

PhD theses defended in 2013

January

On January 17, 2013 **Karin Menninga** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Exploring Learning Abstinence Theory: A new theoretical perspective on continued abstinence in smoking cessation" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A. Dijkstra (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. W.A Gebhardt (University of Groningen)

Summary

Tobacco smoking kills millions of smokers each year. Smoking cessation is one solution for this problem. Although many smokers try to quit smoking, most quitters relapse back to smoking. In the past 25 years little progress has been made with regard to the practice of relapse prevention, although some new theoretical perspectives were developed and applied. Therefore, new directions are needed to inspire research on relapse and the practice of relapse prevention. In this thesis, the Learning Abstinence Theory (LAT) is formulated to that purpose, and empirical data are gathered to test some basic assumptions of this theory.

In the LAT, learning about abstinence is central. Firstly, quitters learn in learning situations (situations in which they used to smoke in the past), about smoking, about their ability to quit, and about not smoking. What they learn in these situations depends on the information they attend to and how they interpret the information; this depends on their situational state of mind. Secondly, quitters learn about their progress towards the desired end-goal of continued abstinence. They need and generate progress feedback to find out whether they are on the right track, that is, whether spending effort will pay off. In addition, quitters construct their own progress feedback in the form of temporal comparisons. These two main aspects of the LAT - states of mind and progress feedback - are the focus of this thesis. In the empirical Chapters 2, 3 and 4, the notion that the state of mind influences interpretations and learning is addressed. In empirical Chapters 2 and 5, feedback about progress, partly as self-constructed temporal comparisons, is studied.

On January 17, 2013 **Claire Marie Zedelius** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Investigating Consciousness in Reward Pursuit" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof. dr. H. Aarts (Utrecht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. H. Veling (Utrecht University)

Summary

The question of how human performance can be improved through rewards is a recurrent topic of interest in psychology. Traditional approaches to this question have usually studied the effects of consciously communicated rewards, and in that have focused mainly on conscious processes such as deliberate decision making and conscious reflection. Recently, however, following the discovery that a large part of human behavior unfolds unconsciously, researchers have proposed that conscious awareness and reflection may be entirely unnecessary or ineffective human reward pursuit. The present dissertation investigated this idea by systematically comparing the effects consciously perceived rewards with the effects of rewards that perceived outside of conscious awareness. A series of Experiments revealed both similarities and striking differences in the way consciously and unconsciously perceived rewards impact processes such as decision making, task preparation, or task execution. The results can be broadly summarized to yield two main conclusions. First, in relatively simple contexts, both consciously and unconsciously perceived rewards can improve performance by influencing people's decisions to invest effort in a task and by increasing people's preparedness to perform a task well. Secondly, unconscious reward processing appears to be rather limited when it comes to improving performance strategically and efficiently in more complex contexts, such as for instance when rewards are unattainable or can be attained only through future performance, or when valuable and personally rewarding stimuli turn out not to be rewards at all. In such contexts, conscious awareness and reflection appear to elicit unique processes that play an important role in providing flexible control over behavior. These findings have interesting practical implications, as they point to new ways to improve human performance through rewards. The findings also have broader theoretical implications concerning the much-debated role of consciousness in modulating goal-directed human behavior more generally.

On January 25, 2013 **Saar Mollen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Fitting in or Breaking Free? On Health Behavior, Social Norms and Conformity" at Maastricht University.

Promotors

Prof. dr. R.A.C. Ruiter (Maastricht University)

Prof. dr. G. Kok (Maastricht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. R.N. Rimal (Johns Hopkins University)

Summary

In prevention practice, there is an understandable, yet mistaken, tendency to try to encourage action against a health problem by depicting the unhealthy behavior as regrettably frequent, such as: "Nine out of ten people eat less than the recommended two hundred grams of vegetables and two pieces of fruit a day". Scientific findings, mainly stemming from the field of environmental concern, provide evidence for the assumption that when unhealthy behavior is highly prevalent, descriptive norms (i.e. what most people do) should not be conveyed in health promotion campaigns. In such cases, injunctive norm messages, conveying what most people approve or disapprove of, might offer an alternative and promising approach to promote health behavior change. The main objective within this thesis was therefore to examine the proposition that messages stressing that a majority acts in an unhealthy way can negatively affect health behavior and that when the majority engages in unhealthy behavior, it is more advantageous to communicate what people should do (i.e., injunctive norm), rather than what they actually do (i.e., descriptive norm).

In Chapter 2 through 4 the potentially adverse effects of unhealthy descriptive norm messages on health motivation and behavior (i.e., diet, exercise, alcohol) were investigated. Moreover, we examined if injunctive norm messages could provide an effective alternative to descriptive norm messages in cases where a majority acts unhealthy (Ch. 3-4). Results indicate that negative descriptive norms can indeed negatively affect health motivation and behavior. However, findings also show that people do not always follow an unhealthy majority and are at times able to resist unhealthy influences in their social environment. With regard to injunctive norms that describe that most people think one should act healthy we found that they can indeed encourage healthy behavior. In Chapter 5 we examined how messages that communicate normative information should be formulated and found that injunctive and descriptive norm messages should be differentially framed to affect people's motivation to act healthily. Implications of these findings for theory as well as practice are discussed.

