

Can Psychology Help Save the World? A Model for Conservation Psychology

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Conservation psychology is defined as psychological research oriented toward understanding why people help or hurt the natural environment and promoting environmentally sustainable practices (Saunders, 2003). Despite a growing body of research, the field is largely unfamiliar to many psychologists and to those working in the environmental field. Here we make a case for the importance of conservation psychology and describe a model for the social psychology of conservation behavior that focuses on situational context, existing schemas, and personal motives. We hope this model will be useful for policymakers and will prompt new psychological research on the topic of conservation.

Conservation psychology is a relatively new field of research, which has the dual aim of understanding why people behave in ways that help or hurt the natural environment and promoting behavior that protects it (Saunders, 2003; Winter, 2004). Topics that could be considered to fall within conservation psychology include studies of conservation behaviors such as recycling (e.g., Geller, 1992; McKenzie-Mohr & Oskamp, 1995; Oskamp, 2002); of the human-animal relationship (e.g. Myers, 1998; Vining, 2003); about environment and identity (e.g., Clayton & Opatow, 2003a; Schultz, 2002); on environmental education and socialization (Chawla, 1999; Kals & Ittner, 2003); on environmental attitudes (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, & Jones, 2000); and on environmental conflict (Opatow & Brook, 2003; Samuelson, Peterson, & Putnam, 2003). Conservation psychology research aims to understand why people act in environmentally sustainable or

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unsustainable ways, and to use this understanding to promote more environmentally sustainable behavior.

Some confusion exists about the relationship between conservation psychology and environmental psychology. Environmental psychology seeks to understand how people are influenced by their natural and human-built physical environments, and conservation psychology draws extensively from environmental psychology research. For example, research has shown that confusing environments can discourage conservation, whereas easily legible environments can promote conservation (Kaplan, 2000). However, conservation psychology also examines nonphysical factors that promote or inhibit environmental conservation, and thus incorporates research from the social, developmental, clinical, or cognitive areas. Furthermore, conservation psychology can be distinguished by its explicitly value-based orientation: the goal of conservation psychology is to promote sustainable behavior. Thus conservation psychologists, whether trained as environmental psychologists, social psychologists, or in some other subdiscipline, conduct research that seeks to understand why people behave in ways that help or harm the natural environment, and how to promote more environmentally protective behavior. It may be most useful to think of conservation psychology as a field of study focused on a common problem area, in contrast to environmental psychology, which is a subdiscipline of psychology (cf. Saunders, 2003; Sommer, 2000).

To date, conservation psychology has not attracted wide attention from mainstream psychology. Many psychologists are disinclined to consider environmental topics as relevant to psychological research. In 2000, for example, Clayton surveyed officers of APA divisions to find out about division policies on environmental practices. Not only did no divisions report having such a policy, comments that were sent in included "This seems not to be a psychological issue, and thus not within our sphere" and "This is the silliest questionnaire I have filled out in a very long time. . . . It is virtually impossible to understate the importance of APA divisions [in regard to protecting the environment]." Of the 22 surveys received (of 52 mailed out), only seven people indicated that they thought it would be appropriate for their division to have a pro-environmental policy. Similarly, students in an introductory psychology class rated psychology as less relevant to understanding or addressing environmental problems than it was to other social issues (Clayton, 1999). Although a significant number of psychologists have studied environmental issues (see, e.g., Clayton & Opatow, 1994; Cvetkovich & Earle, 1992; McKenzie-Mohr & Oskamp, 1995; Oskamp, 2000; Zelezny & Schultz, 2000), we believe protecting the environment is not widely seen by many psychologists as a focus of professional interest.

Perhaps in response, environmental professionals do not tend to see psychology as relevant to an understanding of the environment. A 1990s survey of 1300 alumni of environmental studies programs asked them to rate disciplines from 1 to 5 according to whether their program required rigorous study in that discipline:

psychology got a 1.5, lower than sociology, political science, philosophy, and public health. Most environmental studies programs do not require psychology (Scott, 2004). A quote from an editorial in *Conservation Biology* is illustrative. The authors, defending the topic of “conservation and the social sciences,” begin with the statement “Although it might seem counterintuitive that the foremost influences on the success of *environmental* policy could be *social*. . .” [italics in original] (Mascia et al., 2003, p. 649). One of us was recently forwarded an e-mail posted to a college faculty listserv, which asked incredulously, “what does *psychology* have to do with *environmental* issues?”

