

## **What is water-saving behavior? A psychological perspective**

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Water-saving behavior seems to occur for more or less rational reasons in countries around the globe. Jordan, for instance, is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. For decades, it has suffered from extreme water shortages, which have been exacerbated by drought, depletion of groundwater reserves, and steady population growth. Thus, saving water would appear to be a rational thing for every Jordan citizen to do.

Compared with Jordan, where only 157 liters a day are available to each person, more than 6,200 liters a day are available to each person in Germany, thus making it a water-rich country. With more than sufficient water resources to meet all water demands, water-saving behavior would not seem to have a rational basis in Germany. Economic reasons cannot be used as a rational explanation either because an average of 80% of people's water bills are accounted for by a basic rate, and the increase in water prices has remained consistently below the increase in income. Fascinatingly, however, household water consumption has steadily declined from 144 liters per person and day in 1991 to 121 liters in 2010.

Whereas rational reasons, and thus a motive for water-saving behavior should obviously exist in Jordan, one would expect to find no motive at all in Germany. However, using two student samples from Jordan (N=725) and Germany (N=760), I will show that not just in Jordan but also in Germany, a water-saving motive—or in other words, an attitude toward water saving—exists and can be measured. Even more surprisingly, I will show that such a water-saving attitude seems to be similarly rooted in a more general pro-environmental attitude in both countries.

Finally I will present ideas about my Eawag-related research agenda.