

PhD Theses defended in 2007

January

On January 12, 2007 **Saskia Schalk-Soekar** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Multiculturalism: A Stable Concept with Many Ideological and Political Aspects" at Tilburg University.

Promotor

prof.dr. F.J.R. van de Vijver

Co-promotor

prof.dr. Y.H. Poortinga

Summary

More countries are becoming cultural heterogeneous because of immigration, changing these countries in many ways. It also has an affect on all the citizens living in these countries of destination; not only does this change their mainstreamer populations, the immigrants undergo changes as well. The term multiculturalism refers to all these changes and in the various disciplines in which multiculturalism is studied, the term has many meanings and components. In psychology, multiculturalism refers to an ideology and is de.ned as the acceptance of different cultures in a society and also to the active support for these cultures by both the majority members and the minority group members. This de.nition has close relations with statements of multiculturalism policies, in which it is stressed (among other things) to support the cultural diversity by approving the cultural maintenance of immigrants, to have intercultural interactions, full participation of all groups, and mutual group acceptance and tolerance. But then several questions arise to what extent majority group members and immigrants support such a multiculturalism policy, why they support or do not support this policy, and if their support is stable over time. This thesis is an attempt to carefully answer these questions by examining the psychological concept of multiculturalism, focusing on its ideological and political aspects.

On January 19, 2007 **Helma van den Berg** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Feeling and Thinking in Attitudes" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors

prof.dr. J. van der Pligt
prof.dr. A.S.R. Manstead

Co-promotor

prof.dr. D. Wigboldus

Summary

In what ways are feeling and thinking in attitudes different? Do feelings play a bigger role in attitudes than more rational aspects? These are questions brought up in this dissertation. This issue is approached in two ways. Using structural equation analyses, we first demonstrated that affective, cognitive, and overall evaluations indeed should be distinguished (Chapter 2). In addition to distinguishing affective from cognitive evaluations, we found that they both are distinct from an overall evaluation. We claim that it is not necessarily the overall evaluation that is most predictive of behavior. Indeed, in Chapter 3 we demonstrated that for attitudes toward organ donation, it was the affective evaluation, and not the overall evaluation that best predicted donor-relevant behavioral decisions.

The second part of this dissertation investigated effects of affect versus cognition on attitude formation. We found that positive vs. negative appeals that were framed affectively or cognitively had specific effects on the -corresponding- affective or cognitive evaluation, whereas this difference in framing had no diverging effects on the overall evaluation (Chapter 4). This implies that the use of an appeal framed in affective rather than cognitive terms, results in attitudes that could be labeled as 'affective', not because the overall evaluation is determined more by affective or cognitive information, but because the corresponding attitudinal factor is influenced.

Aside from a message being affectively versus cognitively framed, people can also attend more to their feelings or thoughts when processing information. In Chapter 5, we investigated whether this difference in focus to feeling or thoughts led to different attitudes. We first demonstrated that an unobtrusive focus on thoughts or feelings resulted in making affective or cognitive aspects of the information more salient. It also resulted in different attitudes. Finally, we found that in an affective focus people are faster to evaluate as compared to a cognitive focus. This latter findings suggest that an affective focus might lead to a greater tendency to evaluate.

February

On February 2, 2007 **Nils Jostmann** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "When the going gets tough... How action versus state orientation moderates the impact of situational demands on cognition, affect, and behavior" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. G.R. Semin