Are these intuitive reactions wrong? What is the case for the relevance of psychology to environmental issues? As Mascia et al. (2003) go on to say, “conservation interventions are the product of *human* decision-making processes and require changes in *human* behavior to succeed” (p. 649). In other words, environmental problems are a function of human behaviors, and human behavioral changes will be necessary in order to address them. Psychology not only is relevant to conservation initiatives, but is among the most relevant disciplines as the one most devoted to the study of human behavior and behavioral interventions.

The study of conservation behavior provides an opportunity for psychology to further its core missions of understanding human behavior and promoting human welfare. To understand human behavior, we need to understand what is important to humans, and why. People devote a large amount of cognitive and emotional resources to nonhuman nature; for example, there are more visits to zoos and aquariums than to sporting events, and relationships with nonhuman animals can be some of the most important relationships in people’s lives (Vining, 2003). Promoting human welfare requires solving environmental problems before they harm the well-being of everyone on the planet. Environmental teratogens harm both cognitive and social prenatal development; toxins in the local environment impair cognitive functioning and increase stress levels; global warming and overcrowding increase intergroup conflict; opportunities for interaction with animals and nature improve emotional and physical well-being (see, e.g., Frumkin, 2001).

Threats to the natural environment collectively constitute one of our most pressing social issues. Global climate change, toxins in our air, water, and food supply, the loss of biodiversity, and the sheer pressure of resource use by a burgeoning population are problems so familiar it is difficult to avoid numbness (see, e.g., Worldwatch Institute, 2005). They are also problems created and maintained by human behavior (for a review, see Oskamp, 2000). Indeed, the *World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity*, signed by 1,700 scientists, warns that, “A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated” (Union of Concerned Scientists, 1992, p. 1). Collective decisions to drive more or less fuel-efficient cars, to spray pesticides or to live with the weeds, to support local agriculture or to shop at the supermarket, and even to limit the size of

one's family or not have a major impact on the health of the planet. Because environmental problems are caused by human behavior, psychologists can help solve them.

With so much to contribute to such an important topic, psychologists have a responsibility to "give psychology away" (Miller, 1969) by using our knowledge to provide information that is useful to those concerned with environmental problems. In addition to calling for more research on conservation psychology, we propose a social psychological model of behavior that is relevant to understanding and addressing environmental issues. We are responding, in part, to Hazel Markus's (2004) challenge to social psychologists to summarize what we know about behavior in a way that can have practical relevance for real problems. We briefly describe a social psychological model of behavior, and then describe how the model could aid in understanding and addressing specific environmental problems.

A Social Psychological Model of Conservation Behavior

We present a social psychological model of behavior, which says that behavior is a function of a person's current context, of past experiences and knowledge, and of fundamental motivations such as control and belonging. The social psychological perspective focuses on the impact of the situational context. Past experiences, knowledge, and motivations influence behavior by changing a person's interpretation of the context. This model draws on previous theorizing, especially Ross and Nisbett's (1991) model of the person and the situation.

The first premise of our model, and probably the most fundamental tenet of social psychology, is that people are affected by their context. To quote Markus: "In the beginning, don't look inside the person. Instead look outside. . . ." (2004, p. 2). This model is quite different from how most people, at least Westerners, predict behavior. Most people drastically overestimate the impact of individual motivations and dispositions on behavior, discounting the effect of the situational context. This error is so common that it has been dubbed the "Fundamental Attribution Error" (Ross, 1977). Individual dispositions and motivations do matter, as we will discuss shortly, but their impact is mostly indirect: individual differences serve to guide people's choice of situation and their interpretations of those situations. Thus, without considering the effect of context, behavioral predictions will be inaccurate.

A person's context includes both the social and physical environment. The social environment includes the influence of other people (Allport, 1985). People's behavior is heavily influenced by the behavior and expectations of other people, especially important others. Part of this influence is informational, that is, people get information about how to act based on what they see others doing (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Sherif, 1936). For example, Cialdini and his colleagues (1990) found that people were much more likely to litter if there was already a lot of litter on the ground than if the ground was litter-free. The other part of the influence

is normative, that is, people respond to what they think others want them to do (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Reno, Cialdini, & Kallgren, 1993). Such social norms are enforced by social incentives such as social acceptance or rejection (Asch, 1956). For example, Reno and colleagues (1993) found that people were much less likely to litter if they saw someone else pick up a piece of litter off the ground, than if they did not. Thus, people are heavily influenced by their social environments.

