Life in "Paradise" a social psychological and anthropological study of nature conservation in the Caribbean Netherlands

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Conclusion.

Like elsewhere in the Caribbean, people in the Caribbean Netherlands depend heavily on the natural environment, both economically and for their general well-being. Meanwhile, islands all over the world are increasingly susceptible to the consequences of global climate change. These realities heighten the need to take environmental action, which requires the local community's collective effort. However, taking environmental action is not as self-evident as one might think. I opened this dissertation with the story shared by Jossy, a former resident of Bonaire who described his experiences of the changes on the island since the constitutional reforms compared to how he experienced the island in his youth. He reflected on the changes in the environment (more exotic species, more litter, more urbanization), changes in society (more Dutch "foreigners" and other migrants), and changes in how efforts to conserve the environment were received by the community (receiving praise from the (Dutch) migrants versus ridicule from locals). This dissertation, intended to help us understand the forces underlying residents' environmental protection efforts in the Caribbean Netherlands, revealed that Jossy is not alone in his experiences.

Three explanatory factors are central in this dissertation:

- The small and insular characteristics of the Caribbean Netherlands, which has implications for the composition of the population on the islands, the availability of (human) resources, and influences societal dynamics.
- The (lead up to the) constitutional reforms on the islands on the 10th of October in 2010. Specifically:
  - the colonial history the islands share with the Netherlands and the sentiments of "recolonization" brought about by the constitutional reforms;
  - the integration of environmental management responsibilities into the legal and administrative purview of the Netherlands which includes the increasing presence of Dutch and foreign ENGOs on the three islands concerned with the islands' natural environment;
  - the growing number of (European) migrants on the islands.
- Thirdly, the implications these contextual factors have on the relationship between belonging and residents' engagement in conservation actions. As illustrated with the story of Jossy, the islands' small scale and the changes the island communities experienced over the years which are related to the constitutional reforms carry implications for the usually positive relationship between belonging and pro-environmental behavior.

I combined insights and methods from environmental psychology, anthropology, and Caribbean studies in this work. The study was divided into two parts. The first part took a closer look at the motives of conservationists residing on the three islands and how their actions and motives are affected by the constitutional reforms, the islands' small scale, and notions of belonging from a social-psychological perspective. To gain deeper insights into how these three factors affect environmental management at a societal level,

the second part of the dissertation presented a case study of Bonaire's fishery sector. The two sections reveal that while the factors affecting, and motives for, environmental conservation of island residents are quite similar to those of conservationists elsewhere globally, the residents of the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands, specifically Bonaire, have faced unique experiences related to the constitutional reforms, the small scale of the islands, and notions of belonging. Moreover, these three factors appear to reinforce each other. Specifically, living and acting in small insular communities emphasizes notions of belonging as dependency and familiarity are heightened. However, notions of belonging are challenged due to the realities created by the islands' colonial history and the experienced consequences of constitutional reforms.

In this final, concluding chapter of this dissertation, I will recap the two sections and summarize, analyze, and bring them together. I briefly reiterate the research questions and present the answers to these questions that I identified during the analysis. Next, I discuss the implications of these findings for the scientific discussions on drivers for environmental behavior in the Global South, thereby contributing to the vast body of work on pro-environmental behavior conducted in the Global North. I also reflect on several methodological implications of this study. Lastly, I discuss the societal and scientific relevance of the dissertation's findings, reflect on its limitations, suggest new avenues for future research, and provide some (policy) recommendations to enhance environmental conservation in the Caribbean.

7.1 RECAPITULATION OF THE FINDINGS

I formulated the central research question presented in the Introduction of this dissertation as follows:

> *What role does the perception of belonging (or self-identification) have in how or why people engage in conservation activities in the Caribbean Netherlands?*

This research has shown that notions of belonging indeed play a significant role in the decision of residents of the Caribbean Netherlands to engage in environmental conservation actions (or not). This relationship is multilayered and highly dependent on the context of the three islands, as well as the way an individual identifies him or herself in relation to other members of the island communities. Not only does this perception of belonging have a significant influence on residents' willingness to participate in conservation actions, it also (partially) affects the type of conservation actions they choose to engage in. This interplay is strongly affected by the islands' colonial history and the more recent constitutional reforms. I elaborate on this in the paragraphs below.

