PhD Theses defended in 2006

January

On January 19, 2006 **Maria Dijkstra** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Workplace Conflict and Individual Well-Being" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor
prof.dr. C.K.W. de Dreu

Co-promotors
dr. A.V.A.M. Evers
dr. D. van Dierendonck.

Summary

Interpersonal conflict is among the most common human experiences and inherent to social interaction and organizational life (e.g., Katz & Kahn 1978; March & Simon, 1958). Whenever individuals come together at work, their differences in terms of power, values, interests and attitudes contribute somehow to the development of opposing forces: to the evolvement of conflict. Past research and theoretical development have greatly advanced our understanding of the potential costs and benefits of conflict for the well-being of the organization in terms of performance and productivity. Unfortunately, far less attention has been paid to the consequences of conflict for the well-being of the individual members of organizations in terms of psychological strain, satisfaction and happiness. This is rather surprising given the organizational costs that are associated with the consequences of reduced employee well-being such as poorer quality of work performance, increased absenteeism and high levels of turn-over (Cooper & Marshall, 1976). The focal subject of the studies reported in this dissertation is the relationship between workplace conflict and individual well-being. In trying to disentangle this relationship I will specifically include the role that is played by personality characteristics and conflict management strategies. The particular goal of this dissertation is to investigate how these variables influence the relationship between workplace conflict and well-being.

February

On February 24, 2006 **Ruud Custers** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "On the underlying mechanisms of nonconscious goal pursuit" at Utrecht University.

Promotors
prof.dr. H. Aarts
prof.dr. K. van den Bos

Summary

Recent research demonstrates that goal pursuit can be instigated without conscious interventions when the mental accessibility of goal representations is enhanced by environmental cues. However, the mechanisms producing this nonconscious, motivational, goal-directed activity are not clearly addressed in the literature. In this dissertation a framework is presented within which the nonconscious activation of goal-directed behavior can be understood.
The framework that is outlined in Chapter 2 departs from the idea that a goal is mentally represented as a desired state and identifies three characteristics of this representation that render nonconscious goal pursuit more likely to occur: its mental accessibility, the discrepancy of the represented state with the actual state, and its association with positive affect. In the subsequent chapters, empirical findings are reported in the support of the framework. Chapter 3 reports 3 studies which demonstrate that when people perceive a situation that is discrepant with a specific goal, representations of actions that are instrumental in restoring the goal state are spontaneously activated, but only if the goal representation is chronically or temporally accessible. Chapter 4 describes 6 studies which reveal that unobtrusively attaching positive affect to initially neutral activities by means of affective conditioning techniques increases people's motivation to engage in those activities, without people being aware of the source of this motivation. Finally, Chapter 5 outlines 2 studies which reveal that goal-priming effects on motivational, goal-directed behavior are moderated by the implicitly measured affective valence of the goal state.
As a whole, this dissertation contributes to the knowledge of nonconscious goal pursuit by revealing the underlying mechanisms that are involved. Thereby, the reported work forms a much needed basis for theory-driven research on nonconscious goal pursuit.

April

On April 27, 2006 **Huadong Yang** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Siding in a conflict in China and in the Netherlands" at Leiden University.

Promotors
prof.dr. E. van de Vliert
prof.dr. Kan Shi

Summary

A third party can not only resolve but also intensify an interpersonal conflict. Research in conflict management has long neglected to pay attention to how a third party escalates an interpersonal conflict. By focusing on siding preferences of initially neutral third parties, in this project we investigated how an interpersonal conflict is differentially escalated by such outsiders in China and in the Netherlands. Especially, we examined the impact of individual differences, situational factors, and cultural variations on outsiders' siding decision.
We adopted scenario study as a main research method to investigate outsiders' siding preference. Participants in the role of an informal third party were presented with a series of dispute dilemmas, such as perceived legitimacy judgments versus expected negative sanctions, perceived legitimacy judgments versus a close interpersonal relationship. They were asked to indicate their intention of whose side they will take in each of the conflict dilemmas. We sampled participants from China and the Netherlands and checked their individualistic and collectivistic orientation to allow us to investigate cultural differences. In addition, we developed scales to measure individual differences in moral orientation, expedient orientation, and relational norms. In total, 376 Chinese and 348 Dutch from various Chinese and Dutch organizations participated in this research project.
The results of this project can be summarized from three aspects. First, from the perspective of individual differences, we found that a joint effect of two types of personal orientations, moral orientation and expedient orientation, provides a refined picture in predicting an outsider's preference of siding with a legitimacy party or with a sanction party. Second, in terms of situational factors, results showed that, apart from perceived legitimacy and expected negative sanctions, an outsider also takes interpersonal relationships with disputants into account when making his/her siding decision. Third, in regard to cultural differences, the findings revealed that, Chinese tend to side with their friend motivated by the sharing-concerned communal norm. In contrast, Dutch tend to side with their workplace acquaintance based on the interest-concerned reciprocity norm.
The contributions of this dissertation are threefold. First, to deepen our understanding of conflict management from the perspective of escalation. Second, to contribute to the refinement of traditional theories on siding by incorporating relational criteria into the research model. Third, to interpret outsiders' siding preference through a multilevel theory by taking the joint effects of situational factors, individual differences, and cultural differences into account.