On January 25, 2013 **Anouk van der Weiden** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "When You Think You Know What You're Doing: Experiencing Self-Agency Over Intended and Unintended Outcomes" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. H. Aarts (Utrecht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. K.I. Ruys (Utrecht University)

Summary

As social beings, people often find themselves in situations where the cause of events is ambiguous. One may experience having caused ones friends to laugh by telling a funny story, while their laughter may as well be caused by a person with a strange haircut who just walked by. Hence, the experience of being the cause of one's own actions and resulting outcomes, also referred to as the experience of self-agency, is not a straightforward affair. This raises the question how experiences of self-agency arise in such social, ambiguous contexts. Previous research has shown that experiences of self-agency arise when action-outcomes match ones goals, but also when they match pre-activated (i.e., primed) outcome representations. Yet, how outcome priming affects self-agency experiences is still little understood.

To shed more light on how outcome priming affects experienced self-agency, the present dissertation examined two key assumptions associated with goal effects on self-agency. That is, it is tested whether knowledge regarding the causal relation between actions and outcomes, and a focus on outcomes (rather than actions), is required for outcome priming to affect experienced self-agency. Furthermore, the present dissertation deals with whether and how experiences of self-agency resulting from outcome primes differ from experiences of self-agency resulting from goals. Since goals evoke unique control processes dealing with monitoring and feedback processing of achieving the specific desired outcome, processes that may be especially relevant when outcomes mismatch one's goals, the effect of goals and primes on mismatching outcomes was directly compared.

The present dissertation revealed that outcome priming effects on experienced self-agency only occur as long as one has not learned that one's actions and subsequent outcomes are not causally related. Furthermore, outcome priming effects are most pronounced when one is focused on the outcome of one's action. Note that these conditions resemble the conditions in case of goal pursuit where one has to know which actions are instrumental in attaining one's goal, and where one is likely to represent one's behavior in terms of its outcomes. Yet, this does not imply that outcome primes affect self-agency experiences through the same mechanism as goals do. Indeed, goals and primes diverge in their effect on experienced self-agency over mismatching outcomes, suggesting that there are two qualitatively different routes to experienced self-agency. These findings have important implications for current models on how experiences of self-agency arise and for processes associated with goal-achievement, such as emotion and motivation.

On January 25, 2013 **Annemarie Hiemstra** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Fairness in Paper and Video Resume Screening" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. M.Ph. Born (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. E. Derous (Ghent University, Belgium)

Summary

Recent technological developments have resulted in the introduction of a new type of resume, the video resume, which can be described as a video message in which applicants present themselves to potential employers. Research is struggling to keep pace with the speed with which these kind of new, internet-based technologies are adopted by organizations and applicants. Issues that need to be taken into account when introducing new technology in high-stakes selection include, among other things, their acceptability (i.e., perceived fairness) and possible unintended discriminatory effects (i.e., negative selection results for subgroups). In an attempt to fill this void, the fairness of paper and video resume screening is studied in four empirical studies presented in this dissertation. In doing so it aims to shed light on the existing differential job access between ethnic minority and majority job applicants, as well as to add to our understanding of the use of video resumes as a technological innovation in personnel selection. The studies presented in this dissertation focus on perceptions of fairness (Chapter 3, 4 and 5) and factors related to differential selection outcomes for ethnic minority and majority applicants in paper and video resume screening (Chapter 2 and 5). In the introductory chapter, a description is first provided of paper and video resume screening in personnel selection. Subsequently an overview is given of the labor market position of ethnic minorities in Western countries. Lastly, the main research aims of this dissertation are provided, resulting in the formulation of specific research questions.

On January 29, 2013 **Gert-Jan Lelieveld** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Emotions in negotiations: The role of communicated anger and disappointment" at Leiden University.

Promotors

Prof.dr. E. van Dijk (Leiden University)

Prof.dr. I. van Beest (Tilburg University)

Co-promotor

Prof.dr. G.A. van Kleef (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

This dissertation aims to compare the interpersonal effects of different negative emotions in negotiations, by focusing on two of the most often communicated and experienced emotions in negotiations: anger and disappointment. Anger and disappointment are both emotions that are reactions to undesirable behavior of others. However, when taking a closer look, both emotions are very different in terms of their effects on others. In this dissertation it is shown that both emotions have distinct effects on opponents in negotiations and that anger and disappointment have different underlying mechanisms. Not only are the effects on the behavior of others examined, but also the underlying neural mechanisms of the communication of both emotions.

The results of four empirical chapters show that anger is an emotion that communicates power. Opponents in negotiations give in to angry negotiators to avoid negative consequences such as impasse. When opponents do not have to care about these negative consequences (when anger is communicated by a low-power bargainer, see Chapter 2 and 3) or when the information about the high limits is not communicated in the right way (when it is directed at the person instead of at the offer, see Chapter 4), the communication of anger backfires. Disappointment, on the other hand, is an emotion that communicates weakness. Opponents give in when this communicated weakness evokes guilt (see Chapter 2, 4, and 5), but when it does not evoke guilt, communicating disappointment backfires (see Chapter 5). In addition to these important differences, the results of Chapter 3 also show that, compared to disappointment, expressions of anger increase activation in brain regions of opponents associated with self-referential thinking. This suggests that the communication of anger, more so than the communication of disappointment, evokes a concern for the self in opponents. This dissertation thus not only shows that the interpersonal effects of anger and disappointment differ, but also what their underlying mechanisms are and what the different consequences are for behavior. By taking a close look at how these two emotions affect others' behavior and underlying neural mechanisms, this dissertation provides a more in-depth view of the social functions of negative emotions.

