

# PhD Theses defended in 2014

## January

On January 31, 2014 **Michelle Bal** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Making Sense of Injustice: Benign and Derogatory Reactions to Innocent Victims" at Utrecht University.

### Promotor

Prof. dr. Kees van den Bos (Utrecht University)

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### Summary

People are confronted with injustice and innocent victims on a regular basis. Reactions toward victims can range from going to great lengths to help or support the victims in order to alleviate their ill fate to harsh negative reactions often resulting in blaming and derogating the victims for what happened to them. In my dissertation, I addressed two questions regarding social justice and reactions toward victims of injustice. Why do people blame innocent victims? And how can we transform derogatory reactions into more benevolent reactions? Previous research has shown that victim blaming and derogation paradoxically stem from people's belief in a just world (BJW). Innocent victims threaten the BJW and victim blaming and derogation help restore the belief. Research even showed that negative reactions are enhanced when the victim is similar to the observer, presumably because victim similarity enhances experienced BJW threat.

I added to these findings by showing that perpetrator similarity influences victim blaming and derogation in a similar manner. Hence, proximity of the injustice in a broader sense seems to influence experienced BJW threat and subsequent reactions to resolve the threat. In subsequent studies, I showed that in today's future-oriented society people experience more personal uncertainty. To deal with these aversive feelings, people hold on to the BJW more strongly and victim blaming and derogation are enhanced. Together, these lines of research help gain progressive insights into the psychological underpinnings of the paradoxical negative reactions toward innocent victims of injustice. The second part of the dissertation was devoted to incorporating the more benign reactions toward innocent victims of injustice that do occur in real life, but that have received only minor attention in social justice research.

I investigated the processes that influence whether people are more prone to make sense of this injustice by either negative or positive reactions. My results indicate that people become spontaneously avoidance motivated and self-focused, when confronted with innocent victims of injustice. These factors make derogatory reactions toward victims a likely strategy to make sense of the injustice. However, these reactions can be counteracted and may even be transformed in more benign ways of dealing with injustice, such as support and help for the victims involved, by instilling an other-focus or an approach motivation. With the research presented in this dissertation, I showed that making sense of injustice can be accomplished both by benign and derogatory reactions to innocent victims.

On January 31, 2014 **Marijn Stok** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Eating by the Norm: The Influence of Social Norms on Young People's Eating Behavior" at Utrecht University.

### **Promotors**

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

Prof.dr. J.B.F. de Wit

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. E. de Vet

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## **Summary**

Humans are social beings. Our identities are, for an important part, shaped by the different groups we belong to. Each social group has its own standards or norms for behavior, based upon what is considered good or correct behavior within that social group. Such socially shared norms are usually not made explicit, but become apparent through observing the behavior of group members and through understanding the expectations they have for how others in their social group should behave. The influence that social norms exert over an individual may be most pronounced in young people, who are still looking to establish their social identity and are especially sensitive to group influences.

In the current dissertation, we examined how social norms influence the behavior of young people in the context of eating behavior. More specifically, the focus of this dissertation was to investigate if social norms can be effectively used to promote healthy eating behavior among young people. In five empirical chapters, we reported the findings of a systematic literature review, a large-scale cross-sectional survey, and various experimental studies conducted both in the laboratory and in the field.

Results indicated that social norms are associated with young people's eating behavior, and that intervening in the peer group norms governing eating behavior can affect young people's food consumption. Several important moderators and boundary conditions were identified. Peer social norms that encourage healthy eating seem to be more effective in promoting healthy eating behavior than peer norms that discourage unhealthy eating were only (inversely) related to healthy eating intentions, but not to actual intake of either healthy or unhealthy foods. Moreover, descriptive peer norms (which indicate the actual behavior of other group members) were found to be more effective in promoting healthy eating in young people than injunctive peer norms (which indicate the behavior that other group members would approve of). The extent to which students feel similar to their fellow students may be a crucial moderator of the impact of peer norm manipulations on eating behavior. Finally, we found that young people to whom a healthy peer social norm was communicated reported higher self-identification as a healthy eater, more positive attitudes toward eating healthily and higher self-efficacy for eating healthily. Self-identification, attitude and self-efficacy partially mediated the effect of the majority norm on participants' intentions to eat healthily in the near future, suggesting that increases in these variables might be part of the mechanism through which descriptive social norm interventions lead to positive effects on eating behavior.

