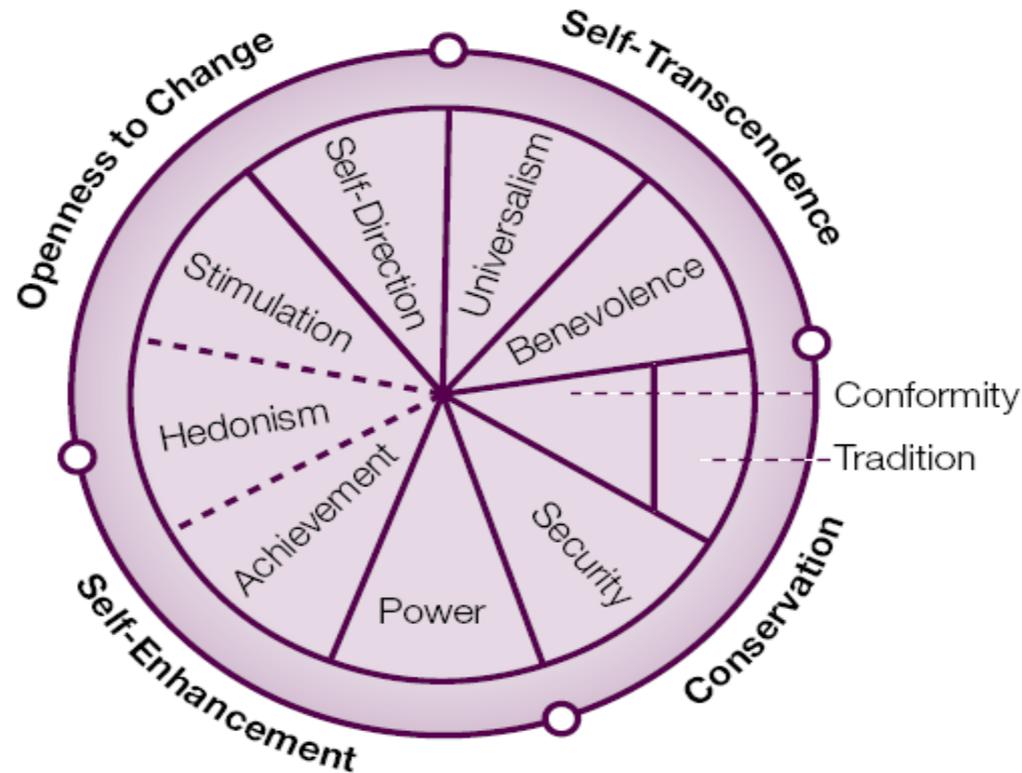
- “waiting”, #49;
- “putting a pause on the process”, #61;
- “thinking...I find if I stop for 10 seconds, I don’t buy it”, #79;
- using an internal checklist that includes “have you thought about it for more than a week”, #23;
- thinking about “what I need as opposed to what I want”, #122;
- delaying “...because I am trying to get them second-hand”, #61;
- “It’s just maturing and learning and stopping to think about things”, #82;
- resisting the “buzz of acquiring new possessions; I know that the buzz wears off quickly once a new possession has been acquired”, #55; and
- “I would almost check or question or kind of slow down a first impulse to act on something and I think it’s partly it’s just a sense of wanting to live a life deliberately that springs from a value system, or maybe wanting to have moral control of my life rather than to be pulled along by what advertisers or peer influencers want me to do”, #18.

