
ZOLTÁN GRÜNHUT AND ÁKOS BODOR: APPLYING THE SCHWARTZ THEORY OF HUMAN VALUES TO CONTEXTUALIZE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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The paper has a pretty simple argument: if environmental awareness should be understood as a normative stance which makes subjects to construct perceptions and interpretations, i.e. individual conceptualizations that both ontologically and in an epistemic sense take into consideration a pan-relational attachment to and an existential involvement into the broadly defined natural environment, then this understanding has to have a linkage to other values as well. Since, among the various concepts, Shalom H. Schwartz's proposes a framework which is generally respected as a theory measures universal values that are recognized throughout all major cultures (or civilizations), the paper considers this conceptual background much suitable to contextualize how environmental awareness is embedded into the matrix of basic human values. Schwartz's concept identifies ten composite values and further describes the dynamic relations amongst them by arranging them into a circular structure. The ten values are grouped into four higher-ordered categories. The present paper assumes that environmental awareness is highly related to the higher value-category of 'self-transcendence' which is built up on 'benevolence', i.e. preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact; and 'universalism' which embraces norms and attitudes like showing understanding, appreciation, tolerance, solidarity and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. The paper obtains data for its empirical investigation from the last round of the European Social Survey (2018) which has a block about the indicators of Schwartz's concept and another thematic part about perceptions and attitudes related to climate change interpreted as environmental awareness in this inquiry.

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