May

On May 19, 2006 **Ellen Dreezens** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The missing link: On the relationship between values and attitudes" at Maastricht University.

Promotors
prof.dr. N. de Vries
prof.dr. G. Kok

Co-promotor
dr. C. Martijn

Summary

Although taste, prize, availability and nutrition value are important factors, some people decide what or what not to eat on the basis of moral considerations. These moral considerations, or values, are therefore important determinants of participant's attitudes toward food. The present dissertation offers a systematic analysis of the relationship between values and attitudes. Values do have an influence on food related attitudes and exert this influence by changing the beliefs that the attitude is made of, and by changing the strength of an attitude.

The relationship between values and attitudes generally is weak when it comes to food-innovations. However, this relationship can be strengthened a great deal by merely suggesting the link between a value and an attitude. This linking does not have to be very explicit or apparent, but even works when used relatively implicitly. A strong relationship between attitudes and values can be accomplished by presenting an attitude issue in the context of a specific value e.g. by suggesting the link between an attitude and a value. Only mentioning the words "ecological food" in a description of a universalistic person results in strong and significant correlations between universalism and OGF, whereas not mentioning these two words results in weak correlations between the value and the attitude. These findings provide a way to bring attitudes in line with respected values, but only if the value and the attitude are related in the first place.

All in all, the data presented in this dissertation all point to the fact that values do contribute to the explanation and prediction of attitudes. We have shown that there is a systematic relationship between specific values and attitudes. However, we argue that merely activating values in order to understand or influence specific attitudes is not enough. It is sometimes also necessary to suggest the link between a value and an attitude issue. It is however not the case that activating a specific value leads to an immediate change in related attitudes or behavior. Activation of a value only strengthens the relationship between values and attitudes.

On May 23, 2006 **Jacquelien van Stekelenburg** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Promoting or preventing social change. Instrumentality, identity, ideology and groupbased anger as motives of protest participation" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor
prof.dr. B.G. Klandermans

Co-promotor
dr. W.W. van Dijk

Summary

Demonstraties zijn een steeds 'normaler' verschijnsel en bovendien wordt het demonstrerende publiek steeds diverser. Waarom demonstreren mensen? In de eerste helft van de vorige eeuw benadrukten onderzoekers de irrationele en emotionele kanten van protest gedrag om daarna de meer rationele en organisationele kanten te benadrukken. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat demonstranten instrumentele, identiteits, ideologische en emotionele gronden hebben om aan protest deel te nemen. Emotionele en rationele motieven spelen dus beide een rol. Maar waarom neemt een demonstrant soms de ene route en soms de ander. Dit proefschrift geeft aan dat dit aan kenmerken van de organiserende organisaties ligt en aan kenmerken van de deelnemers.

Tijdens demonstraties van de vakbeweging en Keer het Tij onderzochten we participatiemotieven. Demonstranten van beide organisaties waren woedend en hoe sterker de woede hoe sterker de motivatie. Maar instrumentele overwegingen versterkten de woede bij de vakbond terwijl ideologische overwegingen de woede bij Keer het Tij versterkten. Psychologische mechanismen?zogenaamde zelf-regulatie?blijken als individueel "besturingsmechanisme" te funktioneren. Zelf-regulatie mechanismen verdelen mensen in promotors en preventors, promotors richten zich op idealen en preventors op veiligheid. Vertaald naar participatiemotieven blijkt dat voor promotors ideologische motieven zwaarder wegen en voor preventors instrumentele- en identiteits-motieven. Daarnaast bleken demonstratieoproepen van Keer het Tij meer promotietermen te gebruiken en die van de vakbeweging preventietermen. Promotors laten zich eerder overtuigen door de oproepen in promotietermen (van Keer het Tij) terwijl preventors zich eerder laten overtuigen door oproepen in preventietermen (van de vakbeweging).