Co-promotor

dr. S.L. Koole

Summary

When the going gets tough... deals with the question how people can shield their thoughts, feelings, and actions against distractions and temptations when demands are high. A theoretical model is proposed according to which people cope more effectively with high demands if they are efficient at action control. Action control reflects people's capacity to form, maintain, and implement (or disengage from) their intentions. Three lines of research provide evidence for the idea that individuals who are highly skilled at action control, or action-oriented individuals, cope better with high demands than individuals who are less skilled at action control, or state-oriented individuals. In a first line, action-oriented individuals utilized their working memory capacity more efficiently than state-oriented individuals when they were primed with a demanding relationship context. In a second line of research, action-oriented individuals displayed better down-regulation of negative affect than state-oriented individuals, even when affect was triggered outside of conscious awareness. Finally, in a third line of research, action- compared to state-oriented individuals under high demands were better able to maintain and implement task instructions against strong competing response tendencies in a Stroop task. Across the different lines of research, state-oriented individuals performed equally well and sometimes even better than action-oriented individuals when demands were low. Action-oriented individuals thus do not possess generally greater mental capacities than state-oriented individuals but they are better able to utilize these capacities under high demands. The findings of the dissertation facilitate the theoretical integration of the separate literatures on action control, working memory, and coping with demands. In addition, the dissertation provides important suggestions how practitioners can help their clients to deal better with high demands in their everyday lives.

On February 22, 2007 **Belle Derks** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Social Identity Threat and Performance Motivation: The Interplay between Ingroup and Outgroup Domain" at Leiden University.

Promotor

prof.dr. N. Ellemers

Co-promotor

dr. C. van Laar

Summary

Being a member of a socially devalued group (e.g., women, ethnic minorities) threatens social identity, leading people to lower their investment in performance domains that determine societal status (e.g., education, career success). The experiments discussed in this dissertation show that offering devalued group members information that affirms their social identity improves their motivation in status-defining domains. Firstly, it was shown that contexts that express value for positive characteristics of devalued groups motivate group members towards higher achievement on status-defining dimensions. Secondly, this motivational effect of social identity affirmation held up even in threatening intergroup contexts in which high status outgroup members were present. When outgroup members acknowledged positive characteristics of the devalued group, devalued group members became focused on approaching success rather than avoiding failure. Thirdly, the beneficial effects of social identity affirmation compared to self-affirmation were revealed: Whereas self-affirmation led devalued group members to be concerned with their individual outcomes, affirming group identity challenged group members to pursue collective action. The findings underline the importance of positive group identity and intergroup respect for status-improvement of low status groups. Implications of the results for the integration of ethnic minorities and the participation of women in the work force are discussed.

March

On March 22, 2007 **Karin Bongers** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "You can't always get what you want! Consequences of success and failure to attain unconscious goals" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. A.J. Dijksterhuis

Co-promotor

prof.dr. R. Spears

Summary

In the present dissertation I examine the consequences of success and failure to attain unconsciously activated goals. I will start with a theoretical overview in Chapter 1. In this chapter evidence is presented that goals can be activated outside of awareness. Furthermore, literature is reviewed concerning evaluation processes in conscious goal pursuit and the existence of an implicit monitoring process in unconscious goal pursuit is explored. It is concluded that people are able to detect successes and failures to attain unconsciously activated goals.

In Chapter 2 three studies are presented in which I investigate whether success and failure to attain unconsciously activated goals affect self-esteem, and the consequences of such failures for performance and motivation. More specifically, in Experiment 2.1 and Experiment 2.2 it is examined whether people who fail to attain their unconsciously activated achievement goal will report lower self-esteem than people who succeed in attaining their unconsciously activated achievement goal. In Experiment 2.3 it is investigated whether people are motivated to protect their self-esteem after failing to attain their unconsciously activated achievement goal.

In Chapter 3 four studies are presented in which I investigate whether failure to attain an unconsciously activated goal results in conscious thoughts about the goal. In the first three experiments, participants are subliminally primed with an achievement goal. In Experiment 3.1 and Experiment 3.3, conscious goal-related thoughts are measured after goal pursuit, while in Experiment 3.2 these goal-related thoughts are measured online during goal pursuit using a think aloud protocol. In all these studies it is demonstrated that unconsciously activated goals are likely to intrude consciousness when goal progress is problematic, and hence, that people become aware of their goals in the face of obstacles. Furthermore, in Experiment 3.4 these findings are replicated with another goal: the goal of being honest.

