

Does public support for the welfare state
translate into support for the environmental
state?: Evidence from the
European Social Survey

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Rationale

- Climate change and its detrimental consequences (IPCC 2015; Royal Society 2010)
- Risk society (Beck 1992) and the role of public in legitimizing governmental policies
- The idea of the *welfare state* as a predecessor of the *environmental state* (Gough et al. 2008)

Welfare state

Whether government should ensure a reasonable standard of living for:

- old people
- unemployed
- working parents

Environmental state - 1

A state that possesses a significant set of institutions and practices dedicated to the management of the environment and societal-environmental interactions (Duit et al. 2016)

Also known as: *Ecostate* (Meadowcroft 2005), *Green state* (Dryzek et al. 2003), *Ecological state* (Lundqvist 2001)

Environmental state - 2

To what extent are you in favour or against the following policies in [country] to reduce climate change?

- Increasing taxes on fossil fuels, such as oil, gas and coal
- Using public money to subsidise renewable energy such as wind and solar power
- A law banning the sale of the least energy efficient household appliances

Explaining public support for the ES - 1

Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern et al. 1999; Stern 2000)

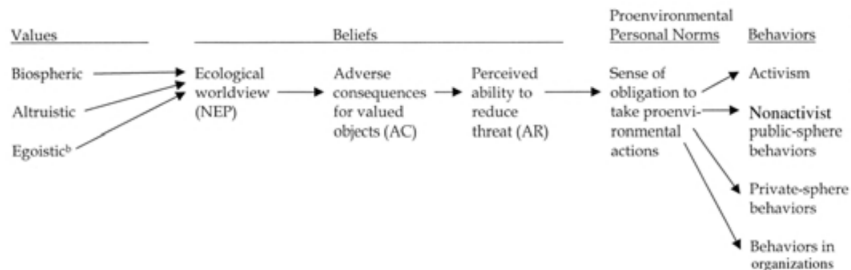


Fig. 1. A schematic representation of variables in the VBN theory of environmentalism^a

Explaining public support for the ES - 2

This research:

- Values: Self-transcendence vs. Self-enhancement (Schwartz 2012)
- Self-transcendence → Climate change belief → Climate change concern → Support for the environmental state
- Political orientation (Left vs. Right)
- Institutional efficacy belief - perceived likelihood that governments in enough countries will collaborate in tackling climate change

Data

- European Social Survey Round 8 (2016)
- 23 European countries
- Probability-based sampling
- Face-to-face data collection

Analytical strategy

- Structural equation model
- Pooled sample analysis
- FIML missing treatment
- Reporting standardized coefficients