Taken together, the studies in this dissertation indicate that social norms play a substantial role in young people's eating behavior. Moreover, social norms can be used to promote healthier eating behavior among young people, as long as the moderators and limitations described in this dissertation are taken into account. For example, health promoters should carefully determine the type of social norms they wish to influence, as well as the kind of eating behavior they target with their norm intervention. If such boundary conditions are taken into account, interventions aimed to promoting healthier social norms can be an effective part of a process in which changing norms contribute to healthier eating behavior among young people.

# February

On February 11, 2014 **Nicoletta Dimitrova** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Rethinking Errors: How Error-Handling Strategy Affects Our Thoughts and Others' Thoughts About Us" at VU University Amsterdam.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. Peter Groenewegen (VU University Amsterdam)

## **Co-promotors**

Dr. Cathy van Dyck (VU University Amsterdam)

Dr. Edwin van Hooft (University of Amsterdam)

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## **Summary**

The main goal of the research in my dissertation entitled "Rethinking errors: How error-handling strategy affects our thoughts and others' thoughts about us" was to investigate the question: "Does error-handling strategy (i.e., the strategy people apply when dealing with errors) affect people's thoughts and subsequent outcomes?" Specifically, in the first part of the dissertation I look at the interindividual effects of leaders' error-handling strategy on followers' thoughts about leaders (perceptions of leader warmth, incorporating sociability and morality, and leader competence) and satisfaction with the leader, motivation, organizational goal-fulfillment, and trust. In part two, I investigate the effects of manipulated error-handling strategy on one's own thoughts (on-task and off-task thoughts), cognitive appraisals (challenge and threat), and subsequent individual task performance (analogical and adaptive transfer performance). Overall, the results of this dissertation show that error management (i.e., a strategy focusing on catching errors, learning from them, and minimizing their negative consequences) is better than error prevention (i.e., a strategy focusing solely on preventing errors) for the thoughts of others, in terms of perception (leaders perceived as more sociable, moral, and competent by followers), and for one's own thoughts, in terms of cognition (more on-task thoughts, fewer negative self-related off-task thoughts, and fewer threat cognitive appraisals). What is more, error management rather than error prevention is associated with more positive outcomes for oneself (task performance), and for others (higher motivation, satisfaction, and trust). We can thus conclude that it is in our best self interest and in the interest of those around us to rethink errors as something to be managed instead of solely focusing on their prevention.

On February 20, 2014 **Namkje Koudenburg** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Conversational Flow: The Emergence and Regulation of Solidarity through social interaction" at University of Groningen.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Tom Postmes (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Ernestine Gordijn (University of Groningen)

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### **Summary**

Social interactions shape social relations. When engaged in conversation with friends or strangers, with individuals or groups, we often pay close attention to what is being said. But independent of content, the form of a conversation has a strong influence too, particularly for feelings of 'we-ness' and solidarity. In this thesis, we show that seemingly trivial aspects of a conversation act as signals for the quality of social relations and for levels of agreement among us. Whether conversations flow smoothly or whether a brief silence occurs can substantially change how certain we are about the relationship and about common views. The art of conversing can thus establish, threaten, change, or confirm social relations and social realities.

# March

On March 27, 2014 **Goda Perlaviciute** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Goal-driven evaluations of sustainable products" at University of Groningen.

## Promotors

Prof. dr. Linda Steg (University of Groningen)

Prof. dr. Siegwart Lindenberg (University of Groningen)

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## Summary

Many sustainable products are offered that aim to reduce environmental problems caused by human behaviour, for instance “green” food products and low-carbon energy alternatives. But how do people evaluate these products? This is an important question because any sustainable solution will stagnate without sufficient public support. This PhD thesis seeks to explain how people arrive at their evaluations of sustainable products and which factors play a role in this process. We take a goal-based approach and develop and test a conceptual framework that explains goal-driven evaluations, based on goal theory and value theory. A key premise is that the evaluation of a product depends on the extent to which the product is seen as fulfilling the goals that are situationally activated. This implies that people who have sustainability goals evaluate sustainable products positively only if these goals are activated and if people see the products as fulfilling these goals. What activates these goals? We argue and demonstrate that the activation of goals in a situation depends on both situational cues and individual values. Values can be seen as overarching goals that are more or less chronically activated. One type of these values focus on sustainability, more particularly the quality of nature and the environment (biospheric values). The stronger a person endorses biospheric values, the more situational cues can activate sustainability goals, leading to goal-based evaluations. In turn, these evaluations have an additional effect: they create a valence (good or bad) that can colour evaluations of product characteristics that may even be unrelated to the goal (halo effect). Our framework has theoretical implications for goal theory and value theory and the integration of the two. We also provide practical implications for interventions aimed at strengthening positive evaluations of sustainable products. In order to influence evaluations, people’s goals need to be addressed. Specifically, sustainable products are most likely to be evaluated positively when people’s sustainability goals are strengthened by normative situational cues and biospheric values, and when the products are seen as suitable to pursue these goals. Also, just labelling products as “green” might backfire if these products are not seen as fulfilling sustainability goals.

