

PhD Theses defended in 2008

January

On January 15, 2008 **Marijke van Putten** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Dealing with missed opportunities. The causes and boundary conditions of inaction inertia" at Tilburg University.

Promotors

prof.dr. M. van Zeelenberg

prof.dr. E. van Dijk

Summary

The aim of this dissertation was to gain knowledge and insight into the inaction inertia effect, which shows that missing an attractive opportunity decreases the likelihood that people will act on a subsequent opportunity within the same domain. For example, people are less likely to book a discounted vacation to Tuscany for \$900 instead of the regular \$1000 when they missed a prior opportunity to book the vacation for \$400 than when they missed it for \$800. Although the inaction inertia effect was well-established and seemed to be a robust finding, many questions concerning its robustness, boundary conditions, causes and consequences remained. This dissertation tried to answer most of these questions.

Chapter 2 investigated what the effect of the presence of multiple options during the decision process on inaction inertia was. The results showed that inaction inertia decreases when there are more options available to choose from. Thus, inaction inertia typically occurs when there is one missed and one current opportunity. The second investigation of the boundary conditions of inaction inertia looked at the association between the missed and the current opportunity. Chapter 3 showed that when this association between the missed and the current opportunity is weak, inaction inertia is less likely to occur. Specifically, the findings show that inaction inertia decreases when, (a) the information about the attractiveness of the missed opportunity is unclear, or ambiguous, and therefore less easy to compare with the attractiveness of the current opportunity; (b) the missed opportunity was not just one step away, but an extra decision was necessary to obtain it; and (c) the missed opportunity is less comparable to the current opportunity. Some people are better at dissociating past events and present events. A relevant individual difference in coping with missed opportunities is well captured by the distinction between action and state-oriented people (Kuhl & Beckmann, 1994). Chapter 4 showed that action-oriented people, who get over negative events relatively quickly, show less inaction inertia effects than state-oriented people, who keep thinking about negative events. Moreover, the findings show that action-oriented people are less influenced by the missed opportunity in their valuation of the current opportunity than state-oriented people. As a result, action-oriented people value the current opportunity more than state-oriented people, and thus are more likely to act on it. Finally, in Chapter 5 the idea is tested that missing a more attractive opportunity leads to the experience of negative feelings, specifically that missing an attractive opportunity is frustrating. A way to cope with this type of frustration is to make the object of frustration less important or less valuable. The findings of Chapter 5 show that thinking about the positive aspects of the opportunity increases frustration and decreases inaction inertia. These findings show a new and interesting explanation of inaction inertia.

On January 17, 2008 **Marcus Maringer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Feeling one thing, seeing another: Emotion comparison effects in person judgments" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Co-promotors

dr. E.H. Gordijn

dr. S. Otten

On January 18, 2008 **Frederike Zwenk** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Voice by Representation" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. G.R. Semin, VU

Co-promotor

Dr. J.W. van Prooijen, VU

Summary

Representation is a day-to-day phenomenon. For example, people are represented by others in the parliament, a trade union or an employees council. The main characteristic of representatives is that they are involved in decision-making processes in which they voice their opinion on behalf of their group members. Decision-making processes in which people are granted an opportunity to voice their opinion by means of their representative are referred to as voice by representation. The findings of the current thesis have underlined the importance of voice by representation. In particular the results of Chapter 2 revealed that group members are very concerned about the procedures their representative is subjected to. Fair procedures are not only of interest for those who are directly involved in the process (the representatives), but certainly also for those who are indirectly involved in the process (those who are being represented), as was indicated by the fact that effects of indirect voice were stronger than effects of direct voice. Furthermore, from the results of Chapter 3 it can be concluded that it matters who acts as the representative. Effects of indirect voice are stronger when a highly compared to hardly preferred representative is involved in the decision-making process. It is assumed that feelings of commitment are the force behind the strong effects of indirect voice. The results of Chapter 4 revealed that the more people feel committed to their representative, the more likely they are to feel personally targeted by the procedures their representative is subjected to. Since there are so many situations in which it is not possible to hear every single person individually, and hence, people are represented by a representative in the decision-making process, it can be concluded that voice by representation is a worthy topic for investigation.