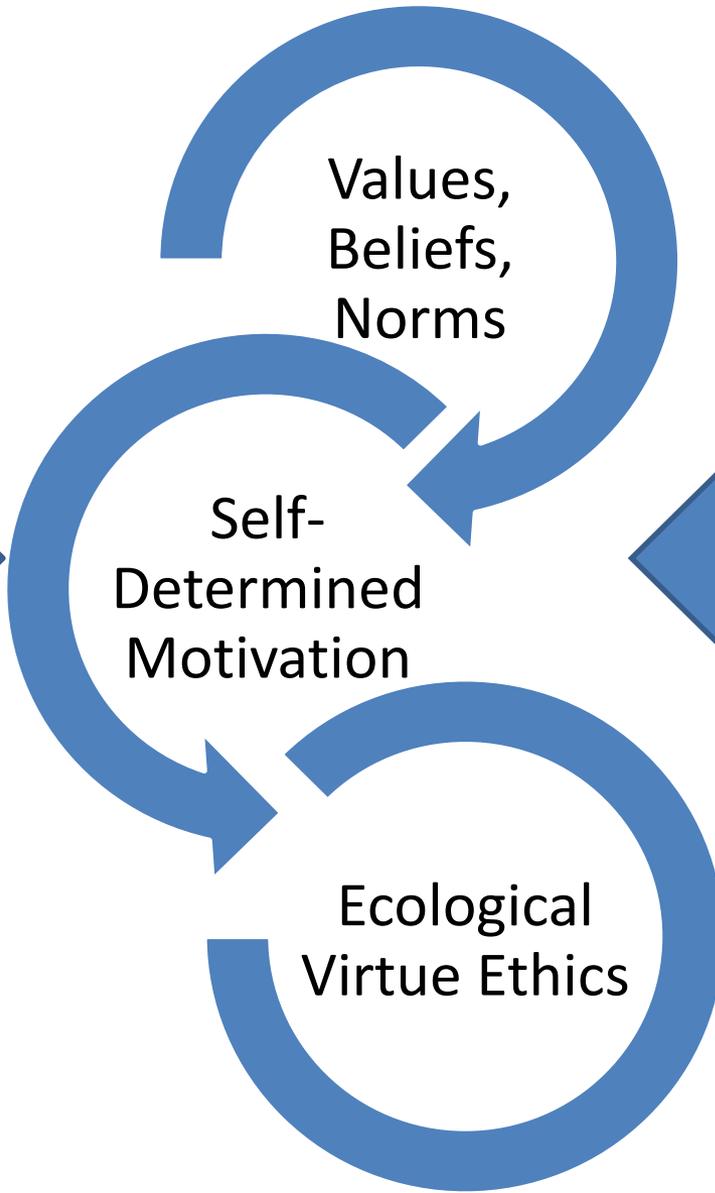
Environmental Worldview

- Nature's value:
 - Intrinsic Value: 77.7%
 - Nature's value from human valuing: 2.6%
 - Combination: 19.7%
- Relate to nature:
 - Embedded: 54.9%
 - Detached and observing: 18.9%
 - Combination: 26.2%
- Green Consumers - Poll most inclined toward detached: 33%
- Nature fragile NOT the only way to think about nature
 - Nature resilient

Collective Interests and Emotions

- Emphasis on enlightened self interest, personal benefit, cost savings activates individualistic (egoistic) values. Self-transcendent , universal values associated with pro-social or ‘bigger-than-self” behaviours (Compton, 2010; Schwartz, 2007) = environment (Stern, 2000; Dunlap, VanLiere, Mertig & Jones, 2000)