# April

On April 17, 2014 **Thomas Sitser** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Predicting sales performance: Strengthening the personality – job performance linkage" at Erasmus University.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. M. Ph. Born

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. D. van der Linden

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## **Summary**

Many organizations worldwide use personality measures to select applicants for sales jobs or to assess incumbent sales employees. In the present dissertation, consisting of four independent studies, five approaches to strengthen the personality-sales performance linkage were studied. This dissertation shows that personality can be used to predict sales performance. Although different meta-analyses in the past 20 years have reported that Conscientiousness and Extraversion are predictors of sales performance, in two independent samples of the dissertation was found that Openness predicted sales performance. Possibly, being open and interested in new things is related to finding new customers. Findings further show that using a GFP score may be useful for selecting sales employees. If one wants to select personnel for rather specific and more restricted tasks, such as dealing with customers or doing administrative work, then the use of more narrow measures may be better. In order to ensure optimal predictive validity, both in practice and in research, it is important to clearly specify the sales performance criterion before the optimal personality predictor is selected. The results of the dissertation further assert the importance of emotion regulation for high emotional labor sales jobs. Also, when predicting sales performance, other-ratings of personality may be an alternative to self-ratings. Finally, adding a sales Frame-Of-Reference to a personality measure may have the potential to improve the predictive validity for sales performance. To further optimize the prediction of sales performance with personality measures, we suggest more focus on the nature of sales performance criteria.

# May

On May 27, 2014 **Felice van Nunspeet** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Neural correlates of the motivation to be moral" at Leiden University.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. Belle Derks

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## **Summary**

Previous research has revealed that it is important for people to be moral. Nevertheless, they may sometimes commit immoral acts. In this dissertation, we examined when and why people become motivated to do what is right. In addition, we used neuroscientific and psychophysiological research methods to unravel some of the underlying cognitive and affective processes involved in this motivation to be moral.

The findings in this dissertation reveal that people are motivated to adjust their performance on a task when the implications of their behavior are framed in terms of their moral values as compared to their competence. Specifically, people inhibit their negative implicit bias towards Muslim women when they are told that their task performance is indicative of their moral values concerning egalitarianism and discrimination. Additional ERP findings showed that such moral concerns increase people's perceptual attention to the different group members presented in the task and the monitoring of their responses.

Results also showed that the motivation to be moral (and the associated cognitive processes) is increased when people are being monitored by members of their own group, and not when they are being monitored by outgroup members. These findings thus indicate that it is especially important for people to be perceived as moral by self-relevant others.

Moreover, the findings reveal that people care about succeeding in acting in ways that are considered moral: Being confronted with information indicating that one is less moral as compared to others has a negative emotional impact, whereas information indicating that one is more moral than others is processed as self-relevant information in the brain. Taken together, the findings in my dissertation thus extend previous research in many ways: By examining people's actual moral behavior and shedding light on the cognitive and affective processes underlying their acts, they reveal that, when, and how people behave according to their moral values.



# June

On June 6, 2014 **Hans Marien** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Understanding and Motivating Human Control: Outcome and Reward Information in Action" at Utrecht University.

## **Promotor**

Prof. dr. Henk Aarts (Utrecht University)

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. Ir. Ruud Custers (Utrecht University)

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## **Summary**

In this thesis motivated goal-directed behavior is investigated from a self-emergent process perspective. This perspective supposes that motivation for goal-directed behavior can be the result of a pattern of relatively simple interactions between reward and outcome information. In this thesis three basic interactions were examined to demonstrate the potential self-emergence of motivated goal-directed behavior.