The environment also includes a person's physical surroundings, both natural and human-made. The natural environment is part of such a context. In fact, the field of environmental psychology explicitly addresses how people are affected by their physical surroundings. It has been argued, most notably by Steven Kellert and E.O. Wilson (e.g., 1993), that as people evolved in a natural environment they learned to respond to natural environments in particular ways; there are no equivalently inherited tendencies to respond to built environments. Thus, we should examine the ways in which people are affected by exposure to natural as well as social environments, and we should understand that changes in natural environments are likely to have psychological and behavioral impacts. For example, urban sprawl leads to increased driving, which harms the environment, and less walking. Decreased exercise has negative physical and mental health consequences (for a review, see Frumkin, 2002). Other environmental changes, such as increased pollution and global warming, will also have negative impacts on mental as well as physical health (e.g., Anderson, Bushman, & Groom, 1997; Moore, 2003; Shusterman, 1992). Contact with nature, meanwhile, often is associated with positive outcomes, including better attention, self-discipline, and performance (Hartig, Mang, & Evans, 1991; Kaplan, 1995; Tennessen & Cimprich, 1995; Ulrich, 1993; for a review, see Frumkin, 2001). Thus, loss of nature is likely to lead to negative psychological and behavioral outcomes.

The second premise of the model acknowledges that people's interpretation of their context is strongly influenced by their past experience and resulting stored knowledge. Specifically, it complicates our understanding of environments by acknowledging that environmental contexts are social as well as physical environments: "nature" is not just a physical reality to which people respond but a social construction whose meaning has been learned. We learn general understandings of nature, such as that it excludes visible human impact and that it is valued. (Other cultures, including previous Western ones, have had different understandings of the value of wild nature.) We learn specific social and political connotations of natural objects, such as spotted owls and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which affect our perception of and reactions to these objects. Nature is also an environment in which social interactions occur. Some of those interactions involve people; for example, communities may come together to plant gardens, or people may seek to share with other onlookers their pleasure at observing an unusual natural event such as an eclipse, a spectacular sunset, or the appearance of a wolf or a bear at a safe distance. Some may even be social interactions with nonhuman

animals, which can have profound effects on mood and on self-understanding (e.g., Myers, 1998). Memories of such important personal experiences will affect the way people respond to current issues involving natural settings.

Environmentally relevant choices and behaviors may or may not be seen as such, based on a person's past experience. For example, someone who has recently read a magazine article about the impact of food choices on the environment may consider this information when buying groceries, whereas a person who has not read the article could not use that information in making food choices. An important goal of many environmental organizations is to encourage people to recognize the environmental significance of behaviors that are not routinely associated with environmental issues.

The third premise of the model is that people's interpretation of their context is strongly influenced by their fundamental motives. For example, at least in Western culture, people seek a positive self-image, a sense of belonging, and a sense of control. These motives in turn influence their interpretation of situations. People who seek a positive self-image through achievements tend to frame situations as tests of self-esteem (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002). A person who bases self-esteem on wealth may be more likely to see the car-buying decision as an opportunity to demonstrate wealth, and buy the expensive, high-status model regardless of its environmental implications. In contrast, a person who bases self-esteem on environmentalism may see decisions as opportunities to demonstrate environmental responsibility, and behave accordingly (Brook, 2005). Seeking control also affects behavior, leading people to look for opportunities to be effective; it also leads them to resist allowing their behavior to be controlled by others, a phenomenon known as reactance (Brehm, 2000). It is not uncommon to see reactance in response to pro-environmental regulations: people, e.g., who deliberately throw paper and cans in the trashcan despite the presence of a nearby recycling bin, or destroy habitat or a protected animal rather than improve it (Brook, Zint, & DeYoung, 2003; Opatow & Brook, 2003).

