In an earlier study, we focused on the environmental managers views on environmental work. One aspect that become apparent was the tension as well as the fertilization between the managers professional role and their private commitment (Catasus, Lundgren & Rynnel, 1997). The environmental managers in our study were, not surprisingly, concerned with environmental issues in their private life. However, as professionals, they stressed the difference between private involvement and professional responsibility. The environmental managers identified a border, a difference, between the professional role one has within an organization and the non-professional role as a private person.

In the previous study this difference was described as "the idealists do not fit in" -- implying the exclusion of participation which is not consonant with the norms within the business context.

In research covering the natural environment and organizations the recurrent focus is the professional managements perspective on business from an inside point of view. This paper not only addresses a professional perspective, but also a non-professional, i.e. a private perspective on environmental work. The aim of the study is to highlight aspects of environmental participation which affect the interplay between the two spheres. The participation may be viewed as beneficial as well as a threat in relation to the organizational rational. Moreover, what is considered legitimate and worth aiming for in the professional sphere might not be in line with the individuals values and preferences.