In a first line of research it is shown that prospective monetary gains encourage people to invest effort and mobilize control processes for better task performance. Importantly, an interaction was found such that reward induced effort mobilization only occurred when task demands were high in terms of control processing, even when these control demands were not explicitly cued beforehand. In other words, this process of motivated control, which was governed by a principle of conservation, seems to follow a self-emergent property. In a second line of research it was investigated how reward information and outcome information interact in controlling goal-directed behavior. It was found that the interaction between reward and outcome information spontaneously influenced the way people controlled their goal-directed actions. In a third line of research participants first acquired knowledge about action-outcome relationships in a rewarding context, and it was found that this interaction produced motivated goal-directed behavior on its own accord. This finding again suggests that motivated goal-directed behavior can be the result of a self-emergent process.

Taken together, these three main findings fit well with recent mechanistic views on goal-directed behavior and offers insight into the potential building blocks that renders human action goal-directed. It is important to note that these building blocks are not essentially different from those proposed by other approaches to understand goal-directed behavior, such as the traditional expectancy-value approach. This approach also takes the value of an outcome into account to understand goal-directed behavior. Importantly, the traditional expectancy-value approach considers goal-directed behavior to result from people's ability to explicitly reflect on and compute the value of an outcome. The current thesis tries to offer a different perspective to understand how goal-directed behavior emerges and is maintained over time, and that answering this question could be facilitated by looking at basic interactions between specific types of information that have been argued to form the basis of motivated goal-directed behavior, such as information about demands, outcomes and rewards.

On June 12, 2014 **Anne Fetsje Sluis** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Towards a virtuous society: Virtues as potential instruments to enhance bridging social capital" at University of Groningen.

**Promotor**

Prof. dr. J.P.L.M. van Oudenhoven (University of Groningen)

**Co-promotor**

Dr. M.E. Timmerman

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**Summary**

Due to immigration, the Islam has been a fast-growing religion in Western European societies, including the Netherlands. As some of the norms, values and beliefs of the Islam are seen as incompatible with the Western European way of life, the Islam is often perceived as a threat to Western European culture. This perceived threat may have negative consequences for the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western European societies. Therefore, a relevant question is how to improve relations between these groups or, more generally, how to strengthen bridging social capital.

As religion plays a major role with regard to perceived differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western-Europe, it is worthwhile to investigate whether a concept relevant to religion may be helpful to improve their mutual relations. Religion emphasizes moral principles and offers guidelines for moral conduct, in other words, religion emphasizes the virtues worth pursuing. Virtues, defined as morally good character traits that can be acquired and developed, may be useful instruments to enhance bridging social capital. This idea is researched throughout this dissertation, where we focused on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (Christians and secularists) in the Netherlands.

First, Dutch Muslims and non-Muslims were asked to list the virtues they regarded as important. Categorization of their answers resulted in 16 overarching virtues. A following study showed that, of these 16 virtues, both groups considered those that refer to concern about others (e.g., respect, openness, love) and to optimism (e.g., trust, joy) as most worth pursuing. Further, the more non-Muslims pursued to possess these virtues, the less symbolic threat they perceived due to the presence of Muslims; the latter appeared to be related to greater acceptance of the participation of Muslims in society while keeping their own cultural and religious identity. In a qualitative study, Muslims and non-Muslims were interviewed about their interpretations of the 16 virtues. This revealed that respect, openness, love and trust can be useful virtues to enhance bridging social capital. An additional study showed that Muslims and non-Muslims largely agree on their interpretations of these virtues. The more non-Muslims agree with the interpretations that refer to being non-condemning and understanding, the greater their intentions to act in non-condemning and understanding ways towards others, including Muslims.

Our findings suggest that virtues that refer to concern for others, being non-condemning and understanding, and to optimism may be useful to improve the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

On June 18, 2014 **Gerdien de Vries** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Pitfalls in the Communication about CO<sub>2</sub> Capture and Storage" at Leiden University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

**Co-promotor**

Dr. Bart W. Terwel (Leiden University)

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**Summary**

One of the greatest environmental challenges the world is facing today is combating global warming. Global warming is largely due to growing concentrations of human-induced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. One of the solutions to mitigate these emissions is the implementation of CO<sub>2</sub> capture and storage (CCS). CCS is a controversial technology, and attitudes towards it are influenced by public communications. Proponents as well as opponents use persuasive communication techniques to convince the public of their views. Examples of such techniques are conveying lots of information at one time (heaping), giving more weight to either advantages or disadvantages (emphasis framing), and citing pro-environmental motives for involvement with CCS (greening). These techniques tend to be judged on their effectiveness but, up till now, less attention went to how (unfavorable) recipients might evaluate a communication in which persuasive techniques are applied as well as the source that produced it. Yet, these message and source evaluations are important because they can have long-term costs for the communicators' reputation and performance. Because message and source evaluations are rather neglected, it might appear as if it is effective to apply persuasive techniques to the communication about CCS, while possible negative side-effects stay undetected. Stated differently, communication about CCS can have pitfalls.