On January 31, 2008 **Joris Lammers** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Toward a more social social psychology of power" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Co-promotors

dr. E.H. Gordijn

dr. S. Otten

Summary

In this dissertation I argue that our social psychological understanding of power is too material and physical and insufficiently social. I furthermore argue that this has led us (i) to ignore the perspective of the powerless (low power) party, (ii) to ignore the important role of how power is evaluated, and (iii) the question how power positions remain stable over time. To partially repair this, I first focus on the role of a powerless party in intergroup settings. Where previous literature has claimed that the powerful tend to stereotype more, I argue and show that the powerless, on their part, tend to metastereotype more.

I then focus on the role of how people evaluate their position of high or low power. The past years a wealth of research has shown that, compared to the powerless, powerful people prefer to go their own way and show less restraint. They are also less keen on cooperation and take more risks. We show that opposite effects are found when people perceive their power position as illegitimate. That is, in that case the powerless start to show less restraint, are less keen on cooperation, etc. The powerful, on their part, become risk averse and willing to cooperate.

In a fourth empirical chapter I focus on the stability of power differences, in particular between men and women in the political domain. I show that by changing what people think is the Most Important Problem in current politics (e.g. the economy) people either have a preference for male, or for female politicians. If people e.g. think the economy needs attention they prefer males, if they think education needs to be improved they prefer female politicians. This effect however completely flips around if candidates are counter-prototypical in terms of their gender.

By showing these effects I feel I have made one step toward a more social social psychology of power. I am confident that future research can build on our findings to continue this journey.

February

On February 1, 2008 **Marjolein Maas** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Experiential Social Justice Judgment Processes" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

prof.dr. K. van den Bos

Summary

The subjective quality of justice judgment processes makes it rather unpredictable how people will react when confronted with unjust events. The effects social justice can have on people's subsequent behaviors have been widely recognized in literature by showing that perceived fairness influences people's behaviors, attitudes, and feelings in many social interactions. Yet, the acknowledgement that people have different reactions to experienced fairness does not tell us much about how people come to experience events as fair or unfair and when these fairness experiences may differ in intensity. The aim of the work presented in this thesis is to gain more knowledge of these processes and factors underlying social justice judgment processes. In order to try to achieve this aim, I addressed the question of how the way people process justice-related information may influence their subsequent reactions. In Chapter 1 it is argued that gaining further knowledge about how experiential-intuitive versus rationalistic-analytic modes of information processing work together and may potentially interact in helping people to distinguish between right and wrong may contribute significantly to understanding how people perceive and react to fair and unfair events. In three chapters I have examined various elements of the experiential and rationalistic processes pertaining to justice judgment processes. Chapter 2 shows in two experiments that when personal uncertainty had made participants susceptible to individual differences in affect intensity, they reacted with both stronger procedural justice judgments and stronger affective reactions toward experienced procedural fairness. In Chapter 3 a new way of manipulating both experiential and rationalistic mindsets is introduced and results show that both ways of processing information may influence people's fairness reactions, but that particularly the strongest affective reactions to fair and unfair events tend to be found when people's experiential mindsets make experienced fairness susceptible to individual differences in affect intensity. Chapter 4 addresses the question whether experiential versus rationalistic modes of information processing also work together and may potentially interact in helping people to distinguish between right and wrong when they are confronted with fair and unfair events that happen to someone else. Results of two experiments show that participants in experiential mindsets held victims blameworthy, irrespective of usually found effects of individual differences in general belief in a just world or the level of threat to the just world. In contrast, participants in rationalistic mindsets show the generally observed just world reactions. In sum, the findings presented in this thesis advance our knowledge of processes and factors underlying social justice judgment processes, by furthering insights in how experiential and rationalistic ways of processing justice-related information influences how people perceive and react to fair and unfair events.

On February 14, 2008 **Margreet Reitsma** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Impact of Linguistically Biased Messages on Involved Receivers" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. G.R. Semin