The affiliation motivation leads to identification with groups, which in turn strongly influences behavior. Identity is developed through personal experience, social groups, and political meanings, and identities are a significant determinant of actions. For example, people who consider themselves environmentalists engage in more pro-environmental behaviors and fewer anti-environmental behaviors than people who do not consider themselves environmentalists (Clayton, 2003; Kempton & Holland, 2003). And it matters how an environmental identity is developed. For example, greater thought in the process of adopting an environmental identity predicts a stronger identity, which predicts more pro-environmental behaviors (Fleming, Brook, Garcia, & Konik, 2005). Identities fulfill affiliation motives through their impact on behavior. Thus, the third tenet of this model is that we need to understand the motives that are salient to people in a given behavioral context.

Our social psychological model suggests that behavior impacting the natural environment is a product of a person's situational context, past experiences, and motivations. By including both the social and physical environments in this context, the model integrates the perspectives of both social and environmental psychology. The natural environment provides a unique and important context within which to examine these dimensions (Clayton, 2003; Clayton & Opatow, 2003b).

Applying the Model

A point that is often made in the environmental literature, as well as the popular press, concerns the apparent disconnect between people's stated high value of the natural environment (Gallup, 1989–1999) and their environmentally destructive practices (Kitchell et al., 2000; NEETF/Roper, 2001). There are a number of ways in which this social psychological model can help us understand people's actions with regard to environmental issues, and to think about ways to promote behavior that is more consistent with their stated environmental values. We describe some specific examples.

Environmental Conflict

Many conflicts arise over environmental issues, and these often inhibit conservation behavior (Klare, 2001; Menning, 2000; Opatow & Brook, 2003). For example, ranchers may resent and resist attempts to protect endangered species on their land, not because they object to the species or do not value it, but because of the way in which the situation has been socially and politically structured.

Context. In the rangeland conflict example, the financial viability and political power of ranchers has declined in recent decades, making it easy for them to feel threatened. And ranchers have been defined by environmental groups as part of the environmental problem, thus defining them as separate from and in opposition to environmental groups (Ogbu, 1991; Opatow & Brook, 2003). In addition, word of any instance in which an environmental regulation harms a rancher quickly spreads across the country and leads to other ranchers fearing the power of environmental regulations. This macro-context may be reinforced by the micro-context in which ranchers learn about endangered species listings. They may encounter information about an endangered species listing in a town meeting, at which they sit with other ranchers in a way that physically separates them from those arguing for legal protection of the animals.

Influence of existing schemas. Preexisting beliefs may influence ranchers' interpretation of the Endangered Species listing. Ranchers may define the species primarily as a pest or a threat rather than as a valuable part of the ecosystem

(Opotow, 1993; Opotow & Brook, 2003). Or, even if they like the species, they may be worried about potential impacts of new regulations, interpreting them in ways that are based on stories they have heard rather than on the actual content of the regulations (Opotow & Brook, 2003).

Personal motives. Affiliation motivations are likely to affect reactions to the situation. For example, ranchers may identify with other ranchers both as a reference group and as a primary source of affiliation and social interaction. They may distrust government and environmental organizations arguing for the protection of the species, and thus be disinclined to cooperate with them (Brook et al., 2003). Ranchers may also perceive these organizations as trying to take away their control over their own land. Thus, their strong self-identifications as ranchers in opposition to the elitist environmentalists, and their resistance to others who want to tell them what to do, may make it difficult for them to see agreeing to work to conserve the animal as anything other than a personal defeat.

Solutions. If these ways in which identity contributes to environmental conflict are understood, several approaches can help overcome them (Opotow & Brook, 2003). First, creating an overarching identity, such as “preservers of open space,” can make people formerly in conflict feel that they are on the same team, working together toward a common goal (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). This approach has led to the conservation of rangeland in the American southwest (examples: Quivera Coalition [<http://www.quiviracoalition.org>], Diablo Trust [<http://www.diablotrust.org/>]) and Malpai Borderlands Group [<http://www.malpaiborderlandsgroup.org>]). Secondly, subgroup identities such as “rancher” and “environmentalist” should be preserved so that people do not feel their original identities are threatened (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), so that people do not feel too lost in a big group (Brewer, 1991), and so that positive relationships formed with individual ranchers or environmentalists in the overarching group may be extended to other ranchers or environmentalists (Gaertner et al., 1993).

Automobile Choices

As another example, consider the rise in popularity of gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and the apparent lack of concern people demonstrate for the fuel efficiency of their cars.