Structural model

Self-
enhancement

Political
orientation

Institutional
efficacy belief

Welfare state
support

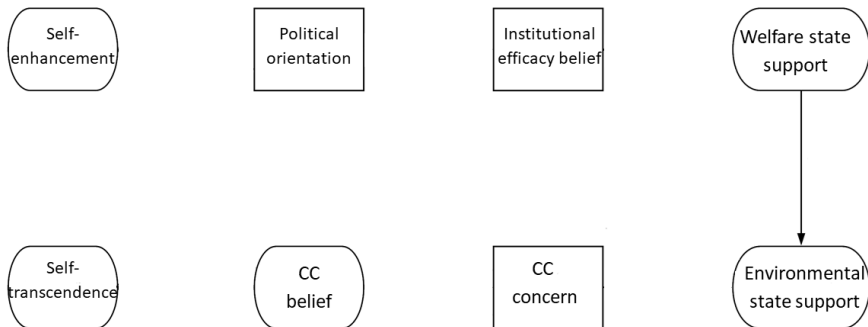
Self-
transcendence

CC
belief

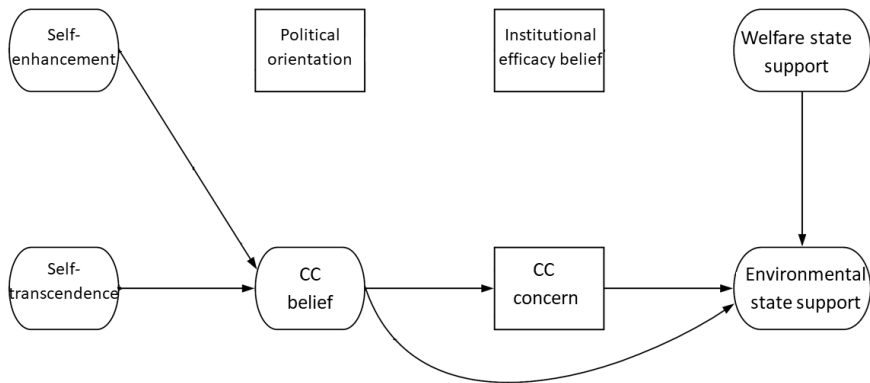
CC
concern

Environmental
state support

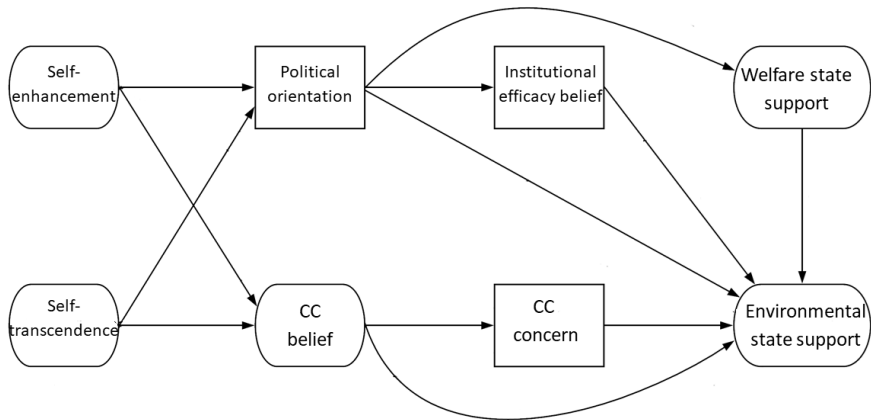
Structural model



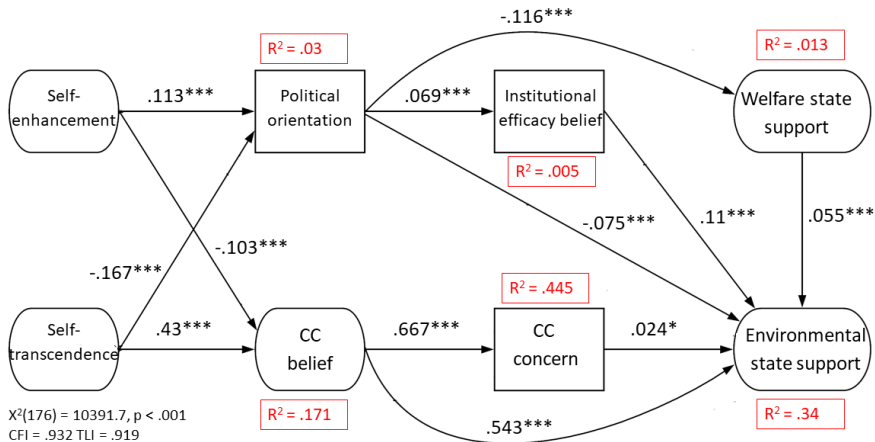
Structural model



Structural model



Structural model (n = 44378; FIML)



$X^2(176) = 10391.7, p < .001$
CFI = .932 TLI = .919
RMSEA = .36 SRMR = .36

Multilevel SEM?

- Low ICC (3-14%), mostly below 10%
- Model with *independent* between level fits well (Hox et al. 2017)
- Convergence issues
- The result don't change in simple two-level models

Discussion - 1

- Value-Belief-Norm theory finds its confirmation
- Cognitive awareness is more important than 'emotional attachment'
- Right-wing views deny ES and WS
- Climate change belief as the strongest predictor of ES - promoting ecological identity?

Discussion - 2

- Weak positive relationship between public support for welfare and environmental states
- Neglectable or persistent?

Limitations

- The most radical climate change deniers ($\sim 2\%$ of the total n) are excluded from the analysis
- Other types of political engagement (e.g. activism or political protests)
- Time effects
- Some concepts need more methodological development

Fin

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