Co-promotor

dr. E. van Leeuwen

Summary

The Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB, e.g., Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989) shows that people describe positive behaviors of others close to them (e.g., in-group member, friend) in abstract terms (for example: 'X is helpful'), but in concrete terms (for example: 'X helps') for people who they are not close to (e.g., out-group member, enemy). In contrast, negative behaviors of people whom they are close to are described in concrete terms (for example: 'X hurts'), but in abstract terms (for example: 'X is aggressive') for people who are distant to them. The aim of this dissertation is to examine the impact of receiving linguistically biased messages upon receivers who are also the actor of the behavior being described. To this end we conducted a number of studies that showed that receiving linguistically biased messages about one's own behavior do have an impact upon a receiver. These linguistically biased messages influence the perceived interpersonal distance to the sender as well as their performance on a subsequent task. Furthermore, the studies made clear that this impact of receiving linguistically biased message upon a receiver depends on the communication context. The research reported in this dissertation opens the research on the LIB to the broader domain and extends the previous research of using linguistically biased language when one talks about others to the consequences of linguistically biased language use when one talks directly to these others. The main contribution of this research is that it closes the communication cycle by investigating the impact of messages about a receiver's behavior that are given directly to the receiver. This extends the research on the LIB and related research into a full communication context and underlines the important role of subtle differences in language use in interpersonal communication settings.

On February 29, 2008 **Hanneke Heinsman** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The competency concept revealed: Its nature, relevance, and practice" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotors

prof.dr. P.L. Koopman
prof.dr. J.J. van Muijen

Co-promotor

dr. A.H.B. de Hoogh

Summary

The four empirical studies presented in the dissertation aim to answer the question whether competencies are a farce, a fad, or a useful concept that should continuously be used in the future. We examined the nature of the competency concept, its relevance, and its use in daily practice. In separate studies we focused on the relationships between competencies and constructs such as personality and cognitive ability, and on relationships between competencies and effectiveness. Furthermore, we studied the value of various competencies beyond other constructs including cognitive ability and personality in the prediction of sales and managerial effectiveness. Finally, we focused on the use of competencies in daily practice. A multi-source and multi-method approach was adopted in order to enhance the generalizability of research findings.

Results showed that, as expected, psychologists mostly focus on cognitive ability, personality or behavioral aspects of applicants, depending on the competency domain (i.e. thinking, feeling, or power) they are rating. Furthermore, competencies were indeed found to be related to perceived effectiveness. Probably due to variation in situational demands and roles, subordinates, peers and supervisors differed in the competencies they relied on when assessing managerial effectiveness. Also, based on data gathered at multiple time-points, competencies were found to contribute uniquely to the prediction of perceived effectiveness, including sales and managerial effectiveness. Finally, results of a survey and a scenario study provided clear guidelines for the implementation of one of the most widely used competency applications, namely competency management. It was shown that employee involvement contributed to a positive attitude towards competency management and to a sense of perceived behavioral control. Both attitude and perceived behavioral control were found to be responsible for the use of competency management by employees.

All in all, though critics have expressed their concern about the merits of the competency concept, competencies do seem to be of value. We therefore believe it is safe to argue that the competency concept could be fruitfully further used in the future. Specifically, the use of competencies may contribute to successful human resource practices such as training, development, personnel selection, and performance appraisal.

March

On March 13, 2008 **Arne van den Bos** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Why we stereotype influences how we stereotype: self-enhancement and comprehension effects on social perception" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Summary

Stereotypes are generalized beliefs about the characteristics of groups of individuals and form the basis of prejudice. Stereotyping can be functional in at least two ways: as a tool to understand the world around us and because it can help to elevate ones self-esteem. In this dissertation, the focus lies on the specific influences of these two goals on the use of stereotypes in social perception.

Through a number of experiments, it is shown that an increased need to understand the world around us (for example, when one walks around in an unfamiliar city), results in more positive and negative stereotyping, whereas an increased need to elevate ones self-esteem (for example, when one failed an exam), results only in more negative stereotyping.

Subsequently, when these needs are relieved through stereotyping or in a different way, stereotype use decreases.

Furthermore, it appears that these two goals are not interchangeable with respect to stereotyping: when stereotyping is driven by a comprehension goal, only increased understanding, and not an increased self-esteem, counteracts stereotyping. This finding highlights the importance of distinguishing between comprehension driven and self-enhancement driven stereotyping, because they represent two different routes that lead to different kinds of stereotyping and can be countered in different ways. In other words: why we stereotype influences how we use, and can counteract the use of, stereotypes.