Context. The situational context within which people buy cars is saturated by advertising that emphasizes the benefits of owning particular brands and types of cars. The auto industry makes much larger profits on SUVs and other luxury vehicles than on more fuel-efficient economy vehicles (AIADA, 2004), so the former

are more heavily promoted. This advertising tends not to focus on environmental impacts, particularly because until recently there were few automobiles that could refer to environmental impacts as a selling point. The automobile industry and specific salespeople exert a powerful influence that until recently was not designed to encourage car buyers to factor environmental impact into the automobile-buying equation.

Influence of existing schemas. Existing schemas also affect how people process information about cars. People are not used to thinking about car buying as an environmental action. Cars are more likely to have connotations (carefully nurtured by advertisers) of independence, glamour, safety, and speed.

Personal motives. Finally, cars are very strongly implicated in identity concerns. Cars are used to establish a positive self-image in the way they express social status and self-definition: flashy, sporty, expensive; practical, reliable, sensible; relaxed, gregarious, and idiosyncratic (Ennis & Zanna, 2000). People seek to demonstrate their social status through their choice of vehicles, which has encouraged purchasing high-status, expensive vehicles over lower-status economy, environmentally efficient vehicles. Until recently, cars did not serve to express environmental values.

Solutions. Based on this understanding, our model can be applied to promote conservation. Specifically, the recent introduction of stylish, gas-electric hybrid cars has provided people with a more environmentally friendly, high-status alternative to SUVs. It is especially interesting that the Toyota Prius, which looks very futuristic, is selling much better than the similar functioning Honda Civic hybrid, which looks just like a normal Honda Civic, a classic “economy” car (Schneider, 2004). People want their hybrid vehicle to clearly demonstrate their environmental values and their social status. This example illustrates a way in which the same motive—self-presentation—can inhibit or promote conservation depending on the choices with which people are presented, and the aspects of the self—high status or environmentalism—that are promoted in advertising.

Alternatively, buying an environmentally sensitive car can be redefined in a way that reinforces another important identity, as in the “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign. This campaign suggests that Jesus would drive a fuel-efficient vehicle to demonstrate his humility and concern for the welfare of others, and that Jesus’ followers should do the same. It connects vehicle choice to religion, a very important identity for many people, and also connects with the widely popular and powerful “What Would Jesus Do?” campaign.

An additional approach is that advertising can change the context within which car purchases take place: salespeople might stress the advantages of a hybrid vehicle over a traditional one. People may be beginning to recognize a car purchase

as something that has an environmental impact. Environmental activists can try to reinforce and further these changes in the experience of buying a car.

Gardening and Lawn Care

As a final example, we develop in more detail the question of landscape practices. Homeowners' practices with regard to their private landscapes, which can include planting invasive foreign species, heavy water use for sprinkler systems, and the application of toxic chemicals as herbicides and insecticides, can seriously affect the environment (Robbins, Polderman, & Birkenholtz, 2001).

Context. What do people expect private yards to look like, and what do they see as typical landscape practices? There is a strong social norm in America for homeowners to maintain neat, well-groomed landscapes, which unfortunately have little ecological value. A broad swath of lawn, with a few neatly trimmed shrubs or perennials in a well-mulched, weed-free flowerbed, is the American ideal and the image with which people are most familiar (e.g., Jenkins, 1994). Thus the physical environment is one in which homeowners are surrounded by model homes with close-clipped, weed-free lawns and well-tended, well-defined flowerbeds. From the social environment, there is pressure to maintain neighborhood standards by emulating this model. In fact, many homeowners' associations have actual rules that enforce these standards. However, even without explicit rules, people usually comply with the social norm. They judge others, based on the appearance of their lawns, as caring or uncaring (Nassauer, 1988). And they manage their lawns according to the social norm of manicured neatness so that others will see them as caring too (Martin, 1993). Another important dimension of context is that many ecologically friendly alternatives to toxic pesticides and fertilizers are not readily available in many local garden supply stores. Thus, the garden supply shopping experience also discourages ecologically friendly yard management.