In Chapter 4 two studies are presented in which I investigate the regulatory function of these conscious thoughts. It is examined whether or not conscious awareness of the goal in the face of failure will be helpful for subsequent goal pursuit. In both experiments participants are subliminally primed with an achievement goal. In Experiment 4.1 conscious goal-related thoughts are measured after goal pursuit. Then performance on a subsequent task is measured to investigate whether people still are motivated to attain their goal in the second task. In Experiment 4.2 the opportunity to think consciously is manipulated to investigate whether impaired performance on a subsequent task is instigated by conscious thoughts about the unattained goal or only by goal pursuit failure.

April

On April 20, 2007 **Lotte Scholten** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Motivation Matters: Motivated information processing in group and individual decision-making" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors

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

prof.dr. D. van Knippenberg

Co-promotor

dr. B.A. Nijstad

Summary

In this dissertation, Lotte Scholten investigated the use of information in (group) decision-making by studying how information exchange and processing shape decision quality. Specifically, this dissertation focuses on the role of epistemic motivation, or the extent to which decision-makers are motivated to engage in deep processing of information, and how this motivation affects information-processing and decision quality. In addition, it includes an important factor in the decision process by recognizing that decision-makers may differ not only in the amounts of information they communicate to others, but may differ also in how they mention information. Biases in information dissemination, so-called spinning of information, may influence the acceptance and evaluation of information, and thereby affect final decisions. Epistemic motivation was expected to improve information processing and thus diminish the potential effect of spin on decision outcomes. Results showed that whereas epistemic motivation did not affect the amount of information that was exchanged, it did lead groups to better process new information and revise initial (erroneous) preferences, leading to improved decision quality, compared to groups that were not epistemically motivated. Spinning of information about decision alternatives influenced decision-makers' evaluation of these alternatives, as well as their final choices. Epistemic motivation did not (consistently) prevent spin from affecting decision quality; in fact, the susceptibility to spin on the part of epistemically motivated decision-makers may be a consequence of their willingness to consider new information. Thus, although epistemic motivation promotes information processing, good quality decisions can be attained only if information processing is based on correct information.

May

On May 10, 2007 **Yael de Liver** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Ambivalence: On the how and when of attitudinal conflict" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. J. van der Pligt

Co-promotor

prof.dr. D.H.J. Wigboldus

Summary

This dissertation presents two different approaches to help understand when people experience ambivalence. The first approach is concerned with the structural basis underlying experienced ambivalence. The second approach involves an investigation of the cognitive and motivational factors that may affect experienced ambivalence.

In a first series of studies it is shown that ambivalent attitudes are characterized by a structure of strong positive and negative associations. This is investigated with two new paradigms that were developed to assess associations underlying ambivalent attitudes. The second part of the thesis addresses the experience of ambivalence. First the focus is on motivational factors related to the discrepancy between current goals and the state of ambivalence. A second factor that affects experienced ambivalence is cognitive capacity. Ambivalence is thought to take effort, because conflicting evaluations must be integrated. As a consequence, reduced cognitive capacity is expected to reduce experienced ambivalence. Finally, we address the impact of abstract versus concrete processing style on the experience of ambivalence towards different attitude objects. Together these studies help provide a more complete picture of the 'When and How' of attitudinal ambivalence.

On May 25, 2007 **Clemens Wenneker** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Processes underlying biased language use" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. R. Spears

Co-promotor

prof.dr. D.H.J. Wigboldus

Summary

Stereotypes and expectancies (for example, hairdressers are sociable, chess masters are intelligent) have been shown to be transferred by means of subtle differences in word choice and without people necessarily being aware of it. Clemens Wenneker investigated which processes play a role in this phenomenon, by letting people read stories and asking them later on to relate the story by typing it into the computer. Results show that stereotypic expectancies lead to the biased storage in memory of a story, which in turn leads to the aforementioned subtle differences in word choice when relating the stories. In addition, if people want to portray the actor of the story in a positive or negative way, this also biases the language used. Wenneker describes when the more automatic memory processes are of importance, and how these compare with the (conscious) goals people may have to portray someone else positively or negatively.

June

On June 7, 2007 **Debra Trampe** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Social Influence: Social Comparison, Construal, and Persuasion Processes" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Co-promotor

dr. F.W. Siero

Summary

In my dissertation entitled, "Social influence: Comparison, construal, and persuasion processes", I examined the social influence process from a social comparison (merely perceiving others), construal (being influenced by others when they are not actually there), and persuasion (when others intentionally try to influence us) perspective.