February

On February 27, 2013 **Marieke Roskes** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Motivated creativity: A conservation of energy approach" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. C.K.W. de Dreu (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Prof.dr. B.A. Nijstad (University of Groningen)

Summary

Does striving for success lead to better performance than striving to avoid failure? How does working under pressure influence people striving for these different types of goals? Is goal-striving more difficult when striving to avoid negative outcomes than when striving for positive outcomes? This dissertation addresses these and related questions, and advocates a novel conservation of energy principle to explain when striving for positive outcomes (approach motivation) and striving to avoid negative outcomes (avoidance motivation) stimulate performance.

The conservation of energy principle (presented in Chapter 2) is based on the idea that people are reluctant to invest energy, unless the benefits of this investment outweigh the costs. Further, when people do decide to invest energy and exert effort, this leads to depletion. Based on this principle, I predict that performance under avoidance motivation is fragile and can be easily undermined, because performance under avoidance motivation relies heavily on the recruitment of cognitive resources and cognitive control. Or, as put by Johan Cruijff; "Het is veel makkelijker om goed te spelen dan om te voorkomen dat je slecht speelt" (It is much easier to play well than to prevent playing badly).

Chapter 3 demonstrates that approach motivation evokes a flexible way of thinking, whereas avoidance motivation evokes a systematic way of thinking. The results show that avoidance motivated people can be as creative as approach motivated people, but that this is more difficult and depleting for them. Therefore, avoidance motivated people only invest in creativity when creative performance helps them to reach their goals. Chapter 4 demonstrates that working under a high time pressure undermines performance more under avoidance rather than approach motivation. Chapter 5 shows that the same products are evaluated as less creative when people think they resulted from a systematic process rather than a flexible process.

It appears that Johan Cruijff was onto something when he noted that it is much easier to play well than to prevent playing badly. Although avoidance motivation may be effective in short-term projects, it may be counterproductive in the long run, when energy gets depleted and people feel exhausted. Even in the short run negative effects of avoidance goal striving may emerge, because it makes people prone to cognitive overload when facing distracters or stressors. This dissertation shows that performance under avoidance motivation can be effective, but is difficult, depleting, and easily undermined.

On February 28, 2013 **Frank de Wit** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The paradox of intragroup conflict" at Leiden University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. K.A. Jehn (Melbourne Business School, University of Melbourne)

Co-promotor

Dr. D.T. Scheepers (Leiden University)

Summary

During group decision making, people often experience disagreements in which they need to choose between their own viewpoint and the viewpoint of another group member. Jury members, for example, may disagree about whether the accused are guilty or innocent, cabinet members may disagree about the best decision to tackle a crisis, and members of top management teams may disagree about where they want to invest. These intragroup conflicts often pose a paradox for groups. That is, on the one hand, a conflict may use up precious time, evoke frustration, and reduce group members' motivation to work for the group. Yet, on the other hand, a conflict may challenge group members' to more critically evaluate their initial viewpoints which, in the end, may result in more well-informed and superior decisions. In this dissertation I address this "paradox of intragroup conflict" by means of a meta-analysis of past intragroup conflict research and six experiments that examine when conflicts are most likely to help or hinder group decision-making. The findings show that although two types of conflict (i.e., relationship and process conflict) have a strong tendency to hurt group outcomes, a third type of conflict (i.e., task conflict) has the potential to help group outcomes. Yet, whether a group can indeed benefit from a task conflict strongly depends on contextual factors (e.g., the presence vs. absence of a relationship conflict) and individual-level factors (e.g., cardiovascular reactions to conflict). Together, these findings contribute to solving the paradox of intragroup conflict and offer new insights that groups can use to guard against the potential dangers of intragroup conflict, as well as to reap the benefits from it. Moreover, the findings highlight the usefulness of a psychophysiological approach to intragroup conflict, for example, to better understand why people sometimes show such a strong tendency to hold on to their own opinion during conflicts.

March

On March 8, 2013 **Evert A. (Evert-Jan) van Doorn** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Emotion Affords Social Influence: Responding to Others' Emotions In Context" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. G.A. van Kleef (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Prof.dr. J. van der Pligt (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

Building on a growing body of empirical evidence concerning social effects of emotions, the four chapters in this dissertation flesh out a social constructionist approach to such effects. The first chapter provides a test of the idea that we ‘reverse engineer’ the circumstances which must have led to the emotions of others. I show that inferences which are based solely on the knowledge that someone is experiencing anger or regret lead observers to draw agency-related inferences that correspond to the appraisals commonly associated with the intrapersonal experience of these emotions. In chapter two, I build on these findings by demonstrating that the impact of emotions on inferential processes are not merely limited to personality traits as previous research would suggest. Specifically, I show that emotions may also provide information about situations by virtue of the (appraisal-based) social signals they convey; participants who read a vignette which contains expressions of happiness or disappointment rate the described situation as more cooperative than participants who read about anger being expressed. In chapter three, I show that such effects are persistent – they can influence not only appraisals but also compliance with requests of which they are part, and do so above and beyond descriptive norms to behave in line with a majority. Anger decreases its perceivers’ compliance, whereas disappointment increases it. In the first three chapters, anger seems to have only disadvantages. In the fourth chapter, however, we study the effects it has on student learning, when expressed in task instructions. Here, anger leads to improved performance on a learning task that takes place after participants have spent a week memorizing the material, compared to when happiness is expressed. A second experiment shows this effect to be moderated by regulatory focus, so that only students who are using strategies focused on goal attainment, rather than error prevention, improve their performance. Taken together, these experiments thus suggest that in order to predict the effects of an expression of emotion on perceivers’ subsequent behavioral responses, we would do well to understand both the cognitive structure which underlies our understanding of the emotion, and structural aspects of the situation in which the emotion is expressed.