On March 14, 2008 **Daniel Fockenberg** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Between Good and Evil: Affective Priming in Dynamic Context" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

prof.dr. G.R. Semin

Summary

The dissertation investigated evaluative processing in dynamic environments. Previous research suggests that people can respond easier to positive or negative stimuli (i.e. target), if it is preceded by another stimulus (i.e. "prime") of the same rather than opposite valence. This "affective priming" effect is short-lasting and depends on a number of conditions. Consequently, the question arises whether and if how primes influence target processing in more complex and dynamic situations, whereby primes can also occur after targets, as well as in the context of other relevant and irrelevant primes, close or removed from the targets. A first series of studies in this dissertation provided evidence that primes can still influence target processing, if they occur short after target presentation (i.e. backward priming). Subsequent research investigated the joint influence between primes that occur before and after the target, across different short time intervals and target processing aims. The results suggest that relevant primes that occur shortly before and after the target have an additive influence on target processing. Irrelevant primes only influenced target processing if they contained very salient information. Furthermore, relevant primes that occurred somewhat earlier in time displayed reversed effects on target processing, in particular if the target was rendered ambivalent by close and incongruent information. Together, the present dissertation provides evidence that people extract meaning from their environment through quick and automatic integration of relevant information and through flexible correction for irrelevant information.

On March 27, 2008 **Lidewij Niezink** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Considering Others in Need, On Altruism, Empathy and Perspective Taking" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. B.P. Buunk (RuG)

Co-promotor

dr. F.W. Siero (RuG)

Summary

In the social psychological literature, empathy is seen as an emotional response which invokes the altruistic motivation to help others. One cognitive tool to increase the experience of empathy is perspective taking. The current dissertation investigates how different perspectives on the suffering of others, in combination with individual differences and situational variations, lead to empathy and the willingness to help those others. It also explores how empathy has been measured within psychology in the past five decades. On the basis of new data, a more optimal measurement of the construct is proposed, by dividing the original measure into two new scales: a sympathy and a tenderheartedness scale. These concepts are subsequently distinguished from related concepts such as emotional contagion, personal distress and compassion. Finally, a new model is proposed in which altruistic behaviour is a consequence of several choices one can make while perceiving the suffering of others.

April

On April 17, 2008 **Aad Oosterhof** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Better together: Antecedents and consequences of perceived expertise dissimilarity and perceived expertise complementarity in teams" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

prof.dr. G. van der Vegt

prof.dr. E. van de Vliert

prof.dr. K. Sanders

Summary

Organizations increasingly rely on teams composed of a diverse set of people. Examples include multidisciplinary teams, project teams, and research & development teams. Organizational managers implement these teams with the implicit premise that effectiveness can be enhanced when members combine and employ their differences. However, practice reveals that team members often prove ineffective at capitalizing on the potential benefits of their differences.

Aad Oosterhof examined why some team members cooperate effectively, whereas others experience cooperation problems. Results suggest that the effectiveness of work relations depends on how team members perceive their differences with other team members. To the extent that team members perceive that other team members have dissimilar complementary expertise, teams perform better. Team members experience more complementarity in expertise to the extent that they have more work experience and when another team member has a different type of expertise and a similar level of expertise.

On April 18, 2008 **Femke ten Velden** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Negotiation in dyads and groups: The effects of social and epistemic motives" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

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

Co-promotor

dr. B. Beersma

Summary

In many of our interactions with other people we implicitly or explicitly negotiate: We try to reach agreement about our perceived divergence of interests. To reach a high quality agreement, negotiators need to gain insight into the negotiation problem at hand, and make sense of this complex and difficult situation. This dissertation focuses on two important relevant motivations: Social and epistemic motivation. Results reported in this dissertation reveal that although social motivation plays an important role in group negotiation, behavior and outcomes are not determined merely by the number of pro-social or pro-self negotiators in a group, but by their relative positions and the decision rule that is employed. When majority rule applies, those that hold a majority position with regards to their preferences are relatively empowered, whereas the minority is empowered when using unanimity rule. In a further set of studies, it was revealed that research on social motivation has been too restricted to the distinction between pro-social and pro-self motivation, and different motivations need to be taken into account. For example, research reported in this dissertation revealed that competitive motivation can be disentangled into two different underlying processes, so-called appetitive competitive motivation (a motivation to come out ahead) and aversive competitive motivation (a motivation not to lose), and these different underlying motives have different effects in negotiation. Those with an appetitive competitive motivation are more inclined to overestimate their chances of success, whereas aversive competitors experience more anxiety, and are therefore more inclined to end in impasse. Finally, this dissertation revealed that negotiators can obtain high individual and collective joint outcomes, when at least one negotiator has high epistemic motivation, and is thus motivated to exchange and process information thoroughly.

