Contents

Chapters published in academic journals and books xi
Acknowledgements xiii
List of tables and figures xviii
List of used abbreviations xix

1 Introduction: Worldviews and the transformation to sustainable societies 1
1.1 Worldview: A concept whose time has come 2
1.2 Why worldviews are essential in the transformation to sustainable societies 5
   1.2.1 A philosophical perspective 6
   1.2.2 A psychological perspective 8
   1.2.3 A sociological perspective 11
   1.2.4 A political science perspective 15
1.3 Philosophical foundations and discussion of key terms 18
   1.3.1 Worldviews and the research worldview guiding this dissertation 18
   1.3.2 Sustainable development, the idea of growth, and quality of life 25
   1.3.3 Environmental attitudes and sustainable lifestyles 31
   1.3.4 Contemporary spirituality 32
   1.3.5 Multiple uses of the term ‘integrative’ 34
1.4 Focus and scope of this study: Research aim and questions 37
   1.4.1 Understanding the nature of worldviews 37
   1.4.2 Empirically investigating the structure of worldviews 38
   1.4.3 Exploring various worldviews and their relevance for sustainable development 38
   1.4.4 Deepening insight into worldviews with particular potentials for sustainable development 39
   1.4.5 Applying insights into worldviews to sustainability policy and practice 40
1.4.6 Summing up: The research questions 41

1.5 An integrative, mixed-methods approach 42
   1.5.1 A concise history of mixed methods as new research worldview 42
   1.5.2 A mixed models design 45

1.6 Reading guide and outline 46

2 Worldviews and their significance for the global sustainable development debate: A philosophical exploration of the evolution of a concept 51
   2.1 Introduction 52
   2.2 Methodology and justification 53
   2.3 The philosophical exploration of the evolution of a concept 55
      2.3.1 The birth of the Kosmos in Greece 55
      2.3.2 Kant and his introduction of ‘Weltanschauung’ 58
      2.3.3 Goethe’s ‘Lebenswelt’ 62
      2.3.4 Hegel’s ‘Zeitgeist’ 64
      2.3.5 Nietzsche’s perspectivism 65
      2.3.6 Heidegger and ‘die Zeit des Weltbildes’ 68
      2.3.7 Contemporary currents: High postmodernism and beyond 70
   2.4 Summary and discussion 74
   2.5 Conclusion and implications 77
      2.5.1 Founding the Integrative Worldview Framework (IWF) 77
      2.5.2 Reflexivity, creativity, responsibility, and inclusiveness: Crucial for sustainable development 81

3 Exploring worldviews and their relationships to sustainable lifestyles: Towards a new conceptual and methodological approach 85
   3.1 Introduction 86
   3.2 Literature review: Research into worldviews and values 89
3.2.1 New Environmental Paradigm: Ecological interconnectedness versus human exemption 90
3.2.2 Intrinsic versus instrumental value of nature, ecocentric versus anthropocentric attitudes 91
3.2.3 Self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, openness to change versus conservation 92
3.2.4 Connectivity with nature: Connectedness versus separateness 93
3.2.5 Environmental solutions: Public versus private, preservation versus utilization 95
3.3 Meta-analysis: Strengths and weaknesses of current measures 96
3.4 Towards a new conceptual and methodological approach 101
3.5 Discussion and conclusion 106

4 Exploring inner and outer worlds: A quantitative study of worldviews, environmental attitudes, and sustainable lifestyles 111
4.1 Introduction 112
4.2 Background 115
  4.2.1 Historical-cultural context: Charles Taylor 115
  4.2.2 Psychological context: Self-Determination Theory (SDT) 117
4.3 Methodology 119
  4.3.1 Development of the questionnaire 119
  4.3.2 Participants and procedures 122
  4.3.3 Analysis 123
4.4 Results 124
  4.3.1 Worldviews and their interrelationships 124
  4.3.2 Environmental attitudes and their interrelationships 127
  4.3.3 Worldviews, environmental attitudes, sustainable lifestyles 130
  4.4.4 Analysis of mediation 133
4.5 Discussion 135
5 Pathways to environmental responsibility: A qualitative exploration of the spiritual dimension of nature experience