On March 19, 2013 **Iris Schneider** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The dynamics of ambivalence: Cognitive, affective and physical consequences of evaluative conflict" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. Joop van der Pligt, University of Amsterdam

Co-promotors

Dr. Frenk van Harreveld, University of Amsterdam

Dr. Mark Rotteveel, University of Amsterdam

Summary

In life, things are not always black or white. Quite often, they are both. A hamburger, for instance can, at the same time elicit positive evaluations pertaining to its tastiness, and negative evaluations pertaining to its unhealthy characteristics. This simultaneous occurrence of both positive and negative evaluations about the same topic constitutes ambivalence. This dissertation investigates cognitive, affective and physical consequences of ambivalence.

The first aspect under investigation concerns the cognitive dynamics that underlie evaluative conflict. Many scholars have speculated that ambivalence activates both positive and negative evaluations and that these evaluations are in conflict with each other until the system settles into equilibrium. To date, however, this idea was not tested empirically. This dissertation has provided empirical evidence that indeed, both positive and negative evaluations are activated simultaneously when people have to evaluate an ambivalent topic.

The second fundamental aspect of ambivalence concerns its association with negative feelings. Ambivalence is an inherent inconsistency (i.e. it associated with opposing evaluations). Because people in general prefer consistencies, ambivalence has been presumed to elicit negative feelings. However, previous research on ambivalence and negative feelings provided mixed results, i.e. people do not feel bad about being ambivalent all the time. Instead, it appears that under certain conditions ambivalence feels bad. We investigated one of these conditions, namely conflict salience. Conflict salience refers to the degree to which people are aware that they are experiencing ambivalence. We found that when people know that they are conflicted, they experience negative feelings as a result of their ambivalence. However, when they do not think about how conflicted they are, ambivalence does not cause negative feelings.

The final aspect of ambivalence investigated concerns the physical level. Mirroring the way people often talk about their experience of ambivalence (i.e. "wavering between opinions"), our work reveals that people literally move more from side to side when they are ambivalent. In fact, this association is so strong, that when people move from side while thinking about an ambivalent topic, their experiences of ambivalence are intensified.

Apart from shedding new light on the nature of ambivalence, this work also offers new methods of measuring ambivalence by introducing online measures of activation and conflict and measures of body movement to assess degrees of ambivalence. As such, this dissertation adds to our understanding of what it means to experience ambivalence, on a cognitive, affective and physical level.

On March 21, 2013 **Gert Stulp** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Sex, Stature and Status - natural selection on height in contemporary human populations" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. A.P. Buunk (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. S. Verhulst (University of Groningen)

Summary

As an upright walking mammal, height is perhaps our most conspicuous feature. Height is a highly variable trait, both within and between populations, has a high heritability, and influences the manner in which people behave and are treated in society. It is therefore possible that natural selection acts on this variation in height and, in this thesis, I investigated whether this was the case. I first examined sexual selection on height, demonstrating that taller individuals have higher social status and increased dominance, that there are height preferences for potential mating partners, that these preferences influence choice in a speed-dating context, and that height preference and choice influence actual pair formation. Having established a role for height in intra- and inter-sexual selection, I considered other ways in which height contributes to biological fitness, and how this differs between the sexes. I demonstrated that shorter women and women with partners much taller than themselves are at greater risk for a Caesarean section, and therefore face greater mortality risks. I furthermore showed that shorter women have more children than taller women, despite higher child mortality, whereas average height men have more children than both shorter and taller men. Due to these differential selection pressures, shorter families achieve higher reproductive success through the female line, whereas average height families achieve greater reproductive success through the male line. In summary, there is natural selection on height in contemporary human populations.

April

On April 4, 2013 **Jessie Koen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Prepare and Pursue: routes to suitable (re-)employment" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A.E.M. van Vianen, UvA

Co-promotor

Dr. U.C. Klehe, UvA

Summary

There is a widespread consensus in reemployment research and -practice that the best route to finding a job is searching for one. However, searching hard for a job is often not enough in times of economic crisis or for long-term and disadvantaged unemployed people, nor does it necessarily result in better reemployment quality. The aim of this dissertation was therefore to designate the routes to genuine reemployment success. To this purpose, it is proposed in this dissertation that the concept of employability may play an important role in establishing successful reemployment. Additionally, it is proposed that one of the dimensions of employability in particular –adaptability– can serve as a preparatory mechanism that contributes to the quality of reemployment.

By examining each dimension of employability separately among different types of samples with different methods, this dissertation answers if, how and why employability can foster genuine reemployment success. The results of Chapter 2, 3 and 4 show that employability and its dimensions do indeed contribute to both job search and finding reemployment among the long-term unemployed, and that employability can be enhanced through reemployment interventions –as long as these interventions are useful for finding reemployment (Chapter 3) and yield opportunities for constructing a career identity (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 and 6 confirm that preparation in the (re-)employment process by means of career adaptability can influence the way in which people search for jobs and the subsequent quality of (re-)employment.