In Chapter 4, I focused on social comparison as a social influence process. More specifically, I investigated when other people will affect the way individuals view themselves. I addressed this issue in the physical attractiveness domain. The general finding is that especially women who are dissatisfied with their body are likely to suffer negative self-evaluative consequences from exposure to images of either human or nonhuman comparison targets, and that this enhanced proneness to social comparison effects of body-dissatisfied women may be attributable to the increased activation of the self. In Chapter 3, I examined the social influence process from a construal perspective. That is, I examined whether nonhuman targets can also be construed in a social manner. I found that placing objects in an advertisement context can increase both thoughts about the self and the likelihood that these objects will be used as a standard against which the self can be evaluated. In Chapter 4, I focused on the question of when physically attractive persons can effectively be used as tools to enhance people's evaluations of a product. The studies show that the persuasiveness of a physically attractive person depends both on the extent to which receivers elaborate on the message and on the rel

On June 21, 2007 **Hugo Alberts** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Carrying on or giving in: Processes of self-control and ego depletion" at Maastricht University.

Promotors

prof.dr. N. de Vries

prof.dr. H.L.G.J. Merckelbach

Co-promotor

dr. C. Martijn

Summary

According to the strength model of self-control, self-control consumes energy. After an act of self-control, a subsequent act is bound to fail due to energy loss or ego depletion. The current thesis attempted to provide more insight in the processes that underlie ego depletion. First, it was investigated whether there exists a relation between the extent to which people believe that self-control is dependent on limited energy and their self-reported self-control abilities. The results showed that stronger energy related beliefs of self-control are related to worse self-reported self-control abilities (Study 1 and Study 2) as well as higher levels of overall impulsiveness (Study 3). Study 4 and 5 investigated whether the automatic emergence of ego depletion can be reduced or even eliminated by means of manipulations that are known to operate at the same automatic level as the occurrence of ego depletion itself. It was found that priming initially depleted participants with persistence helped them to overcome ego depletion: their performance on a subsequent self-control task remained equal. Study 6 and 7 investigated the role of attentional processes in self-control. In Study 6, it was found that participants who were distracted while exerting physical self-control outperformed both participants who focused their attention on the physical self-control task as well as control participants who did not receive any focus instructions. Finally, Study 7 showed that ego depletion can also be overcome by increasing self-awareness. Depleted participants who were exposed to a self-awareness manipulation did not show a decline in self-control performance as opposed to control participants. In sum, whereas the strength model stresses the limits of our capability to control ourselves, the present studies rather stress the flexibility and relativity of these limits and suggest that that self-control and the emergence of ego depletion is more compound and dynamic than initially suggested.

September

On September 5, 2007 **Arnaud Wisman** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "New Direction in Terror Management Theory" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. P.A.M. van Lange

Co-promotor

dr. S. Koole

Summary

New direction in Terror Management Theory deals with the question how people's manage the awareness of mortality. The TMT posits that the unique adult human ability of mortality awareness in conjunction with an instinct for survival shapes a potential for death anxiety. In this dissertation I argued that, aside symbolic terror management, several additional terror management mechanism operate to manage reminders of one's own mortality. In Chapter 2, I highlighted the role of affiliation strivings in managing reminders of mortality. More specifically in Chapter 2, across three different experiments, it was found that mortality salience led to increased affiliation strivings, as indicated by a greater behavioral tendency to sit next to others. In Chapter 3, I hypothesized and found that reminders of mortality (mortality salience) should promote the desire for offspring to the extent that it does not conflict with other self-relevant worldviews that also serve to manage existential concerns. In Chapter 4, I presented a novel theoretical framework that raises the possibility that people use pre-symbolic solutions to the problem of death awareness. I argued that both pre-symbolic and symbolic terror management mechanism can effectively reduce death-related thoughts, and that both can do so at the conscious as well as the unconscious levels. Overall the results of this dissertation were in line with the generic hypothesis of this dissertation that people make use of multiple terror management mechanisms to ward of existential fear.