To find answers to this question, in Chapter 2 I first explored what the sociopsychological drivers are of residents of the Caribbean Netherlands to protect the islands' environment. Like people elsewhere in the world, residents in the Caribbean Netherlands have a series of social-psychological factors motivating them to protect the islands' environment. Specifically, conservation actors indicated their behavior is driven both by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including childhood and other (past) experiences with the environment, their knowledge of, and concern for, the environment, a sense of place attachment, personal values and beliefs, as well as social norms of the island communities. The conservation actors also expressed the goals they desire to achieve with their efforts (i.e., behavioral outcomes), ranging from more altruistic (e.g., the direct benefits that can be achieved for the environment) to more self-centered drivers (e.g., personal enjoyment or their career). While there were some differences between the drivers of local and non-local conservation actors and differences between the islands, all of the informants were ultimately concerned with the environment and protected it as they saw fit.

While these socio-psychological drivers are not necessarily unique for the Caribbean Netherlands, as they have been previously identified in other research, the conservation actors' motives and behavior are partly affected by the islands' socio-political and geographical context. In Chapter 3 I first explored how these motives are affected by the specific Dutch Caribbean context. The thematic analysis in Chapter 3 identified several (sub)themes that reflected and captured the debates surrounding (participation in) conservation actions and their relation to the contextual characteristics of the Caribbean Netherlands I have already discussed. The fishery case study presented in Chapters Five and Six provided several additional insights into the influence of the context on the motives of residents of the Caribbean Netherlands to protect the islands' environment. Specifically: How are the management struggles of Bonaire's fishery sector affected by the political changes brought about by the constitutional reforms instituted on10/10/10? By notions of belonging? By the small scale of the island?

In line with my expectations, the small scale of the islands affects the availability of resources and human capacity on the islands, which means that most conservationists felt a strong sense of responsibility in regard to their actions ("if we don't do something, nobody will"), but are also overwhelmed with the sheer amount of work that needs to be done by so few people. At the same time, due to the islands' small population, most residents know each other. This can both complicate and facilitate the process of nature conservation. The fishers, for example, greatly benefitted from the fact that they live in a small community and were therefore able to quickly arrange most of the formalities required for the establishment of their cooperative and, thereby, actively participate in fishery management efforts. In other cases, being well-known in the island communities also negatively affected their willingness to participate in conservation actions and this small scale at times (negatively) affected the reputation of conservation actors. Depending on the type of measure the conservation actor took and the approach

s/he used, their efforts could be more or less successful and viewed either positively or negatively within the community. This (lack of) approval by the community carries consequences for the environment and for the individual's reputation. An upside of the islands' small scale was that environmental issues were generally relatively easy to identify, and their management is seen as attainable. On the other hand, as seen in the fishery case study, the fact that the islands are small, and the environmental impact of the island communities is minimal compared to those of larger countries also diminishes the sense of control and responsibility and with it the willingness and/or the perceived need of some residents to take measures to help conserve the local environment.

The effect of the constitutional reforms instituted on10/10/10 is multifaceted. On the one hand, there are instances where the changes of 10/10/10 complicated environmental management. This was clearly visible in the fishery case study, where the legislative changes and the creation of new bureaucratic procedures complicated environmental management and conservation. Key-informants expressed how changes in legislation present loopholes, created ambiguities in governmental and organizational responsibilities, and those financial sources that were available before 10/10/10 were no longer available for the islands. Another repeatedly mentioned challenge was the big gap between the Dutch government's expectations and demands and the realities of the islands. This reflected a second prominent effect of the constitutional reforms, which is visible in the sentiments regarding environmental conservation on the islands. The Dutch migrants and Dutch government's prominent and dominant presence on the islands and their involvement in environmental conservation and management efforts triggered sentiments of "re-colonialization" and a sense of loss of ownership among some residents. This sentiment of the "Dutch taking over" is also very present among Bonaire's fishers' community. Among some local conservation actors, this development was an important reason to engage in conservation actions, while others like the fishers instead distanced themselves from conservation activities. On the other hand, the closer ties with the Netherlands gave the three islands access to new resources — financially and in terms of capacity and knowledge — for environmental conservation. This development facilitates local conservationists in their goal of protecting and conserving the natural environment of their islands.