5.1 Introduction 150
5.2 Background: Contemporary nature spirituality 152
5.3 Methodology 155
5.4 Interview results 157
  5.4.1 General dynamics and context of nature experience 158
  5.4.2 Conceptualizations of nature and the human-nature relationship 160
  5.4.3 Participant’s understanding and experience of spirituality 162
  5.4.4 Profound or spiritual nature experiences: Presence, interconnectedness, self-expansion 168
  5.4.5 Potential pathways to a sense of environmental responsibility 173
5.5 Discussion and conclusion 177

Appendix III: Interview-guide 182

6 The rising culture of contemporary spirituality: A sociological study of potentials and pitfalls for sustainable development 185

6.1 Introduction 186
6.2 Literature review: An exploration of potentials and pitfalls 189
6.2.1  Potentials of contemporary spirituality for sustainable development 190
6.2.2  Pitfalls of contemporary spirituality for sustainable development 196
6.3  Discussion: A dialectical-developmental perspective on contemporary spirituality 200
6.4  Conclusion 206

7  The integrative worldview and its potential for sustainable societies: A qualitative exploration of the views and values of environmental leaders 209
7.1  Introduction 210
7.2  Methodology 214
7.3  Interview results 217
  7.3.1  Evolutionary, spiritual-unitive ontology and a positive anthropology 217
  7.3.2  Epistemology: Internalization and integration of multiple modes of knowing 223
  7.3.3  Axiology: Sustainability-work has a spiritual foundation and meaning 226
  7.3.4  Societal vision: An emerging ‘sustainable social imaginary’ 228
7.4  Discussion 237
  7.4.1  Findings contextualized in the literature 237
  7.4.2  Methodological limitations 241
7.5  Conclusions 242
  Appendix IV: Interview-guide 244
  Appendix V: List of interview-participants 245

8  Synthesis and policy-implications: Reflexive policy-making and communicative action for sustainable solutions 247
8.1  Introduction 248
8.2 An expanded understanding and articulation of the Integrative Worldview Framework (IWF) 250
8.2.1 Major worldviews in the West: Traditional, modern, and postmodern 250
8.2.2 An emerging integrative worldview: Dialectical development? 257
8.2.3 General principles for application of the IWF 266
8.3 Applying the IWF for policy-making and communicative action 268
8.3.1 IWF as heuristic for cultural and psychological self-reflexivity 268
8.3.2 IWF as analytical tool for understanding worldview-dynamics in society 272
8.3.3 IWF as scaffolding for effective sustainability communications and solutions 275
8.4 Discussion and conclusion 281

9  Discussion, conclusions, future perspectives 285
9.1 Discussion: Concerns and recommendations for further research 286
9.1.1 Different theoretical and paradigmatic perspectives 286
9.1.2 Use of a developmental perspective 288
9.1.3 Relationship between individual and collective worldviews 292
9.1.4 Worldview-bias of the researcher 295
9.1.5 Focus on certain worldviews at the expense of others 297
9.1.6 Heuristic approach 298
9.1.7 Worldviews emerging from the survey 299
9.2 Conclusions: An overview of outcomes 301
9.2.1 Understanding the nature of worldviews 301
9.2.2 Empirically investigating the structure of worldviews 304
9.2.3 Exploring various worldviews and their relevance for sustainable development 305
9.2.4 Deepening insight into worldviews with particular potentials for sustainable development 307

9.2.5 Applying insights in worldviews to sustainability policy and practice 309

9.3 Future perspectives: Societal and policy implications 312

Bibliography 316
Summary 347
Samenvatting (summary in Dutch) 355
About the author 363