

# At a Distance, All Is Well: The Intertwining Relationship Between System Justification, Psychological Distance, and Environmental Concern

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## **Abstract**

In the face of increasingly challenging environmental developments, achieving broad support for pro-environmental policies and especially addressing people resisting the social change needed to tackle environmental problems is particularly important. By linking system justification and construal level theory, we propose that the tendency to justify the overarching social structure (system justification) increases the psychological distance (the degree to which people feel removed) of environmental problems. As a result, environmental problems are not perceived as urgent or are simply downplayed. One correlative and one experimental study support the proposed relationships. Current studies are investigating whether manipulations of psychological distance can also persuade people with a high system justification tendency to support pro-environmental policies. Our findings allow for a targeted approach of audiences and a targeted framing through ideological market segmentation.

**Subject Areas:** *Advertising, Cognition, Information Processing, Public Policy*

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