Lastly, my research examined the effect of notions of belonging for conservation efforts in the Caribbean Netherlands. I explored this question in Chapters 3 and 4 where I asked: *Do people protect the environment partly or even primarily as a means to protect their sense of belonging within their community*? Chapter 3 revealed that the relationship between belonging and conservation action is multifaceted. For one, conservation actors' sense of belonging can be enhanced or disrupted through conservation participation. For some conservation actors, their engagement led to an enhanced sense of belonging, whereas for others, engagement led to feelings of exclusion or rejection by the community. These feelings emerged regardless of their current sense of belonging (i.e., being local or

not). Thus, both locals and non-locals can be rejected by their community due to their engagement in conservation actions. This perceived rejection depends primarily on the type of conservation actions the actor engages in and how these efforts are approached. Specifically, efforts that are considerate of local cultural values and norms tend to receive more support, just like efforts that do not focus solely on the placement of restrictions.

Chapter 4 examined the relationship between belonging and participation in conservation actions in greater depth and contrasted the Caribbean Netherlands with small, isolated communities in the United Kingdom. We tested the following hypotheses:

1. *Hypothesis 1:* A stronger desire to belong to a community leads to more participation in conservation actions;
2. *Hypothesis 2:* the effect of the desire to belong to a community on participation in conservation actions is stronger for those who have a lower current sense of belonging; and
3. *Hypothesis 3:* the effect of the desire to belong to a community on participation in conservation actions is stronger for those who have stronger reputational concerns.

While we found some indication that residents who participate in conservation efforts do so to improve their sense of belonging, this was mostly a secondary (unexpected) experienced benefit and thus not their primary motive. Nevertheless, the two studies we presented in Chapter 4 revealed that there is evidence that a person's desire to belong to a community leads to more engagement in conservation actions. This is especially the case for actors who do not yet feel they belong in the local community and was only discernable for specific forms of conservation actions (i.e., actions focused on creating environmental awareness). There was also some evidence that a stronger desire to belong to a community leads to more conservation actions when people are concerned about their reputation. We tested this effect of reputational concern in Study Two, which is a replication study of Study One in a different kind of small-scale community, namely small, isolated communities in the U.K. Nevertheless, the results are very comparable. Overall, these findings support the idea that the effect of a person's desire to belong to community on their engagement in conservation actions is especially imminent when the need to belong to a community is salient — either because people do not feel they currently belong to a community or because they are concerned about their reputation.

The complexity of the relationship between belonging and conservation actions among conservation actors in the Caribbean Netherlands can be partially explained by the islands' small scale and socio-political context. Specifically, as conservation behavior has a reputation of being a "Dutch" thing to do, engagement in these actions can lead to exclusion. Due to the colonial history of the islands and the sentiments of "recolonization" arising from the constitutional reforms of 10/10/10, conservation actors can experience resistance from the community when they try to take action to protect the environment. Moreover, the visibility of these conservation actions in small

scale communities makes conservation actors particularly vulnerable to the prevailing opinion (and thus rejection or acceptance) of the efforts they have made. Overall, my research has shown that whether or not participating in conservation efforts is beneficial for a person's sense of belonging depends on the way people approach or engage in these actions. Specifically, it is highly valued by the community when cultural beliefs, norms, and sensitivities are taken into account and worked with rather than against. In this same respect, it helps if locals are involved in conservation actions in order for these conservation efforts to receive support from the community. Their participation communicates the message that it is not solely foreigners who are concerned with the environment.

Again, the fishery case study I presented in Chapters 5and 6 provided additional insights into the relationship between belonging, the need to preserve the environment, and the societal dynamics of the islands. Most fishers agree that measures must be taken to protect the environment and safeguard the fishery sector of the island. However, the growing number of rules and regulations which are particularly disadvantageous for fishers and the perception that these rules are increasingly being put in place by the Dutch government creates resistance among fishers to cooperate with and support these environmental measures. The colonial history shared with the Netherlands and previous failed management attempts by the island government contributed to strong feelings of distrust between fishers and these respective stakeholders such as the government and ENGOs. This distrust contributed greatly to the continued internal struggles of the fishery sector and the failure to manage the marine ecosystem effectively. Moreover, as the fishers' community is small (everybody knowing everybody) and they depend on each other, it can damage their reputation with their peers if they abide by these rules. This reputational concern was also visible among the employees of the ENGOs who are responsible for enforcing fishery and marine legislation in Bonaire's Marine Park. While marine ecosystems where fishing takes place are amongst the most complex ecosystems to conserve in the world, these local circumstances on the Caribbean Netherlands have contributed significantly to complications in protecting them.