Together, the findings in this dissertation yield conclusive evidence that employability offers a comprehensive approach to fostering genuine reemployment success. Whether we look at regular job seekers, the long-term unemployed, stigmatized disadvantaged young adults or university graduates, employability and its separate dimensions are crucial. Employability is –by providing both the resources to engage and persist in proper job search methods and to eventually land suitable reemployment– a fruitful route when pursuing genuine reemployment success. Moreover, preparation (i.e., career adaptability) is particularly essential for the quality of (re-)employment. Thus, in the pursuit of suitable (re-)employment, employability and preparation are sensible routes for maximizing the chances on finding a suitable job.

On April 18, 2013 **Jana Niemann** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Feedback Is the Breakfast of Champions, but It Can Be Hard to Digest: A Psychological Perspective on Feedback Seeking and Receiving" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof. dr. N.W. Van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Prof. dr. B.M. Wisse (University of Groningen)

Prof. dr. K. Sassenberg (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. D.C. Rus (University of Groningen)

Summary

This dissertation focuses on reactions to negative feedback and feedback seeking in organizations. Feedback is one of the most essential organizational tools to improve employee performance and to foster employee development. Yet, negative feedback regularly fails to improve performance probably because people often react adversely when they receive negative feedback, that is, they experience negative emotions or they blame the feedback provider for the negative feedback. Moreover, individuals are often reluctant to ask others for feedback. We investigated when and why individuals show such adverse reactions to negative feedback and when and why individuals are reluctant to ask others for feedback. First, our findings indicate that power, distrust, and uncertainty strongly influence how people react to negative feedback and whether they will seek feedback from others. Second, we show that social factors heavily affect individuals' decision to ask for feedback. Specifically, we found that the importance people attach to a positive self-image and to maintaining a positive image in the eyes of others greatly influences their decision to seek feedback.

Thirdly, our findings point to strategies that may help to attenuate adverse reactions to negative feedback. Specifically, we show that a more indirect framing of negative feedback may be an effective strategy to reduce the

May

On May 14, 2013 **Serena Does** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "At the heart of egalitarianism: How morality framing shapes Whites' responses to social inequality" at Leiden University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

Co-promotor

Dr. Belle Derks (Leiden University)

Summary

The central goal of this dissertation was to identify an effective psychological intervention to increase dominant group members' (e.g., Whites) commitment to social equality. I focused on the perspective of dominant group members, because they are potentially valuable allies in the struggle toward more equality as their group often has more power than minority groups. At the same time, dominant group members are more likely than subordinate group members to oppose social change, thereby perpetuating their group's privilege and power. I theorized that if redressing inequality becomes a way for dominant group members to boost their group's moral standing (i.e., as fair and just), resistance to social change among these group members might decrease, thereby increasing opportunities for social change. To test this hypothesis, I examined the effect of morality framing—i.e., presenting social equality as a moral ideal versus a moral obligation—on Whites' responses to social inequality.

The studies in Chapter 2 demonstrate that exposure to the moral ideal (vs. obligation) frame elicits more positive intergroup attitudes among Whites. In Chapter 3 it is established that giving a speech about equality as a moral ideal (rather than as a moral obligation), elicits cardiovascular (CV) reactivity among Whites that is consistent with greater relative challenge, and thus less relative threat. Also, it was found that Whites spoke significantly faster, indicating greater eagerness and less vigilance, when speaking about equality as a moral ideal rather than an obligation. In contrast, the studies in Chapter 4 show that during contact with a Black confederate, prior exposure to the moral ideal (vs. obligation) frame elicits CV reactivity among Whites consistent with greater relative threat. Mediation analyses help explain these paradoxical findings. Namely, it was found that the more positive attitudes toward cultural diversity—elicited by the moral ideal (vs. obligation) frame—induced CV reactivity in Whites that is consistent with greater relative threat during contact with the Black confederate. Heightened threat during intergroup contact may thus indicate the psychological cost of caring.

Taken together, the research in this dissertation—with its multi-method approach and examination of distinct populations (i.e., White employees and students)—further the understanding of the complex interplay between self reported attitudes, physiological responses, and behavior during intergroup contact. As a result, this dissertation can help inform psychological interventions and policy aimed at increasing the commitment to social change among unlikely allies: Those benefiting from the status quo.

June

On June 13, 2013 **Romy van der Lee** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Moral Motivation Within Groups" at Leiden University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

Co-promotor

Dr. Daan Scheepers (Leiden University)

Summary

Morality is of particular importance to people: People want to be considered moral and want to belong to moral groups. Consequently, morality judgments have the potential to motivate individuals to behave in ways that are considered to be 'good'. In the current dissertation, I examined the impact of intragroup morality judgments on group members' motivational responses, and compared those to competence judgments as an alternative domain of evaluation. In three empirical chapters, I investigated the impact of morality (vs. competence) judgments from different perspectives, namely judgments of 1) group member's own prior behavior, 2) another group member's behavior, as well as 3) the behavior of a prospective group member. The central hypothesis was that intragroup morality judgments generally impact more strongly on group members' motivational responses than competence judgments. The results demonstrated that the motivational force of morality largely pertains to immorality. Judgments of immorality elicit a range of motivational responses in group members, such as negative affect, lowered perceived coping abilities, a cardiovascular pattern indicative of threat rather than challenge, and a greater inclination towards social exclusion. In conclusion, morality judgments—generally more so than competence judgments—impact on group members' striving to be a 'good' group member.

July

On July 9, 2013 **Chantal den Daas** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "In the heat of the moment: The effect of impulsive and reflective states on sexual risk decisions" at Utrecht University.