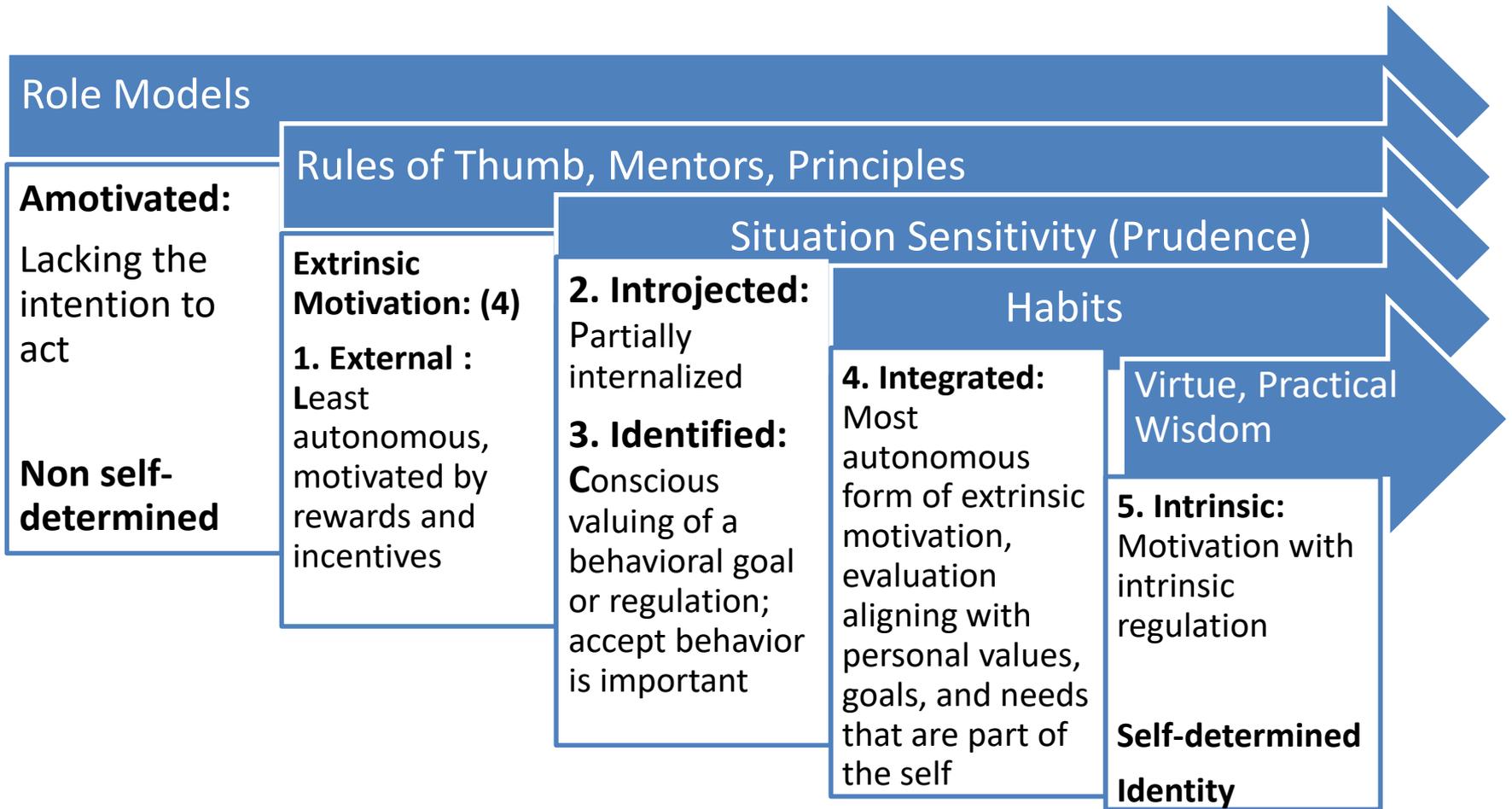
Environmental Practice

#124: Environmental professional, female, 18 to 24 years old, mid-sized city: It's a continuous lifestyle change. You can't bag on yourself about everything you do that is wrong. Don't forget all the good you are doing and keep on working on your goal.

Life Well Lived Environment

- #53: Lifestyle, female, 36 to 50 years old, mid-sized city: Being *close to nature daily*, very little – if any - consumption of goods that are not recyclable, buying local products and food that support local producers and use less fuel, packaging, *reduced consumption of goods*, sharing goods/tools/appliances with neighbours, volunteering and community engagement.

Environmental Practice Trajectory



Arrows indicate virtue ethics infrastructure components that nurture environmental experience (values, beliefs, norms), striving (self-determination: autonomy, competence, relatedness and extrinsic to intrinsic self-regulation and motivation) and practice (ethics, particularly humility, situational sensitivity (prudence), respect and gratitude).

Thank you for your attention

Questions?

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Motivation Spectrum

- A person who runs for the joy of running is *intrinsically* motivated;
- A person who runs because a friend asked them to is *extrinsically* motivated;
- A person who runs in response to the guilt they feel for eating cake the night before shows *introjected* motivation;
- A person who runs for the health benefits shows identified motivation, and a person who runs because a healthy lifestyle is fun shows *integrated* motivation.

Provincial Distribution

Location Province

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BC	44	18.9	18.9	18.9
	AB	18	7.7	7.7	26.6
	SK	2	.9	.9	27.5
	MN	2	.9	.9	28.3
	ON	105	45.1	45.1	73.4
	QC	10	4.3	4.3	77.7
	NB	31	13.3	13.3	91.0
	NS	9	3.9	3.9	94.8
	NFLD	4	1.7	1.7	96.6
	Yukon- NWT	1	.4	.4	97.0
	US	6	2.6	2.6	99.6
	Europe	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total		233	100.0	100.0

Research Questions

1. What influence, if any, does ecological virtue orientation have on environmentally supportive lifestyles?
2. How does an ecological virtue orientation, if at all, influence motivation toward environmental supportive lifestyles compared to individuals with utilitarian or deontological orientations?
3. What is the relationship between virtue orientation in environmentally supportive lifestyle practitioners and ecological virtue ethics theory?
4. What is the relationship, if any, between care orientation (relational focus) and virtue orientation (character focus) in individuals practicing environmentally supportive lifestyles?

Age Distribution

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	15	6.4	6.7	6.7
	25-35	47	20.2	21.1	27.8
	36-50	58	24.9	26.0	53.8
	51-65	80	34.3	35.9	89.7
	66-75	23	9.9	10.3	100.0
	Total		223	95.7	100.0
Missing	DK/NA	10	4.3		
Total		233	100.0		

Behavior Change Models: Reason and Self-interest

Model of theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 2006): low alignment with intention and actual behaviours: about 30 percent. Values not represented

Theory of Planned Behavior