The establishment of the fishery cooperative on Bonaire, PISKABON, illustrated that giving the fishers back some sense of control and ownership through co-management creates new possibilities for cooperation between the various fishery and marine ecosystem stakeholders, and thus for successful management. This finding also underscores that fishers are more likely to participate in conservation actions if their peers support them and, therefore, they do not run the risk of damaging their reputation, i.e., their sense of belonging. Nevertheless, the establishment of the cooperative did not magically resolve all the existing inequalities between the fishers and the other stakeholders, most of whom have more formal organizational skills and experience with (complex) bureaucratic procedures.

Finally, while this was not a central focus of my research, my study revealed that there are also differences between the islands. Interestingly, tensions between the growing European Dutch and American community on Saba appeared to be less of an issue on this island because the newcomers are adhering to similar social norms related to the environment as the local community on Saba. Thus, engaging in conservation actions on Saba was less likely to have negative reputational consequences but, rather, functions as a means to enhance approval and acceptance in the local community. In contrast, the tensions created within the communities between the "Dutch" migrants and locals due to the Dutch government's dominant presence was expressed on all the islands but seemed to be most dominant on Bonaire. This is a reflection of the fact that, indeed, the visibility of the Dutch government and community on Bonaire is the greatest compared to the other two islands. While there are clear differences amongst the islands and, for example, Saba is substantially smaller than Sint Eustatius and Bonaire, the challenges and opportunities induced by small scale were expressed in similar ways by conservation actors on all three islands.

In sum, my study showed that, although the drivers of conservation actors in the Caribbean Netherlands are not necessarily unique, the role of the context should not be underestimated or neglected. Specifically, the extent or importance of certain motivations for environmental protection is visibly influenced by the island's small scale and the constitutional reforms they went through in 2010. Also, notions of belonging significantly influence conservation actors' motives and behavior in multiple directions.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This study's findings have several implications for the academic debate on drivers of pro-environmental behavior and discussions on the implications of small-scale, islandness, and non-sovereignty on the relationship between belonging and nature conservation. First, the finding that many of the social-psychological drivers of conservation actors in the Caribbean Netherlands are similar to or in line with the already identified drivers of pro-environmental behavior in studies conducted predominantly in the Global North is not surprising. While I argued in the Introduction that very few studies have been conducted in the Caribbean using theories and insights from the discipline of environmental psychology (Baptiste & Thomas, 2017), I also stated that Caribbean cultures (and thus their values and norms) are not always that different from societies in the Global North. This is because the Global North has been and remains central in the creation of Caribbean societies through colonization (Trouillot, 1992). In line with this reasoning, indeed, I found that in various cases the norms about the environment adhered to in the Global North are also prevalent in the Caribbean.

However, my study did reveal that despite the similarities shared with the Global North, the regional context and its painful history of colonialism and slavery are vital for understanding why conservation behavior gains support from some but is rejected by others in Caribbean societies. This rejection is especially interesting given the broad awareness of the importance of preserving and protecting Caribbean environments. These findings are a particularly relevant contribution to the discipline of psychology, where situational contexts are taken into consideration but tend to be untruly generalized (Milfont & Schultz, 2016; Uzzell & Rathzel, 2009). Specifically, meaning a context that can be applied to multiple instances, for example "being part of a group", "living in a green area", "working in a cubicle in an office", and/or "being religious". Generally, in psychology the origin of these contexts is not explicitly questioned or studied within the research. In contrast, my study has shown that the specific history of colonization and the ever-present remnants of this past are of substantial influence on contemporary (socio-psychological) environmental matters. The specific history that shaped the islands' cultures helps to explain why some people are more engaged in environmental actions than others and how community members perceive various efforts to protect the environment.