Promotors

Prof.dr. John de Wit (Utrecht University)

Prof.dr. Henk Aarts (Utrecht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. Michael Häfner (Utrecht University)

Summary

Why do people behave in ways that are bad for them in the long term? People are bad at resisting temptations at the expense of their long-term goals, they for instance have unprotected sex despite their long term goal to stay healthy. Impulsivity is often coined as reason for these kinds of behavior. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate why impulsiveness leads to riskier decisions.

We first investigated the intuitively appealing, but unlikely, notion that people in impulsive states are less influenced by their long-term goals. Specifically, we found that sexual risk decisions of people in impulsive and reflective states are equally influenced by the importance of their long-term goals. We further showed that, when health goals are important, people in reflective states make riskier decisions as temptations become stronger, while decisions of people in impulsive states are not influenced by temptation strength. Subsequently, we investigated other possible reasons why impulsiveness leads to riskier decisions, namely difference in attention and perception. Specifically, we hypothesized and established, using eye-tracking, that people in impulsive states focus their attention on the most salient information, whereas people in reflective states distribute their attention. This attentional difference was found to affect sexual attractiveness judgments. Additionally, we found that people in impulsive states estimate the size of goal-relevant objects in biased ways. Specifically, sex-primed heterosexual men estimated a woman's breasts as larger than men primed with a neutral stimulus. When primed with a sex goal, larger cup size, and thus sexual maturity, is goal congruent. Women showed the reverse effect, estimating cup size of a competitor as smaller is goal congruent, because for women another woman is competition, and estimating her cup size as smaller puts themselves in a more positive light (i.e., more sexually mature). That people in impulsive states are influenced by motivation, whereas people in reflective states are not, suggests that biased size estimation is a spontaneous process that promotes readiness for goal pursuit in people in impulsive states.

Lastly, we tested whether changing a 'simple' environmental factor can possibly change the cognitive state people are in and possibly reduce risk taking. Based on widespread notions in our language, we hypothesized that temperature influences risk taking behavior. We found that imagery, such as 'in the heat of the moment', can be taken literally; people make riskier sexual decisions when temperatures are higher than when temperatures are lower.

September

On September 5, 2013 **Kelly D. Cobey** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Female Physiology Meets Psychology: Menstrual Cycle and Contraceptive Pill Effects" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A.P. Buunk (University of Groningen)

Summary

Remarkably, relatively few studies have examined psychological effects associated with use of hormonal contraception (HC). In my thesis I provide evidence which suggests that the use of HC disrupts natural hormonal fluctuation and consequently generates negative psychological consequences for social relationships. Examining how use of HC impacts behaviour in social relationships may contribute to women's ability to make more informed decisions to use HC and potentially may guide the development of new pill formulations. I approached this topic from an evolutionary psychology perspective. This viewpoint provided pertinent theoretical insights into what behavioural changes one might expect to see as a result using HC.

The first part of my thesis focused on the impact of HC on romantic jealousy. In two studies, I found that women report higher levels of jealousy when fertile than when non-fertile. Further, partnered, but not single, women reported significantly higher levels of jealousy when using HC as compared to when regularly cycling. Then, in the penultimate chapter to part one I showed that there is variation in the degree of jealousy expressed among women using HC based on the concentration of synthetic estrogen contained within their HC pill. Namely, women using HC containing higher doses of synthetic estrogen reported higher levels of jealousy. In the final chapter of part one, using partnered women, I tested the influence of current HC use in tandem with the influence of use of HC at the initiation of the romantic relationship. Here, I found that women whose current use of HC was congruent to the start of their relationship were less jealous than those whose current use of HC was incongruent. In the latter section of my thesis I proceeded to test factors which may prompt hormonal variation in jealousy response. In doing so, I tested how female-female competitive behaviour is influenced by use of HC, and found that, among partnered women using HC, female-female competition is lower than when regularly cycling. I subsequently examined shifts in romantic partner's self-perceptions of attractiveness across the female cycle and during use of HC. Here I found that men rate their partners, and themselves, as more attractive near to ovulation as compared to when their partner used HC. Together, the results of this thesis shed light on presently unrecognized negative consequences of use of HC. These results are salient to the millions of women worldwide who use HC and to their contraceptive providers.

On September 5, 2013 **Roy B.L. Sijbom** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Leaders' reactions to employee creativity: An achievement goal approach" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. O. Jansen (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. N.W. van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Summary

In today's complex, dynamic, and highly competitive environment, organizations need to innovate continuously to survive and prosper. Since the foundation of all innovation is creative ideas, employee creativity, defined as the generation of novel and useful ideas, is a crucial resource in the process of organizational innovation. As the challenges of managing creativity are considerable, a growing body of research reveals that leaders fulfill a critical role when it comes to employee creativity. Although considerable research has been devoted to understand how leaders may facilitate and stimulate employee creativity, little research focused on how leaders actually react to employee creativity. An interesting and relevant question in this regard is: Why are some leaders receptive and supportive to creative ideas voiced by their subordinates, whereas others tend to nip those ideas in the bud?

In this dissertation, I examine how achievement goals of leaders, as a motivational factor, affect their reactions to employee creativity. Specifically, I propose and demonstrate that leaders' performance and mastery goals have differential influences on how they perceive, evaluate, and respond to creative ideas voiced by their employees. The current findings lay a foundation of empirical and experimental evidence for the influential role of achievement motivational factors in leader perceptions and responses to subordinate creativity. Furthermore, our results provide a platform for further research on this intriguing and important managerial issue.