On April 28, 2008 **Maike Wehrens** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "How did YOU do? Social comparison in secondary education" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

prof.dr. B.P. Buunk

prof.dr. D.A. Stapel

Summary

The value that is attached to academic performance by Western society, and also many non-Western societies, leads most students to be concerned with their school performance, and evokes a need for evaluating how they are doing at school. One way to obtain this evaluative information is by comparing one's own performance with that of peers, i.e. by engaging in social comparison. The central question of this dissertation was whether social comparison influenced children's academic performance at high school. The focus was on the social comparison components comparison choice, i.e. choice of a comparison target, and comparative evaluation, i.e. how students feel they are doing at school compared to their classmates. The studies were part of a large-scale longitudinal cohort study that was carried out among Dutch students from all different tracks in secondary education.

The first of the main findings was that, after controlling for earlier performance, the more upward students compared and the more favorable their comparative evaluation was, the higher students' own performances were two years later. In addition, the positive effect of comparison choice only applied to students with a favorable comparative evaluation. Second, three types of responses to social comparison were distinguished: empathic, constructive, and destructive. These responses appeared to be (indirectly) related to students' academic performance. In particular, the destructive thinking seemed to matter for academic performance. Third, it was found that on average students lowered their comparison level after only a weak manipulation of imagining a failure on a test as compared to imagining a success on a test. Nevertheless, comparison levels after failure were still relatively high. Lastly, illusory superiority was associated with lower dropout rates and with better progress through high school over a period of three to six years. On the contrary, illusory inferiority was associated with higher dropout rates and with worse progress through high school.

The results of this dissertation are theoretically valuable and provide insight in the situation in school classes. Despite the small effect sizes the results show that the comparison of school grades is not necessarily detrimental and that it may even have positive consequences for school performance.

May

On May 29, 2008 **Kyra Luijters** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Making Diversity Bloom: Coping Effectively with Cultural Differences at Work" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

prof.dr. K.I. van Oudenhoven-van der Zee

Co-promotor

dr. S. Otten

Summary

In this dissertation, I focussed on the processes in organizations that determine both positive as well as negative effects of cultural diversity, i.e. diversity in ethnic backgrounds. Cultural diversity affects employee identification, the degree to which employees feel part of their work groups. This dissertation shows that the more similarity in cultural values employees perceive, the more they identify with their work groups. Obviously, this poses a challenge for diverse work groups, because perceived similarity in cultural values is lower in cultural diverse work groups. Therefore, alternative ways of enhancing identification have been studied. Results show that despite low perceived similarity, employees in cultural diverse work groups identify strongly with their work groups when diversity is appreciated as an advantage for the work group, and differences are openly discussed.

How do cultural minority member employees deal with their team and cultural identities at work? A study among minority member employees indicates that they prefer strong team identity adoption: they prefer to have strong ties to their workgroup. Additionally, results indicate that being different yet belonging to the same workgroup poses a challenge: a preference for a strong team identity in combination with strong cultural maintenance is related to the personality characteristic emotional stability: only minority member employees that feel sure of their grounds prefer this combination.

Lastly, diversity perspectives of team managers were studied. Most managers predominantly stress the importance of a fair and equal treatment of all employees ('Discrimination and Fairness' perspective). However, employees experience more openness towards differences in their workgroup when the manager differentiates between employees of different cultural backgrounds for functional reasons ('Access and Legitimacy' perspective) and wants to learn of cultural differences ('Integration and Learning' perspective). In addition, results indicate that the 'Access and Legitimacy' perspective, but especially the 'Integration and Learning' perspective are more effective for team processes such as communication and creativity, than the 'Discrimination and Fairness' perspective.

June

On June 17, 2008 **Sezgin Cihangir** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Dark Side of Subtle Discrimination: How targets respond to different forms of discrimination" at Leiden University.

Promotor

prof.dr. N. Ellemers

Co-promotor

dr. M. Barreto

Summary

In this thesis, we investigated the role of several individual and social factors (i.e., personal self-esteem, social norms and social influence) that directly affect how people deal with uncertainty, in reaction to blatant versus subtle discrimination. While responses to blatant discrimination were not affected by any of these factors, these factors determined to a significant degree responses to subtle discrimination.