The contextual features also provided an explanation for why the relationship between belonging and pro-environmental behavior can differ greatly between people. The vast body of work examining this relationship presents a predominantly positive association between belonging and pro-environmental behavior and argues that engagement in conservation actions can lead to an increased sense of belonging to the respective place or community (Scannell & Gifford, 2017; Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Lewicka, 2005; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Mihaylov & Perkins, 2013; Hernández, Martín, Ruiz & Hidalgo, 2010; Stefaniak, Bilewicz & Lewicka, 2017). This is partially confirmed in my study, but the results of my work also shows the complexity of the issue. I found that while the desire to belong to the community can lead to engagement in conservation actions, this engagement can actually also lead to *reduced* feelings of belonging. My research has shown that in addition to functioning as a motive for engaging in conservation actions, the desire to belong or the fear of losing one's sense of belonging can thus also reduce the willingness to participate in conservation actions.

These findings are in line with Brick, Sherman, and Kim (2017), who concluded that anti-environmentalists (i.e., people who don't adhere to pro-environmental values) are less likely to engage in highly visible pro-environmental behavior, even if these behaviors are, for example, financially beneficial, in order to avoid signaling any association with an unwanted social identity. In comparison, pro-environmentalists increase their engagement in highly visible pro-environmental behavior, even if it costs them more financially, in order to promote that element of their social identity. Along similar lines, Coulthard et al. (2017) found that "in island contexts policy implementation processes are highly sensitive to social identity — us and them, insiders and outsiders — and

perceptions of control and autonomy, all of which can positively or negatively influence responses to [marine] conservation" (Ibid, p.306). Overall, my research findings illustrate the importance of taking both notions of islandness and (post-)colonial realities into account. This is important not only on a global ecological level but is also a vital insight when attempting to solve and act upon the urgency of environmental challenges in the Caribbean. In this way, my work has relevance for, and contributes to, larger scholarly and contemporary debates, for example on climate justice, by linking the colonial legacy to the environmental degradation we face today.

My study also contributes to the discipline of environmental psychology from a methodological perspective. Most psychological research uses extensive quantitative statistical analysis to compare and understand differences in human behavior. Often data are derived from easily reachable groups to ensure large datasets. The current study combined various methods, including qualitative surveys, qualitative semi-structured interviews, and in-depth participatory action research. The inclusion and analysis of my qualitative data and fieldwork observations allowed me to make a contribution to the traditional practice of psychology research. The case study using participatory action research, in particular, demonstrated the value of working closely with the community and gaining access to informants who are generally less likely to participate in scientific research. While insightful, some notes of caution should be exercised regarding the use of participatory action research in this dissertation. Choosing to intensively support and assist the fishers with the establishment of their fishery cooperative had consequences. For one, I became a prominent figure among the group, in general, and particularly for the Board members. While this helped me gain trust, it also affected how the community of Bonaire perceived me. I was quickly seen as someone who represented the fishers, specifically the Board members of PISKABON. Consequently, the national government, the public entity of Bonaire, STINAPA, and other organizations began approaching me in that role. These parties often contacted me instead of directly getting in touch with the Board members of PISKABON, and they tended to "use" me as a messenger. While I could share some information or help set up meetings, I was not at liberty to openly share all things that went on among the Board members. At times, this was quite challenging, considering I also had to conduct interviews and engage in conversations with stakeholders other than the fishers for my study's broader objective. Not only did this affect the way these stakeholders perceived me, but it also says a lot about the hesitation of and lack of trust among the various stakeholders.

My intensive collaboration with the Board of PISKABON also affected my ability to interview fishers who were not (yet) directly involved with PISKABON. As PISKABON still had to prove itself and gain credibility within the fishing community, the timing was not right for me to interview other fishers who most likely perceived me as a team member or representative of PISKABON. Moreover, requesting interviews with fishers could harm the trust I built within the fisher community, as previous researchers did

not have a good reputation among the fishers. This was because the outcome of the majority of these previously conducted studies, in general, was not directly beneficial for the fishers. These studies emphasized the declining state of the marine environment, the negative impact of fishing on the marine environment, and the requirement for fishers to change their fishing techniques and methods to more sustainable techniques and adhere to protective measures. Fishers therefore felt they were the sole ones blamed for the decline of the fish stocks and marine environment, while at the same time they did not have the power or leverage to advocate for their needs and interests. Due to this history fishers had with researchers, I remained wary about how I was perceived and guarded the trust I gained among the fishers. This meant that I made conscious decisions about what information I could share with other stakeholders in the field. If this is not done appropriately, the researcher can cause much damage, which can be detrimental for academia and for the local societies. While participatory action research allows the community to have a larger say in the research process, researchers must remain aware of, and sensitive to, their impact on the communities they research, especially when dealing with unequal power relations (Grove & Pugh, 2015).