On September 27, 2007 **Hilbrand Oldenhuis** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "I know what they think about us: Metaperceptions and intergroup relations" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Co-promotors

dr. E.H. Gordijn

dr. S. Otten

Summary

In my dissertation I show that metaprejudice and metastereotypes can be important causes of negative as well as positive intergroup behavior and should therefore be taken very seriously when studying intergroup processes as well as when improving intergroup relations.

I examine the relation between prejudice (how do I feel about the outgroup) and metaprejudice (how do I expect the outgroup to feel about my ingroup). I show that people in general expect the relation between prejudice and metaprejudice to be reciprocal: the more group members like an outgroup, the more they expect that outgroup to like the ingroup. However, when group members feel guilty towards the outgroup, especially positively prejudiced people perceive that the outgroup does not have such a positive view of their ingroup. Hence, the relation between prejudice and metaprejudice becomes less positive and might even become negative. Furthermore, I examine the effects of metastereotypes for behavioral expressions within intergroup relations. Once metastereotypes regarding a specific outgroup are activated, people are inclined to reciprocate and thus act in line with negative metastereotypes. For example, I show that East Germans react more lazily when their metastereotypes regarding West Germans (including lazy) are activated.

Moreover, level of prejudices plays a moderating role for metastereotypical influence on behaviors. I show that negatively prejudiced ingroup members are inclined to reciprocate and thus act in line with a negative metastereotype, whereas positively prejudiced ingroup members are inclined to reciprocate and thus act in line with a positive metastereotype. High prejudice people are especially motivated to reciprocate an outgroup's negative (meta)stereotype, whereas low prejudice people are especially motivated to reciprocate an outgroup's positive (meta)stereotype.

Of course, metastereotypes are not always valid. I show that the validity of the metastereotype matters especially for positively prejudiced people. They do not reciprocate, and thus contrast away from a negative, invalid metastereotype, whereas they do reciprocate and thus act in line with a positive, invalid metastereotype. Apparently, when a metastereotype is perceived as invalid, low prejudiced people demonstrate their urge to show positive behavior towards a positively valued outgroup. To be more specific, if an invalid metastereotype is negative, people have extra motivation to show positive behavior in order to show that the metastereotype is based on fiction, and when an invalid metastereotype is positive, they have extra motivation to show reciprocity and, thus, positive behavior, in order to keep the outgroup's positive view of the ingroup intact.

October

On October 5, 2007 **Loran Nordgren** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Thinking about Feeling: The Nature and Significance of the Hot/Cold Empathy Gap" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. J. van der Pligt

Summary

This dissertation focuses on what Loewenstein (1996) has termed a hot/cold “empathy gap.” The goal of this dissertation was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the nature and significance of the empathy gap. A total of twelve experiments are presented in four empirical chapters. The first three experiments show that, compared to people in a hot state, people in a cold state underestimate the influence affect had on their past behavior and over-emphasize the influence of non-affective factors, such as personality traits. Next, four studies explored how the empathy gap influences the evaluation of impulsive behavior. People often have very little tolerance for impulsive behavior such as drug addiction and problem gambling. Next we considered the implications for health behavior. Results show that the empathy gap influences perceptions of control, self-efficacy beliefs, and goal setting. The final part consists of three experiments that examined the nature of self-control beliefs. Results show that people are unrealistically confident of their capacity to control their affective impulses, and that this “restraint bias” consequently leads people to underutilize opportunities to guard against temptation. The findings from this dissertation highlight the many ways in which the empathy gap is central to social psychological thought and action.

On October 9, 2007 **Erik de Kwaadsteniet** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Uncertainty in social dilemmas" at Leiden University.