On September 12, 2013 **Ellen van der Werff** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Growing environmental self-identity" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. Linda Steg (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. Kees Keizer (University of Groningen)

Summary

To overcome environmental problems we need to know what important antecedents of environmental behaviour are. In this dissertation we studied whether environmental self-identity is an important predictor of environmental behaviour.

Environmental self-identity can be defined as the extent to which you see yourself as an environmentally-friendly person. We found that it is indeed related to a range of pro-environmental actions, for example, energy use and preference for sustainable products.

We found that environmental self-identity is partly stable, as it is influenced by one's biospheric values. Biospheric values even predicted environmental self-identity at a later moment in time and after a manipulation of environmental self-identity. However, environmental self-identity can also be changed to a certain extent. Based on self-perception theory we studied whether reminding people of their past behaviour influences their environmental self-identity. We indeed found that when people realize that they often acted environmentally-friendly in the past their environmental self-identity was strengthened which in turn promoted pro-environmental actions. When people realized they rarely acted environmentally-friendly in the past their environmental self-identity was weakened and they were less likely to act pro-environmental. However, past behaviour only influenced environmental self-identity when the signalling strength of the past behaviour was high. Only when it concerned a range of rather different behaviours or when the behaviour was difficult and unique environmental self-identity was strengthened.

Finally, we found that people with a strong environmental self-identity are intrinsically motivated to act pro-environmental. A strong environmental self-identity was found to be related to an obligation-based intrinsic motivation to act environmentally-friendly.

On September 19, 2013 **Melvyn Hamstra** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Self-Regulation in a Social Environment" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. Nico W. Van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Barbara Wisse (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Kai Sassenberg (University of Groningen)

Summary

Individuals possess motivated preferences for pursuing goals in a certain way, that is, for self-regulating using particular types of strategic means (e.g., Higgins, 1997, 1999). When individuals pursue goals, or anticipate pursuing goals, in a way that allows them to apply these preferred strategic means, they experience regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000, 2005). Regulatory fit refers to individuals' experience that what they are doing is 'right', a feeling that they are behaving in a way that suits them. Regulatory fit enhances the strength of individuals' motivation, gives them a sense of engagement and enjoyment in what they are doing, and enhances the value they attribute to the goal-pursuit process (Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, 2000, 2005). When individuals experience value from regulatory fit, it affects their evaluation of objects they encounter (e.g., products and persuasive messages; Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2007) and can make them engage more strongly and more persistently in their activities (Förster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998; Higgins, 2006; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). Although self-regulation often takes place in a social environment, researchers have only recently started to investigate the effects of the social environment on self-regulation and of self-regulation on individuals' social environment (Finkel & Fitzsimons, 2011). As such, little is known on how regulatory fit shapes individuals' responses to others and how it may be shaped by factors in the social environment.

The first goal of this dissertation is to investigate whether the intrapersonal experience of regulatory fit affects individuals' responses to others. That is, we investigate whether experiences of congruence between individuals' motivational orientation and their own goal-pursuit strategies affects their subjective responses to others toward whom they are positively or negatively inclined. The second goal of this dissertation is to investigate whether regulatory fit can arise from characteristics of others in the social environment. That is, we investigate whether individuals' preferred strategies (stemming from the orientation they hold toward their goals) combined with strategy-relevant aspects associated with characteristics of others shape the individual's subjective (experiential and evaluative) and objective (behavioral and performance-related) self-regulatory outcomes. We achieve this second goal by examining three social relationships in which individuals may find themselves: the relation with a leader, the relation with a group, and the relation with a collaboration partner.

October

On October 2, 2013 **Daniel Sligte** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The functionality of creativity" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors

Prof.dr. C.K.W. de Dreu (University of Amsterdam)

Prof.dr. B.A. Nijstad (University of Groningen)

Summary

This dissertation used an evolutionary framework to assess the functionality of creativity. People have two important, and to some extent conflicting, motives: the motive to fit in with a group, and the motive to stand out of a group. To be creative means to find the right balance between these two; one needs to come up with ideas that are both feasible – and thus acceptable to a social group – and original – and thus deviant from social consensus. I showed that creativity can be functional in satisfying either one of these motives, and that it depends on a combination of personality and the situation which of these two motives becomes more prominent and how this translates to creative performance.

Creativity can be functional to the motive of independent people to be unique, of interdependent people to fit in, to the motive to gain power, and to the motive leave a legacy and be existentially reassured once reminded of mortality. However, people are reluctant to be creative when they fear falling outside the safe perimeters of their group, when they can lose power, or when they are reminded of death and creativity cannot help them to cope with this.

On October 3, 2013 **Lise Jans** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Reconciling individuality with social solidarity: Forming social identity from the bottom up" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. Tom Postmes (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Karen I. van Oudenhoven-van der Zee (University of Twente)

Summary

During the last decades, Western societies have become increasingly individualistic. Many people fear that this gain in individual freedom threatens solidarity in society. The individual and the collective are assumed to be in opposition. But is this assumption always correct? Or is it possible to form groups in which individual distinctiveness and group membership can come into agreement?

In the present dissertation, we show that such reconciliation is possible. We propose that individual group members can actively contribute to the formation of shared group identity—a bottom-up (inductive) process that involves each group member as an individual. While being a distinctive individual can be difficult when group identity is formed on the basis of commonalities (a mechanical or deductive process) as might be the case in the army or the police, this dissertation shows that individuality can be reconciled more easily with strong social solidarity when group identity is formed inductively (or organically) out of individuals' contributions.