The main idea throughout the thesis is that blatant discrimination involves a clear rejection situation. Because of this clarity, the factors that are addressed in this dissertation are not expected to determine responses to this type of unfair group-based treatment. However, when situational cues fail to indicate the cause of the negative outcome such as in case of subtle discrimination, targets are more dependent on their level of self-esteem, the tolerance of social norms, and the opinion of others regarding the discriminatory treatment.

The thesis provides us with insightful information about responses to multi-interpretable rejection situations where people are unsure about whether the negative treatment is due to their individual qualities or due to the prejudice the other holds about their social group. Furthermore, the thesis clarifies why group-based rejection can sometimes have negative and at other times have positive consequences by comparing responses of the targets to blatant and subtle discrimination.

On June 23, 2008 **Giel Dik** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "On the contagiousness of others' goals: The role of perceiving effort" at Utrecht University.

Promotors

prof.dr. H. Aarts

prof.dr. K. van den Bos

Summary

This dissertation examines goal contagion: The phenomenon that people unconsciously copy social goals that they perceive in another's behavior. Specifically, it is investigated whether goal contagion is moderated by one particular situational feature, which is the behavioral effort that we observe in an agent's behavior. As the amount of effort that an agent invests reveals the strength of her motivation, and hence the value of the pursued goal, it is predicted that goals that are pursued with high effort behavior are more contagious than low effort behavior goals. In a total of nine experiments the influence that perceiving effort has on the occurrence of goal contagion via different underlying cognitive processes is demonstrated. First, it is shown that the goal that an agent tries to attain is more readily observed (spontaneously inferred) when the agent does so in a more effortful manner. Because of this, the goal is also more adopted by the observers. Second, it is demonstrated that people are more likely to infer a goal from effortful behavior because they become more motivated to find out to what end the effortful behavior is aimed (versus medium or low effort behavior). That is, people are more eager to know what an agent wants to attain when the latter invests more effort. Third, even when an agent's goal is already known to observers, the mere effort that the agent invests to reach the goal is sufficient to make the goal more desirable to observers, and leads to more motivated behavior to attain the goal themselves. In other words, observers are more eager to attain a goal when they see that someone else tries hard (versus not hard) to reach it. The results above are clarified with a framework that utilizes the concepts of accessibility and desirability as key social-cognitive components to explain goal contagion. The role of perceiving effort on these different components is revealed and discussed. In addition, the human tendency to anthropomorphize is incorporated in the implications of the studies, as most of the experiments use non-living geometrical objects to convey 'behavior'.

On June 27, 2008 **Iloa de Hooge** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Moral emotions in decision making: Towards a better understanding of shame and guilt" at Tilburg University.

Promotor

prof.dr. M. Zeelenberg

Co-promotor

dr. S.M. Breugelmans

Summary

Emotions play a large role in daily life. They influence what we think, how we act, and what decisions we make. One important area in which emotions might play a role is social behavior. Many scholars have often wondered why people act prosocially and cooperate in daily life. This dissertation tries to shed light on why and when people act prosocially by focusing on two very interpersonal emotions: shame and guilt.

There are many theories about what shame and guilt are and when they arise, but it is unclear how these emotions influence behavior. According to moral emotions theories, shame and guilt act as commitment devices, stimulating prosocial behavior and committing people to options that are best for society and themselves in the long run. In emotion research, shame is perceived as an ugly emotion with negative influences on behavior such as social avoidance, withdrawal and rejection. Guilt is perceived as a negative feeling with positive behavioral consequences, motivating apologies and amending behavior.

In summary, different theories offer different predictions about what behaviors shame and guilt motivate. Unfortunately, empirical research can not provide an answer. The few studies on consequences of shame and guilt have provided contrasting results, and there are almost no studies that have measured actual behavior following from shame or guilt. The aim of this dissertation is to fill this gap and empirically study what behaviors shame and guilt motivate. In four empirical chapters, the dissertation shows that the effects of shame and guilt can only be understood when specific elements of the emotion and the situational relevance are taken into account. When taking a closer look at shame, it appears that this emotion gives rise to negative thoughts about the self and about what others would think about the self. As a consequence, the goal of shame is to deal with a threatened self. The dissertation shows that shame first motivates approach behaviors such as prosocial behavior to restore the self, and when this is not possible or too risky, it motivates avoidance behaviors to protect the self. Guilt revolves around a threatened relationship and activates a goal to improve the hurt relationship. The dissertation reveals that guilt motivates prosocial behavior towards the victim of the transgression, but at the expense of third others present and not at the expense of oneself.