Promotor

prof.dr. E. van Dijk

Co-promotors

dr. A.P. Wit

dr. D. de Cremer

Summary

This dissertation focuses on environmental uncertainty in social dilemmas. Real-life social dilemma situations are often characterized by uncertainty. For example, fishermen mostly do not know the exact size of the fish population (i.e., resource size uncertainty) or how many fishermen are fishing from the same fishing stock (i.e., group size uncertainty). Several researchers have therefore asked themselves the question as to how such uncertainty influences people's choice behavior. These researchers have repeatedly concluded that uncertainty is detrimental to the collective because it induces defection and over-harvesting. The present dissertation provides a more comprehensive view on uncertainty in social dilemmas. Whereas earlier research has primarily investigated how uncertainty influences harvesting decisions, this dissertation also focuses on how environmental uncertainty affects interpersonal processes. This dissertation introduces a perspective that argues that environmental uncertainty hampers the application of the equal division rule, which in turn influences how group members interact with one another. In six chapters, I elaborate on numerous implications of this notion. By focusing on three key aspects of interpersonal processes (i.e., tacit coordination, justification pressures and interpersonal emotions), and by testing my ideas in seven empirical studies, I demonstrate that the effects of uncertainty are much more differentiated than is portrayed in earlier research.

On October 24, 2007 **Gert Homsma** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Making Errors Worthwhile: Determinants of Constructive Error Handling" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotors

prof.dr. P.L. Koopman

prof.dr. T. Elfring

Co-promotors

dr. C. van Dyck

dr. D. de Gilder

Summary

Although scholars have argued that the underlying assumptions of organizational culture influence error handling and learning practices, this relationship has not been empirically established (Edmondson, 1996; Van Dyck et al., 2005). In this dissertation this gap is addressed through the development and validation of the error assumption framework.

Organizations that are guided by assumptions that reflect a tolerant yet decisive orientation towards errors learn more from their errors than organizations guided by tolerant-indecisive, intolerant-decisive and intolerant-decisive assumptions about error (Chapter 2).

In Chapter 3, causal attribution has been identified as an important antecedent of behavior after error occurrence. The results show that perceived personal control and responsibility are better predictors of learning than the attribution dimensions 'locus of causality' and 'stability'. When people perceive more personal control or acknowledge more responsibility over the cause of an error, they have higher expectancies with regard to future success and propose higher quality strategies for future action.

The study presented in Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrated that learning depends on certain aspects of the error incident. Errors in complex tasks lead to more learning than errors that are made in routine actions. Moreover, the severity of the consequences influences learning from error. Employees communicate and learn from their errors when negative consequences make it necessary for them to do so.

November

On November 2, 2007 **Hanneke Kooij-de Bode** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Distributed Information and Group Decision Making: Effects of Diversity and Affect" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Promotors

prof.dr. D. van Knippenberg

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

Summary

Organizations tend to rely on small groups rather than individuals when important decisions have to be made, based on the assumption that groups possess a broader range of informational resources and more diversity of insights than individuals. However, research on group decision-making shows that groups often fail to use effectively group members' unique information. Central in this dissertation is the relationship between distributed information, the way groups process information, and the quality of the group decision. In three experiments, the influence of demographic diversity, dispositional negative affect, and mood on groups' information elaboration process and groups' decision quality is studied. Results indicate the following: Groups with distributed information and diverse demographic backgrounds elaborate information more and reach better decisions with a focus on information exchange and integration than without such a focus. Higher dispositional negative affect within a group with distributed information stimulates information elaboration and group decision quality. A negative mood within a group with distributed information only affects information elaboration within a group and groups' decision quality positively if group members are lower in dispositional distress. In all three single experiments, information elaboration within a group mediates groups' decision quality. It is concluded that diversity and affect – as disposition as well as mood – are important issues to include in group research and implications for research in organizational behavior are discussed.

On November 2, 2007 **Unna Danner** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "By Force of Habit: On the Formation and Maintenance of Goal-Directed Habitual Behavior" at Utrecht University.

Promotors

prof.dr. H. Aarts

prof.dr. N. de Vries

Summary

In daily life we perform all kinds of behaviors to attain specific goals in absence of conscious awareness as a result of frequently engaging in them, e.g., the route one takes to work or one's choice of breakfast. People are capable of automatically selecting and performing a specific goal-directed behavior without considering all possible options that may also serve as means to attain their goal. When reflecting on the reason why a specific action is undertaken, people often come up with the answer "because I always do so" or in other words, by force of habit.

