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"Ethics and Values in Environmental Policy: The Said and the UNCED"

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While citizens often use non-instrumental arguments to support environmental protection, most governmental policies are justified by instrumental arguments. This paper explores some of the reasons. We interviewed senior policy advisors to four European governments active in global climate change negotiations and the UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) process. In response to our questions, a majority of these advisors articulated deeply held personal environmental values. They told us that they normally keep these values separate from their professional environmental policy activities. We interpret these findings within the context of the literature on environmental ethics and values. We suggest that environmental policy could be improved if widely held environmental values were articulated, validated, and admitted into the process of policy analysis and deliberation.

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