Influence of existing schemas. As with car buying, most people probably do not define home yard care as a situation with environmental implications. In particular, many Americans think of nature as something "out there," distant, and removed from areas of human habitation and influence. Private yards are not seen as part of nature but as part of the home. In addition, most people have a poor understanding of ecosystems. Homeowners think of a particular plant or insect that they do (flowers, butterflies) or do not (weeds, bugs) like, and have little understanding of the way it interacts with other components of the garden. Some homeowners, for example, object to earthworms in their lawns or flowerbeds, despite the utility of the worms in maintaining healthy soil. Thus, most Americans lack both an awareness of the impact of home landscapes on ecology, and the

expertise to manage their landscapes in an ecologically beneficial manner even if they are inclined to do so.

Personal motives. Private yards, as an extension of the home, are used as a very public demonstration of personal values and character traits (cf. Werner, 2003). Some people take great pride in working on their gardens and demonstrating their expertise through displays of thriving and colorful plantings. Others may focus on demonstrating, not expertise, but social status through their intensively maintained landscapes. For many people, it is important that their private yards provide evidence of the homeowner's responsibility and care. For example, people judge those with neatly maintained landscapes as more caring and responsible than people with messy landscapes (Nassauer, 1988). In all of these ways, self-image is enhanced by maintaining a neat, manicured landscape. Belongingness motives are evident, in that people manage their yards according to social norms to help them fit into the community. Frahm (2000, cited in Werner, 2003) found that many citizens in the northwestern United States reported using lawn chemicals in order to be good neighbors. Control motives also underlie much of the use of herbicides, as evinced by the very term "weed control." People perceive the incursion of weeds into a flowerbed or lawn as a battle, and gardening as an opportunity to demonstrate their dominance (Tuan, 1984).

Solutions. Our model suggests a tripartite approach to changing homeowners' practices: change the context within which they make decisions about these practices; change the ways in which they perceive "yards" as opposed to "nature," and change the implications for identity of various lawncare practices.

One option for promoting environmentally beneficial landscaping, conceptually similar to developing high-status hybrid cars, is developing landscaping options that are both neat and good for the environment. Such options fulfill homeowners' desire to demonstrate that they are responsible and caring, while also protecting the environment (Nassauer, 1992). An example of such a landscape design is to have carefully designed swaths of native prairie plants, which are neatly separated from adjacent lawn with borders, walls, or fences. A key to acceptance of "wildness" in landscapes is to show that the landscape design is intentional. One way to do this is to provide cues that someone cares about the landscape, such as a sign saying that the yard provides habitat for wildlife, or borders, showing that the wild plants belong in a specific place (Nassauer, 1992). If these options are presented as choices to homeowners, it will significantly change the context within which they make their landscaping choices.

This process should be self-reinforcing: as more salient examples of environmentally beneficial yards become visible, people will begin to recognize the connection between environmental health and landscaping choices. Greater public awareness about the harmful consequences of pesticides and fertilizers will

also encourage people to think about the environment when they think about their lawncare practices. They will increasingly realize that their yards are, in fact, a part of nature.

Control issues may be some of the most difficult to deal with. Environmentally beneficial landscape practices, almost by definition, remove some of the control over the landscape from the homeowner and return it to natural ecosystem processes. But the same signs of intentionality that increase the acceptance of natural landscapes among observers may also help the homeowner feel in control. Heavy-handed attempts to restrict landscape practices may be resisted as restraints on the control of the homeowner. We suggest that information presented to the homeowner focus both on environmentally friendly landscaping options and on some of the aspects of the normative practices that reduce the homeowner's control. For example, communication materials might stress the lack of control over the chemicals that enter the air and the ground when a homeowner uses pesticides and herbicides.

Summary

We began with the provocative question of whether psychology can be useful in addressing one of our most pressing social issues, that of protecting the natural environment and conserving natural resources. We argue that psychology can be very useful for promoting conservation, but has been seriously underutilized in conservation policy. By this we do not mean to slight or overlook the important work that has been done in this area—on the contrary, we admire this work all the more for being pathbreaking—but to highlight the fact that this work still lies outside the mainstream. Thus, psychologists have an opportunity to make a difference, and policymakers have an opportunity to make environmental policy more effective by incorporating psychological principles in its development. We present a social psychological model of behavior, and discuss the implications of this model for promoting environmental conservation, using three practical examples. Attention to the social and physical context, existing schemas, and personal motives that are implicated in specific behaviors should help policymakers design more effective interventions to promote environmentally sustainable behavior.

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