The aim of this thesis was to investigate different aspects of goal-directed habits. Research from different fields (e.g., automatic goal pursuit, memory retrieval and intention-behavior models) was used to study the cognitive processes underlying habits, especially the role of inhibitory processes, and to study how habits can guide behavior. There is a long tradition of research on habits because they were acknowledged long ago to be an important part of daily life. It is not the importance of the habit itself that is currently subject to empirical debate but its conceptualization and subsequent operationalization. However, clarity of these matters is essential to gain understanding how habits are formed and maintained and how our daily behaviors are influenced by our habits.

The findings in this thesis further support the idea that habits can be regarded as a specific form of automatic goal pursuit and as such can guide goal-directed behavior without conscious intent. It is shown how it is possible to perform goal-directed behavior in a habitual fashion whereas the means of attainment initially had to be considered. Not only are these inhibitory processes important to instigate habit formation, they are also necessary to resist these same habits when there is a desire to attain one's goal in a non-habitual way. Moreover, it is demonstrated that the context in which the habit emerged is an essential factor to consider. By showing the influence of inhibitory processes and the role of context stability, additional understanding is provided of the difficulty and success of habit change. One can have the best intentions but the road to an actual change of behavior is filled with obstacles. Chances are that one will act by force of habit! These insights can provide a different starting point for the alteration of (undesired) habits.

On November 16, 2007 **Maureen Tumewu** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Social Psychology of Gender Differences and Procedural Justice in Close Relationships" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

prof.dr. K. van den Bos

Co-promotor

dr. E.S. Kluwer

Summary

Conflicts in close relationships can be a threat to the existence of an intimate relationship and research has shown that relationship conflict can have profound negative effects on an individual's mental and physical well-being. The way couples interact and handle their conflicts is seen as a central determinant of marital quality. For example, when individuals feel their partner does not treat them with dignity and respect, this has a negative effect on their relationship satisfaction. Treating a person with dignity and respect is a key component of procedural justice. When an individual is treated procedurally just, this indicates that this individual is respected. In spite of the importance of relational information, little research has been done to the influence of procedural justice on the reactions of men and women in close relationships. In this dissertation I focus on the influence of procedural justice on the reactions of men and women in close relationships.

Some studies have shown that women are more sensitive to procedural justice than men. Results of other studies could not find support for gender differences in procedural justice. In my dissertation, I focus on the issue when women are more sensitive to procedural justice than men in close relationships. In doing so, one of the subjects I study examines the effects of status differences between men and women and how they affect their reactions toward procedural justice. I show that women with low status showed stronger fair process effects than men with low status and men and women with high status, suggesting that status moderates the relationship between gender and procedural justice.

Assuming that women are more relationally oriented than men, I also studied gender differences in procedural justice in the context of close relationships. Results showed that men who were high in relational orientation (both measured and manipulated) reacted equally strong to procedural justice as women. Furthermore, I show that women who process information in an experiential way are more sensitive to procedural justice than men who process information in an experiential way. In conclusion, this thesis provides more insight in the processes underlying gender differences in procedural justice in the context of close relationships.

On November 28, 2007 **Elianne van Steenbergen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Work-Family Facilitation: A Positive Psychological Perspective on Role Combination" at Leiden University.

Promotor

prof.dr. N. Ellemers

Summary

This dissertation provides a balanced picture of the experiences that individuals can have in the combination of their work and family roles. Extending the common focus in previous literature on experiences of role conflict (and their detrimental consequences), the present research also addresses the positive side of role combination and reveals the different ways in which work and family roles can facilitate each other (energy-based, time-based, behavioral, and psychological facilitation). This research shows that experiencing work-family facilitation has beneficial consequences for employees' well-being at work and at home (e.g., higher work satisfaction, higher life satisfaction), contributes to employees' mental and physical health (e.g., lower depressive complaints, lower cholesterol level, healthier body weight), and results in concrete gains for the organization as well (e.g., enhanced objective job performance, lower absenteeism). Furthermore, this research indicates that facilitation can be stimulated by means of informational (appraisal) support and by providing support for family issues in the work environment (a family supportive work environment) as well as support for work issues at home (a work supportive home environment). Thus, this dissertation provides a positive perspective on the combination of work and family roles, which hopefully also find its way to a non-academic audience.