Lastly, my study contributes to the literature on environmental conservation in Caribbean SIDS. The majority of studies examining nature conservation on islands looked at the physical (ecological) and political characteristics of islands. Small islands are increasingly viewed as the go-to place to find new ways of thinking and approach complex issues such as climate change (Kueffer & Kinney, 2017; Chandler & Pugh, 2020; Perumal, 2018; Ratter, 2018). Despite this interest in these islands, fewer studies have focused on the social-psychological underpinnings explaining the relationship between islanders and their environment and communities (Klöck & Nunn, 2019; Baptiste & Thomas, 2017; Baptise, 2018; Kelman, 2018; Petzold & Magnan, 2019; Nunn & Kumar, 2018). My dissertation contributes to that body of work. Specifically, my research examined how the small scale of the islands triggers debates on feelings of responsibility for conserving the environment, and on land use and ownership, which can create tensions within the community regarding the conservation of the environment. Indeed, I found that people knowing each other in small communities also has implications for people's conservation actions. Moreover, while the Caribbean region has been studied extensively, the three smallest islands of the former Netherlands Antilles have not been the focal point in most of these studies. My dissertation, therefore, specifically contributes to the Dutch Caribbean academic debate. Some might argue that the research conducted on small islands in the Caribbean is not generalizable. However, and citing the words of Beate Ratter (2018, p.211), I argue for the opposite, namely:

> *The attraction of islands as an ideal field of research is not restricted to their non-contained spaces but their relationality — their relation to the ocean and other islands and their relation as peripheries to the global centers. Their connectivity and relationality are just as important as smallness, boundedness, and isolation. Islands*

can make us pause for thought, leading us towards new questions. As such, they are ideally placed to be objects of reflection on contemporary developments and situations — ideally suited to some alternative thinking about alternatives.

7.3 SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIETAL RELEVANCE OF THE FINDINGS

My dissertation aims to contribute new insights and practical recommendations to the debate on how to balance the urgency of environmental action while remaining sensitive to (post) colonial realities in the (Dutch) Caribbean. In the Introduction, the societal and scientific relevance of this study was discussed. Specifically, situated in social history, cultural and environmental anthropology, public administration, and environmental science, my research aims to create a less compartmentalized picture and to directly address societal concerns. Based on the results of my research, I can, indeed, address several of these points. By taking into account the colonial environmental history of the three islands, their non-sovereignty, and the small scale of the communities residing on the islands, my dissertation provides an insight into conservation actors' engagement in the Caribbean Netherlands. Particularly, because of its multidisciplinary and multi-method character, my dissertation produces new insights and practical recommendations that I hope will be useful for engaging more people in environmental activities in the (Dutch) Caribbean.

For one, my findings highlight the importance of investing in the process with which nature conservation is approached. The approach adhered to, namely being sensitive to cultural values, norms, and practices with a focus on inclusiveness, is key for receiving support from the local community, and this support is determinate for the success of ecological interventions. Also, considering the importance of the need to have a sense of belonging, my research can inform planners, immigrant associations, and other community organizations that aim to integrate people within a community. Specifically, my findings showed that people engage in conservation actions not only out of concern for other people, species, or ecosystems (e.g., Bamberg & Möser, 2007) but also out of a desire to belong to the community, which can be an important motive for conservation actions. The insights I have acquired on the relationship between belonging, reputation, and conservation actions can be used to get more actors on Board, which is an absolute necessity if we are to address the islands' ecological hazards collectively.

My dissertation also contributes to the discipline of environmental psychology as it focused on a more integrated and holistic inclusion of culture as a factor of analysis and argues for its importance for understanding pro-environmental behavior. Therefore, this research responds to arguments made by Milfont and Schultz (2016) that how individuals relate to the natural environment is culturally patterned, and engages with the plea of

Uzzell and Rathzel (2009) for transformative environmental psychology, which is based on the understanding that, "our perceptions, attitudes, and actions are not formulated in an instance but have a history" (p. 348). At the same time, my research findings confirm the premise of psychologists that many psychological processes are universal, and the knowledge gained from one study is therefore transferable to other populations.