June

On June 1, 2006 **Tomas Ståhl** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Determinants of Fairness-based and Favorability-based Reactions to Authorities' Decisions" at Leiden University.

Promotors
prof.dr. N. Ellemers
prof.dr. K.Y. Törnblom.

Co-promotor
dr. R. Vermunt

Summary

The research reported in this thesis addresses the question of why people accept decisions made by authorities (e.g., organizational managers, societal authorities). In particular, the focus is on how the relationship one has to the decision-making authority affects the basis for decision acceptance. A series of laboratory experiments examine this issue. A general finding is that when the authority is from the same group as the recipient, and when the recipient identifies with the group shared with the authority, decision acceptance is governed by the fairness of decision-making procedures. By contrast, when the authority is from another group than the recipient, decision acceptance is primarily based on the favorability of decisions and decision-making procedures used by the authority (i.e., by self-interest). Additional studies investigate the psychological processes behind these effects and indicate that procedural fairness-based acceptance of decisions made by authorities from one's own group is primarily driven by relational concerns about being respected by the authority and to be included in the group. Finally, favorability-based responses to authorities from other groups were driven by negative expectations about the authority's intentions.

On June 15, 2006 **Saskia Schwinghammer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Self in Social Comparison" at University of Groningen.

Promotor
prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Summary

The way we see ourselves is largely determined by the people around us. Through the process of social comparison we compare our own attributes to those of others, and establish our self-image. In this dissertation the role of the self in social comparison processes is studied, by examining social comparison effects when different aspects of the self were activated (neutral, positive and negative). Evidence from the empirical chapters shows that the self is not a passive system that simply processes social comparison information to which it is exposed. Rather, the self plays an active role in determining whether or not we need social comparison information, and for what reasons this comparison information is needed (i.e. for self-evaluative, self-improving, or self-enhancing reasons). Once social comparison information is encountered, the self subsequently determines how this information is being processed (defensively versus non-defensively), and it shapes the actual pattern of effects (on both an implicit and implicit level). It is concluded that the self is an important and constant factor in the comparison process that need to be taken into consideration when studying and understanding social comparison phenomena.

July

On July 5, 2006 **Astrid Homan** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Harvesting the value in diversity: Examining the effects of diversity beliefs, cross-categorization, and superordinate identities on the functioning of diverse work groups" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors
prof.dr. C.K.W. de Dreu
prof.dr. D. van Knippenberg.

Summary

Years of research on the role of diversity on team functioning have left some important voids and underinvestigated areas. This asks for a more systematic examination of the effects of diversity in teams by focusing on important moderators and mediators. In my dissertation, I took such an approach. The central question that constituted the thread running through my dissertation was the following: How can the potential positive effects of diversity be harvested?

To examine this question I conducted three elaborate experiments. In the first experiment I wanted to show how the interplay between informational diversity and other dimensions of diversity can account for some of the inconsistent effects of informational diversity in previous research. 70 four-person groups involved in a decision-making task received homogeneous or heterogeneous information. I created groups that were or were not characterized by a diversity faultline. In groups with a diversity faultline, heterogeneity of information either converged with or cross-cut the faultline. Results showed that informational diversity enhanced group functioning when it was crossed rather than converged with the existing faultline.

As the first experiment showed, converging dimensions of diversity often prevent groups from exploiting the potential benefits of diversity. In a second experiment, I examined whether the disruptive effects of diversity faultlines can be overcome by convincing groups of the value in diversity. Groups were either persuaded of the value of diversity or of the value of similarity for group performance, and they were provided with either homogeneous or heterogeneous information. As expected, informationally diverse groups performed better when they held pro-diversity rather than pro-similarity beliefs, whereas the performance of informationally homogeneous groups was unaffected by diversity beliefs. This effect was mediated by group-level information elaboration.

The third study combined the ideas of experiments 1 and 2 by examining how the performance of diverse teams is affected by member openness to experience and the extent to which team reward structure emphasizes a super-ordinate identity, cross-cuts diversity, or contributes to a diversity faultline by emphasizing subgroups. Teams performed the worst when reward structure converged with diversity (i.e., faultline teams) compared to teams in which reward structure cross-cut diversity or pointed to a superordinate identity. High openness to experience positively influenced teams in which differences were salient (i.e., faultline and cross-categorized teams) but not teams with a superordinate identity.

This dissertation has revealed that the answer to the question "How can the potential positive effects of diversity be harvested?" is contingent on diversity beliefs and the salience of

subgroups within the team. Teams in which differences are salient should have a positive attitude toward diversity in order to make use of these differences. Obscuring differences by means of stressing a superordinate identity helps overcome the negative effects of diversity but also limits the opportunity to profit from the positive effects of diversity.