The experimental and survey research presented in this dissertation identified pitfalls in the use of heaping, emphasis framing, and greening. That is, the results show that irrelevant details can dilute the persuasiveness of a relevant message, giving more weight to either advantages or disadvantages is perceived as manipulative—even as illegitimate when people expect informative communications—and citing pro-environmental motives for involvement with CCS can be perceived as greenwashing. Furthermore, the research reveals the psychological processes underlying these pitfalls and their boundary conditions. Expectations about the communication source appear to play an important role in how the use of persuasive techniques is perceived. To avoid long-term negative perceptions, stakeholders with an interest in CCS can best take people's source expectations into account and provide a relevant, balanced and credible message about the technology.

On June 19, 2014 **Thecla Brakel** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The effects of social comparison information on cancer survivors' quality of life: A field-experimental intervention approach" at University of Groningen.

### **Promotors**

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

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

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### **Summary**

Cancer patients often compare themselves with other cancer patients, usually to make themselves feel better or to learn from the comparison target. They also do this in the often uncertain period after completion of the hospital treatment. In order to support cancer patients, it is possible to provide them with social comparison information in interventions. In this study, social comparison interventions were developed and in three field experiments the effects were examined on the quality of life of cancer patients.

The conclusion was that the effects of the social comparison interventions were rather different for cancer patients: In some patients, the quality of life improved while it declined in others. This was due to differences in social comparison sensitivity and patients perceived health status. In a follow-up study the individual differences between cancer patients were taken into account; in this intervention patients received social comparison information that was specifically designed for them. Two other individual differences appeared to influence the effects of the social comparison intervention now: the differences between patients with regard to their current experienced life-threat and their future health perspective.

In psychosocial programs for cancer patients it is therefore important to take individual differences patients into account when confronting them with information from, or about fellow patients, such as in peer support groups. Probably some patients should be advised not to participate in such programs because their quality of life may decrease. The insights from the three field experiments can contribute to the development of effective psychosocial interventions, which have no adverse effects.

On June 26, 2014 **Said Shafa** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "In the eyes of others: The role of honor concerns in explaining and preventing insult-elicited aggression" at Leiden University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

**Co-promotors**

Dr. Fieke Harinck (Leiden University)

Dr. Bianca Beersma (University of Amsterdam)

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**Summary**

Much of the previous work investigating the impact of honor has focused on how people endorsing honor values respond to possibly offensive interactions. Despite the accumulation of this research, it is yet unclear why people endorsing the ideal of honor respond more fiercely after being offended. Moreover, hardly any systematic attempts have been undertaken to identify ways in which these negative ramifications of offensive encounters can be prevented or reduced. The discoveries made in the context of this dissertation paint a more balanced picture of the role of honor in conflict management and inform us on possible avenues of effective conflict intervention. Results show that that the moral imperative of treating others with respect is a core concern in honor cultures and insults are considered more of a moral violation of this norm among those high in honor. As honor is the worth of an individual predominantly based on their value in the eyes of other, insults are more likely to threaten self-worth than when people endorse dignity. Therefore, in the face of potential conflicts, preventing loss of honor becomes a major concern. The current studies show that this concern initially results in more appeasing and less dominating conflict management styles to prevent conflict escalation. Nevertheless, if confrontations or offensive behavior persist, the same concern may evoke more aggressive reactions. Moreover, results demonstrate that one way to avert this reaction is by affirming the social worth of those concerned with honor, in order to postpone the point at which people feel the need to defend their honor by means of aggression. Such interventions may help advance the process of intercultural negotiation and conflict resolution before they escalate.

# September

On September 12, 2014 **Daniel Alink** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Public Trust: Expectancies, Beliefs, and Behavior" at University of Amsterdam.