September

On September 19, 2008 **Lonneke de Meijer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Ethnicity effects in police officer selection: Applicant, assessor, and selection-method factors" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. H. van der Molen

Co-promotor

Prof.dr. M.Ph. Born

Summary

The research reported in De Meijer's dissertation has highlighted several issues. One important issue is language as Dutch language-proficiency of applicants explained a substantial part of the score differences between the ethnic majority group and ethnic minority groups. Interestingly, assessor-applicant (dis)similarity did not differentially affect evaluations of ethnically diverse applicants. This finding alleviates concerns that discrimination of ethnic minority groups due to (dis)similarity may occur during personnel selection. However, a difference was found in the decision-making process of ethnic majority assessors judging ethnic minority applicants compared to ethnic majority applicants. This finding indicates that assessors are, in some way, affected by the ethnicity of applicants. Gaining experience in assessing ethnic minority applicants, exchanging knowledge about assessment in a multi-cultural setting among assessors, or perhaps further standardizing the selection process should diminish differential effects. Furthermore, selection measures, both cognitive and non-cognitive, appear to differentially predict training performance of ethnic majority and minority trainees. A possible explanation of this differential effect may lay in the subjective evaluations of supervisors during training. Finally, scores on a newly developed situational judgment test (SJT) turned out to show substantially smaller ethnic group differences than generally are found on the cognitive ability test. These findings yield practical guidelines for personnel selection in a multi-cultural setting, such as further standardization of the decision-making process to hire or reject applicants and diminishing the influence of language skills of applicants by means of SJTs. More research is needed to further improve our understanding of personnel selection, specifically, and job opportunities, in general, in a multi-cultural setting.

October

On October 1, 2008 **Sjoerd Pennekamp** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Dynamics of disadvantage: Uncovering the role of group-based anger" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A.H. Fischer, UvA

Co-promotors

Dr. B. Doosje, UvA

Dr. S. Zebel, UvA

Summary

In this dissertation we explain how members of disadvantaged groups come to experience emotions about the position of their group in society, in particular anger. In the first two studies we investigate the antecedents and consequences of group-based anger for historical and current disadvantages. We show that for both appraisals of outgroup blame are important in explaining the experience of anger. This anger results in action tendencies consisting of demanding reparation for the disadvantages through protest. Having shown how anger arises and what it leads to, in the following studies we focus on how intergroup communication affects this emotion. In particular we demonstrate that for members of disadvantaged minorities the group membership of a source is an important predictor of the reactions to a message. Whereas ingroup members are allowed to voice opinions in which they argue for the suppression of the minority identity, members of an outgroup give rise to anger when they want to restrict the freedom of expression by members of the minority. The last studies show that opinions of ingroup members are not always received more positive than outgroup opinions. Here we show that ingroup members who emphasize the lower status of their group, give rise to anger. Outgroup members on the other hand give rise to anger when they discount the low status. If sources give rise to anger this leads to a willingness to change the opinion of the source. This shows that anger can motivate members of disadvantaged groups to conquer the status quo.

On October 2, 2008 **Lindred Greer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Team Composition and Conflict: The Role of Individual Differences" at Leiden University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. K.A. Jehn, UL

Summary

Within teams, individual members may have very different cognitions and behaviors. In my dissertation, I look at the implications of this for research on group composition and conflict. I identify reasons why individual cognitions relating to group composition and diversity may differ, such as the individual's position in a team. I investigate the repercussions of these cognitive differences related to diversity and group composition for team and individual performance. I also investigate how individuals in teams may have different cognitions and behaviors relating to intragroup conflict. I examine the factors that could lead some individuals to be more likely than other individuals in the same team to engage in intrateam conflict, and I also investigate the consequences of differences in individual conflict engagement within a team for team and individual performance. In understanding individual differences in cognitions and behaviors within the same team, my dissertation proposes and finds that understudied forms of group composition, such as status and power differences, may be key explanatory factors. For example, I propose and find that an individual's position in a status hierarchy within the team may affect the individual's perceptions and behaviors, and ultimately performance, within the team. In my dissertation, I employ multiple methods, including field studies (a quasi-experiment, surveys, interviews, and qualitative observation), laboratory studies, and archival studies.