December

On December 6, 2007 **Wokje Abrahamse** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Energy conservation through behavioral change: Examining the effectiveness of a tailor-made approach" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

prof.dr. C.A.J. Vlek

prof.dr. J.A. Rothengatter

Co-promotor

dr. E.M. Steg

Summary

Households constitute an important target group when it comes to encouraging energy conservation. This dissertation provides an overview of the effectiveness of interventions aimed at encouraging households to reduce their energy use through behavioural changes. It also provides more insight into the factors related to household energy use and conservation. Tailored interventions in particular appear to be effective in reducing energy consumption. In a field experiment, households were given tailored information about energy saving measures they could apply. They were asked to try and save 5% energy and an interactive website indicated how much energy they could save with each measure to attain that goal. Households also received feedback about their energy savings. Households who received the combination of tailored information, goal setting and tailored feedback via the Internet saved 5%, while households in a control group used more energy. Households in the experimental group had adopted more energy-saving measures and had more knowledge of energy conservation, compared to the control group. Household energy consumption appeared to be mainly related to socio-demographic variables, such as income and household size. Energy savings appeared to be mainly related to individual factors like perceived behavioural control. If the aim is to encourage households to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, it is important to provide them with more insight into which energy saving options are most effective for them to conserve energy. In view of the annual energy reduction targets set by the Dutch government, a tailor-made approach via the Internet can be an important step in that direction.

On December 6, 2007 **Stefan Thomas Mol** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Crossing Borders with Personnel Selection: From Expatriates to Multicultural Teams" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Promotors

prof.dr. H.T. van der Molen

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Summary

The dissertation "Crossing borders with personnel selection: From expatriates to multicultural teams" contains one theoretical investigation and four empirical studies focused on personnel selection in the cross-cultural context. Within the first four studies the emphasis is on the relationship between personality characteristics and outcomes that may be employed in expatriate selection. The final study is aimed at the prediction of the training performance of police candidates at the South African Police Services (SAPS). All studies are aimed at the improvement of selection decisions on the intercultural work floor. Chapter 2 contains a meta-analysis of 30 previous empirical studies aimed at the prediction of expatriate job performance. On the basis of this investigation it was concluded that four of the 'Big Five' personality characteristics, namely extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness are predictive of expatriate job performance and that openness is not related to expatriate job performance. Cultural sensitivity and local language ability were also found to predict expatriate job performance. Chapter 3 is theoretical in nature and tries to find answers to one of the most problematic questions in the prediction of expatriate effectiveness, namely how such effectiveness may best be operationalized. It was argued that expatriate adjustment to the host country is not a good criterion for expatriate selection research that specific performance dimensions are preferable over broader performance dimensions, and that adaptive performance too should be considered in validating selection context predictors. Chapter 4 was aimed at the simultaneous investigation of the personality characteristics that had been identified in Chapter 2 and other promising predictors, such as intelligence. A second aim of this investigation was to investigate the relationships of these predictors to multiple dimensions of expatriate job performance, such as task performance and diplomacy. Within this investigation it was concluded that the Big Five personality characteristics may be necessary and sufficient in the parsimonious prediction of expatriate job performance. Chapter 5 is aimed at the prediction of the expatriation willingness of domestic entry level candidates so that organizations can heed these candidates expatriation willingness at the time of domestic selection. It was found that especially specific earlier experiences such as travel or foreign living experience were predictive of expatriation willingness. In chapter 6 it was investigated to what extent police trainees in the more collectivistic South African culture were willing to differentiate the performance differences between them. On the basis of this investigation it was concluded that only 3 percent of the variance in training performance could be attributed to the target, that 18 percent was attributable to the perceiver and that 15 percent of the variance in performance ratings had to be attributed to the relationship between the target and the perceiver.