My findings also underscore the importance of addressing environmental and social issues simultaneously. For example, there is no use in demanding time-consuming pro-environmental participation from people struggling to make ends meet. This awareness and approach are not new – since the mid 80s attention has been paid to more integrated biodiversity conservation through so-called Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDP). An approach that aims to combine social development needs with locally based projects that link conservation goals to development (Hughes & Flintan, 2001; Alpert, 1996). WWF was one of the organizations to adhere to this approach in its projects and still does so in various forms to this day. However, the concept of integrated conservation has evolved and gained new momentum over the past years by integrating the concept of intersectionality.

Intersectionality originated from feminism and is a framework for understanding how multiple dimensions of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, religion, sexual orientation) combine to create different kinds of privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). This concept can be linked to environmentalism (i.e., Intersectional Environmentalism) and has gained increasing amounts of attention over the past years. Intersectional environmentalism not only advocates for the simultaneous protection of both people and the planet, but also pays specific attention to the ways marginalized communities, such as Bonaire's fishers, face injustice and how they are interconnected with the earth's ecosystem (Thomas, 2022). Leah Thomas coined the term 'Intersectional Environmentalism' in the midst of the Black Lives Matter marches taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. One of her social media posts went viral and sparked a spirited conversation about placing social justice central in environmental debates. One of her main objectives was to change the "white-washed environmental narrative". While Thomas focuses strongly on the issue of race within the discourse of environmentalism, she ultimately aims for environmentalism to become more inclusive by focusing simultaneously on people's and the planet's needs. Indeed, as we saw with the fishery case study, only when experiences of injustices and other social concerns are addressed, are fishers willing to participate in conservation efforts. Moreover, my research illustrated that the legacies of colonialism need to be taken into account as they continue to influence societal dynamics on the islands, affecting residents' willingness to participate in conservation actions.

7.4 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To get an even better understanding of why some people choose to engage in conservation actions in the Caribbean Netherlands as well as to find ways to encourage others to do so, future research should also include the population who are not engaged in conservation activities. While I did include a broader group in the online survey study and the fishery case-study, closely examining all layers of the community and their willingness or reluctance to protect the environment can further determine whether the challenges presented by the context identified in the current study function as a barrier for other people. Indeed, the fishery case study already revealed interesting and useful insights into the views, experiences, and opinions of people who are not typically considered conservationists.

Future research can be more comparative by including private or household behavior to examine if there are, indeed, differences in the implications of societal dynamics on people's behavioral decisions. Future research could examine the notion of being local — or not — in Caribbean communities more extensively and consider the possible implications of this part of one's identity. Identity and belonging are complex constructs to understand and pinpoint. They are multi-layered and depending on how a part of one's identity is defined affects, for example, behavioral processes and experiences. Lastly, in terms of examining the relationship between belonging and pro-environmental behavior, a truly spectacular next step would be to conduct (field) experiments to assess the causal direction of the relationship between the desire to belong to the island community and pro-environmental behavior with more certainty than is possible with correlational findings.

These avenues underscore my earlier reflections, namely the complexity of combining the epistemologies of positivist psychology with those of reflective and constructivist anthropology. In this dissertation, the struggle with combining these avenues ultimately led to a degree of 'separation' (i.e., Part One and Part Two) of the disciplines rather than a full multidisciplinary integration. Future research may work towards truly inter- or even transdisciplinary approaches to provide deeper, and perhaps more concise understandings of the complexities discussed in this dissertation, in particular those pertaining to belonging and identity.

All in all, my dissertation is both expansive and limited. Its conclusions have global applicability, yet its focus is very much on the local context of the Caribbean Netherlands, with a particular focus on the case study of fishers on Bonaire. It argues for broadening the academic approach and methodologies used in studying the environment to embrace true trans-disciplinarity. This necessarily includes a contextualization of the culture, post-colonial histories, and contexts of the societies in which environmental actions (or lack thereof) are occurring. By expanding who, what, and how we research we can have a far greater impact than if we were to stay confined to our narrow disciplinary boundaries.

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