September

On September 7, 2006 **Carmen Carmona Rodríguez** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Inferior or Superior: Social Comparison in Dutch and Spanish Organizations" at University of Groningen.

Promotors
prof.dr. B. Buunk
prof.dr. J.M. Peiro

Co-promotor
dr. A. Dijkstra

Summary

When do you compare yourself with others? With whom do you compare yourself with others? How do these comparisons make you feel? Social comparison is a daily process that everyone does for different motives and in different situations. For instance, we want to know how attractive, intelligent or how we perform in different areas of our life. Therefore, to do that we need to get information from others such as friends, colleagues or relatives to evaluate ourselves compared to others. In particular, there are different ways in which we can compare ourselves with others. In our research, we have shown that these different ways of social comparison may positively or negatively influence people in different contexts such as academia and work. In particular, the feelings and thoughts evoked when students compare themselves with others in a specific way affect their self-confidence and performance. In addition, in organizations, feelings and thoughts evoked by the way workers identify or contrast themselves with others who are doing better or worse affect their levels of burnout over a period of one year, and their levels of commitment to the organization. Interestingly, our research has also highlighted that there are culture, context and gender differences in the way individuals compare themselves with others. For instance, compared to the Spanish, the Dutch are more competitive and feel superior after comparisons with others who are doing worse; compared to public organizations, workers in private organizations are motivated by others who are doing better, and feel superior to others who are doing worse. In addition, women in private organizations compared themselves more often with men than women. Thus, this finding may suggest that although nowadays in the North and South of Europe gender differences are decreasing, still comparisons with one's own and the opposite gender may have different meanings for men and women. In sum, this research highlights that the way people compare themselves with others is an important factor that may affect individuals' behavior, feelings and cognitions.

October

On October 17, 2006 **Martijn van Zomeren** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Social-psychological paths to protest: An integrative perspective" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors
prof.dr. R. Spears
prof.dr. A.H. Fischer

Summary

When and how do people engage in collective action against collective disadvantage? Because the collective action literature is large, multi-disciplinary, and heterogeneous, many diverse answers to this question have been given. The main aim of this thesis was to find some ³general simplicity² among the ³specific complexities² in the literature. In my thesis I propose an integrative perspective that encompasses different theoretical approaches to collective action. In four empirical chapters, containing nine empirical studies and a comprehensive meta-analysis, I tested this integrative perspective that proposes two distinct ³paths to protest², conceptualized as emotion-focused and problem-focused coping with collective disadvantage.
As a first test of this perspective (as outlined in Chapter 1), in Chapter 2 three experiments show that disadvantaged group members' feelings of group-based anger and their group efficacy beliefs independently predict their collective action tendencies. Moreover, the two proposed coping processes are context-dependent, and their activation depends on the emotional and contextual resources people have available and put to use.
Furthermore, in Chapter 3 a field study of a ³real-life² demonstration and a follow-up experiment show that group identification facilitates emotion-focused coping (i.e., higher identifiers are more likely to act because of stronger group-based anger), and moderates problem-focused coping (i.e., lower identifiers depend increasingly more on their group efficacy beliefs to engage in collective action).
Extending this integrative perspective, three experiments reported in Chapter 4 suggest that group-based anger is not only a major motivation for collective action but also a communicative tool to mobilize their disadvantaged group, or to challenge the authorities. Group-based anger should thus not be viewed as an ³irrational² response to collective disadvantage ¬ rather, group-based anger in response to collective disadvantage appears to be quite multi-functional indeed.
Finally, Chapter 5 corroborated my integrative perspective by showing meta-analytic evidence that injustice, efficacy, and identity predict collective action well. Results confirmed that injustice and
identity are more strongly related to each other than to efficacy, and that emotion measures of injustice (like anger) are better predictors of collective action than non-emotion measures.
The ³dual pathway model of coping with collective disadvantage² thus fits with the literature across very different measures, methods, populations, and contexts.
n the concluding chapter, I therefore argue that my perspective provides an integrative answer to the question when and how people engage in collective action. This is important in fostering further theoretical integration, and it also has major implications for practice and

policy. For example, lower identifiers with a disadvantaged group can be mobilized most effectively by focusing on group efficacy rather than on group-based anger. Also, the multi-functionality of group-based anger suggests multiple ways for its strategic expression, which all aim for influencing the emotional and contextual resources group members have available to battle their collective disadvantage.