On October 17, 2008 **Lotte van Dillen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Dealing with negative feelings: The role of working memory in emotion regulation" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. G.R. Semin, UU

Co-promotors

Dr. S.L. Koole, VU

Dr. D.J. Heslenveld, VU

Summary

Though negative emotions are often adaptive, they can occupy people's thoughts unwantedly and thereby undermine personal well-being. It is therefore important to look for ways in which people can shield themselves against the disruptive power of negative emotions. The present dissertation examined how processing of negative emotional information may depend on the availability of working memory resources. The central hypothesis under investigation is that the more working memory is being used by a distracting activity, the less room may remain for negative emotions to persist. In line with this idea, taxing working memory was found to moderate the impact of negative emotional stimuli on negative feelings (Chapter 2 and 3), circuits within the emotional brain (Chapter 3), and attentional interference of negative information (Chapter 4). Taken together, the present dissertation demonstrates how the strategic allocation of working memory resources may allow people to regulate their negative emotional responses in accord with ongoing task demands and goal-directed activities.

On October 24, 2008 **Chris Reinders Folmer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Cooperation and communication: Plastic goals and social roles" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. P.A.M. van Lange, VU

Co-promotor

Dr. M. Gallucci, Un. Milano-Bicocca

Summary

One of the cornerstones of humanity's success has been our unrivalled ability to cooperate. Its fruits are all around us: from massive physical manifestations like the pyramids, to the less tangible, but even more immense pool of collective knowledge which makes up our culture. The ability to cooperate enables us to achieve goals that are impossible to achieve on our own. But despite these great collective successes, the question why people actually cooperate is far from straightforward: paradoxically, people in fact are often better off if they choose not to cooperate. For example, it may be more attractive to let our partner do all the dishes, or to let others pay for public goods like health care. How is it possible then that cooperation nevertheless is so widespread?

In this dissertation, we reveal that people's decisions to cooperate or not may depend strongly on the context in which they make these decisions. On the one hand, our research reveals that how people perceive and experience their interactions is tied strongly to their interpersonal orientations – the way in which they value the outcomes of themselves in relation to those of others. For example, some people perceive their decisions particularly in terms of their self-interest, while others may do so in terms of the collective interest. Our research reveals that this has strong implications for their decisions, and for how they see the actions of others. On the other hand, however, the present dissertation reveals that such orientations may be less stable than thought previously, and may depend strongly on the context in which people interact. If people make a decision when fulfilling a different social role, they may have a different construal of the situation, may value different outcomes, and may have a different perception of what others say and do. The present dissertation in particular reveals that when people interact as representatives – individuals whose actions have consequences for others outside of the interaction – they adopt a much more competitive mindset, which leads them to make more competitive decisions, to have more competitive expectations of others, and to have a perception of others' communications and actions that is biased toward distrust. As such, the present dissertation reveals that people's goals may be quite plastic, and that their decisions and experience of their interactions may depend strongly on their social roles. However, our research also reveals that much may be gained by taking the "mindset" and roles of others into account: by doing so, they can more effectively persuade others to cooperate, to the benefit of all.

November

On November 13, 2008 **Marijn Poortvliet** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Information exchange examined: An interpersonal account of achievement goals" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. O. Janssen, RuG

Prof.dr. N.W. van Yperen, RuG

Prof.dr. E. van de Vliert, RuG

Summary

In this dissertation the effect of achievement goals on information exchange is examined. Achievement goals are goals that people pursue in achievement situations. A distinction is made between mastery goals, the goal to improve oneself, and performance goals, the goal to outperform others. It turned out that mastery goals lead to more openness when individuals give task-related information to others, compared to performance goals. This could be explained by the fact that, relative to people with performance goals, individuals with mastery goals have a stronger desire to provide good information to others in order to receive good information back. This also showed when individuals with mastery goals learned to have a poor performance. In that case they first invested in their task performance before they shared information with others.

Another aspect of information exchange, the utilization of information from others, was also investigated. The outcomes showed that, relative to mastery goals, performance goals led to more utilization of high-quality information, and less utilization of poor-quality information. Finally, results showed that people with mastery goals had stronger intentions to collaborate with, and showed less harmful behavior to an other, when they and the other scored worse on a task. For performance goals the intention to collaborate was weaker when they and the other scored very good or very bad, compared to an intermediate performance. This negative influence of performance goals relative to mastery goals was limited to low performance situations.