

Resources conservation and sustainable behaviors promotion to face global issues: recent
results and future developments

Stefano De Dominicis¹⁻²

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia dei Processi di Sviluppo e Socializzazione, Sapienza
Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

² CIRPA – Interuniversity Research Centre for Environmental Psychology (Centro
Interuniversitario di Ricerca in Psicologia Ambientale), Rome, Italy

Contacts:

Dr. Stefano De Dominicis, Dipartimento di Psicologia dei Processi di Sviluppo e
Socializzazione, Sapienza University of Rome.

Via dei Marsi 78, 00185, Roma, Italy.

E-mail: stefano.dedominicis@uniroma1.it

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Abstract

Environmental Psychology is gaining relevance as a science focused on people-environment transactions that can promote effective adaptation to current climate change and overpopulation issues (e.g., environmental risks impact, food supply, waste production, resources conservations, water shortage, etc.). Within this framework, we recently demonstrated that self-enhancing motives (positive for the individuals) effectively engage a wide range of population (i.e., both egoistic *and* altruistic oriented individuals) in acting pro-environmentally, while self-transcending motives (positive for the environment) elicit green actions only for a smaller proportion of population (i.e., altruistic individuals only; De Dominicis, Schultz, Bonaiuto, *under review*). Moreover, we demonstrated that social norm is one of the most effective motivator of long term energy conservation, confirming that such a self-relevant motive promotes sustainable behavioral change (Schultz, Estrada, Schmitt, Sokoloski, & Silva-Send, *in press*; De Dominicis, Schultz, Sokoloski, Jaeger, *article in preparation*). Also, we showed that, although proper environmental risk coping behavior is influenced by individuals' psychological bonds with places (De Dominicis, Fornara, Ganucci Cancellieri, Twigger-Ross, & Bonaiuto, 2015), when individuals' vested interest is made salient about a specific matter of risk, at-risk populations properly cope with life-threatening environmental risks such as floods (De Dominicis, 2012; De Dominicis et al., 2014; De Dominicis et al., *under review*).

These results, taken together, are in line with current models of behavior change

applied to social, environmental and health issues (e.g., Mosler, 2012). Furthermore, they propose substantial new theoretical insights both on the attitude-behaviors relationship that underlies pro-environmental, sustainable and resilient behaviors; and also on attitudes and norms determinants, providing important knowledge about how to effectively promote sustainable behavior change. Further research should address impactful issues, such as water management, with a strong interdisciplinary approach (e.g., behavioral sciences, engineering, resources management, communication) and should be focused on sustainable behaviors promotion via new technologies. The understanding of how resources management and information technologies in at-risk contexts could promote behavioral change toward conservation, pro-environmental and sustainable behaviors can build new fundamental knowledge and real world applications to promote effective transition toward a more sustainable future.

Keywords

Conservation, pro-environmental and sustainable behaviors; behavioral change; attitudes-behaviors relation; attitudes and norms determinants; information technologies.

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