In all, the different research lines in this dissertation provide new insights in the interplay between individual distinctiveness and group membership. We believe that this dissertation points to a new direction for thinking about groups and group processes that takes into account both how groups and individuals are cognitively perceived and how they physically interact. We believe that only the mutual consideration of both cognitive and interactive dynamics can do justice to the complex interplay between individual and society that we witness in modern Western society.

On October 31, 2013 **Ruth van Veelen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Integrating I and We: Cognitive routes to Social Identification" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. Sabine Otten (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. Nina Hansen (University of Groningen)

Summary

Identification with groups provides people with safety, self-definition and, self-esteem. In today's increasingly complex and diverse society, social identification also forms the social glue that binds people together. Yet despite this indisputable relevance, remarkably little is known about how people identify with groups. From a cognitive perspective, social identification denotes a certain amount of overlap between the mental representation of the self and the group. Yet how does this self-group overlap emerge? And does this vary across different social contexts? In this dissertation I aim to unravel the cognitive mechanisms explaining how people identify in different social contexts.

Adopting a multi-method approach, the studies in this dissertation form the empirical basis for a Cognitive Dual-Pathway Model to Social Identification. Specifically, the model demonstrates that not only people's assimilation to group stereotypes (self-stereotyping) but also people's projection of personal self-attributes onto a group (self-anchoring) can form a basis for social identification. This finding implies that social identification does not necessarily rely on group members' perceived similarity or prototypicality, but can also be based on the individual self. Further application of the model shows that the cognitive processes underlying successful identification vary between social contexts. Specifically, among newcomers or in ill-defined groups self-anchoring positively instigates social identification, while self-stereotyping does so among well-established group members or in well-defined groups. In diverse groups, minority members' identification benefits most from self-anchoring relative to self-stereotyping. I conclude that advanced insight in how people identify relies on an integrated focus on the social and personal self.

December

On December 4, 2013 **Lottie Bullens** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Having second thoughts: consequences of decision reversibility" at University of Amsterdam. .

Promotors

Prof.dr. J. Forster (University of Amsterdam)

Prof.dr. J. van der Pligt (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. F. van Harreveld (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

Many of the decisions we make during our lives are irreversible. From everyday choices such as deciding whether or not to put sugar in our coffee to more consequential dilemmas such as deciding whether or not to abort one's unborn child. Other decisions leave more room for second-guessing our initial preferences. These reversible decisions provide us with the opportunity to change our minds at a later point in time. People generally prefer reversible to irreversible decisions. We, for instance, tend to provide temporary (rather than permanent) contracts to new employees, live together with our romantic partners for a while before getting married, and buy products at full price that we can return to the store rather than products that are on sale but cannot be returned.

While individuals seem to initially prefer reversible decisions over irreversible ones, previous research shows that the opportunity to revise actually leads to lower levels of post-choice satisfaction. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that people often do not revise their initial choice. Hence, we do not seem very good at predicting our reactions subsequent to reversible decisions. Up until now, very few studies investigated the consequences of reversible versus irreversible decision-making, and many questions concerning the topic are yet unanswered. It is, for instance, still unclear what cognitive processes occur when people have made an (ir)reversible decision, or what processes actually underlie the effects found on choice satisfaction. Furthermore, no research yet exists exploring the motivational consequences of decision reversibility. This dissertation aimed to fill this void in the literature by investigating more extensively the cognitive, motivational and behavioral processes that are affected by the reversibility versus irreversibility of decisions.

On December 12, 2013 **Charlotte Vinkers** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Future-oriented Self-Regulation in Eating Behavior" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof. dr. D.T.D. de Ridder

Co-promotor

Dr. M.A. Adriaanse

Summary

Hoewel veel mensen minder ongezond proberen te eten, lukt het maar weinigen. Eén reden dat de meeste afvalpogingen mislukken, is dat mensen vaak niet goed om kunnen gaan met de obstakels die gepaard gaan met het bereiken van een gezonder eetpatroon.

Een voorbeeld van zo'n obstakel is het aangeboden stuk taart op een verjaardagsfeestje. De zogenoemde 'Proactive Coping Theory' stelt dat als mensen op zulke obstakels anticiperen en zich erop voorbereiden ('proactief zijn'), ze beter in staat zijn om het obstakel, het stuk taart, te weerstaan: op die manier kan ongezond eetgedrag worden tegengegaan en is het gewicht te beheersen.

Deze centrale aanname is in het proefschrift van Charlotte Vinkers onderzocht in meerdere experimentele studies en veldstudies. Haar onderzoeken tonen samen aan dat het voorzien van, en voorbereiden op, toekomstige obstakels een positieve invloed kan hebben op het beteugelen van ongezond eetgedrag. Vinkers: "Dit nieuwe inzicht is belangrijk omdat uit de praktijk blijkt dat de verleiding erg groot is om tóch het lekkere koekje te nemen als we er oog in oog mee staan." Volgens Vinkers is het dan ook verstandig om van tevoren, als we niet al onze energie hoeven te besteden aan het weerstaan van de tastbare en onmiddellijke verleiding, na te denken over dit soort obstakels en alvast een plan gereed te hebben. Hoewel het onderzoek in haar proefschrift demonstreert dat de voorbereiding op obstakels voordelen kan hebben, toonde ze ook aan dat deze aanpak moeilijk en wellicht niet aantrekkelijk of geschikt is voor alle mensen. De inzichten in dit proefschrift hebben niet alleen belangrijke theoretische en praktische implicaties, maar geven ook nieuwe aangrijpingspunten voor verder onderzoek.