## **Promotor**

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

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. Frenk van Harreveld (University of Amsterdam)

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## **Summary**

Most people think of trust as the bonding force between people in romantic, professional, and family relationships. Of growing importance however is public trust: trust in organizations that are not represented by a single person, such as companies, non-profit organizations and governmental institutions. The present dissertation takes existing knowledge on interpersonal trust as a starting point to investigate antecedents and consequences of public trust.

The first part of the dissertation sheds light on how perceptions of competence, benevolence and integrity affect trust in for-profit firms. Chapter two demonstrates that these antecedents have different effects on trust depending on the interaction context: impersonal trust in firms, for example through a website, is mainly driven by perceptions of competence, while interpersonal trust in a firm via an employee benefits more from benevolence. In chapter three it is shown that benevolent firms are trusted only if their integrity is sufficient, and that this effect is independent from the effect of competence.

The second part of the dissertation discusses an important consequence of public trust: people's voting behavior. Chapter four demonstrates that low trust in party-neutral political institutions gives rise to other-condemning moral emotions such as anger and contempt, which are channeled into protest votes for relatively populist parties on either side of the political spectrum. In chapter five this relationship is further investigated by building a more elaborate model of political trust and populist voting behavior. It is shown that integrity and competence are important drivers of political trust. Furthermore, people who mainly experience economic threat are more likely to vote for left-wing populist parties, while people who experience cultural threat generally prefer right-wing populism.

On September 18, 2014 **Monique van Rijn** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Understanding employees' professional development: The joint influence of individual and situational factors" at University of Twente.

# October

On October 27, 2014 **Linda Muusses** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "How Internet use may affect our relationships: Characteristics of Internet use and personal and relational wellbeing" at VU University Amsterdam.

## Promotors

prof.dr. P.A.M. van Lange (VU University Amsterdam)

prof.dr. P. Kerkhof (VU University Amsterdam)

## Co-promotor

prof.dr. C. Finkenauer (VU University Amsterdam)

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## Summary

Internet is becoming more and more important in our daily lives, and can have both positive and negative consequences on our social relationships. However, much of the research is focused on adolescents, and what is missing is research about Internet use and romantic relationship in adults. The present dissertation focusses on characteristics of Internet use and personal and relational wellbeing. In the second chapter we investigate the directionality of the relationship between compulsive Internet use (CIU) and positive and negative indicators of wellbeing among adults. Using prospective dyadic data of married couples, the results suggest CIU lowers wellbeing, and happiness is a buffer for developing CIU.

Furthermore, while previous research showed that compulsive Internet use has deleterious effects on a wide array of relationship quality indicators, chapter three and four add knowledge about mechanisms through which these effects might occur, and showed that when people perceive compulsive Internet use in their partner, this may affect their relationship quality. Chapter three showed that people use their perception of their partner's compulsive Internet use as a cue for their partner's level of self-control. The perceived level of their partner's self-control in turn, predicts how much they trust their partner. Chapter four showed that the more people perceive their partner to exhibit signs of compulsive Internet use, the less they feel that their partner is responsive to their needs, concerns and goal strivings. In turn, this perception of their partner's (lack of) responsiveness serves as a cue for exclusion by their partner.

Finally, chapter five aims to shed light on the directionality of the relation between SEIM use and relationship quality among married couples. The results showed that, among husbands, adjustment and SEIM use are negatively and reciprocally related. Also, sexual satisfaction in husbands predicted a decrease in their wives' SEIM one year later, while wives' SEIM did not affect their husbands' sexual satisfaction. The research in this dissertation shows that investigating the directionality of effects through longitudinal research can paint a different picture than cross-sectional analyses might. The research also shows that the effects of Internet use are not just apparent in the Internet user him/herself, but that interpersonal effects can exist as well.



# November

On November 17, 2014 **Martijn Keizer** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Do norms matter? The role of normative considerations as predictors of pro-environmental behavior" at University of Groningen.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. Linda Steg (University of Groningen)

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. Martijn van Zomeren (University of Groningen)

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## **Summary**

Most individuals care about the environment and feel that they ought to contribute to enhancing environmental quality. Yet, few individuals seem to consistently engage in pro-environmental action. Does this mean that peoples' normative considerations with regard to the environment are unimportant?

My research suggests that norms do matter, but only under particular circumstances. Specifically, when the behavioral costs associated with pro-environmental action are perceived to be low, individuals are likely to act upon their normative considerations. However, when perceived costs are higher, individuals are less likely to act in line with these considerations. These results suggest that external factors, and not the strength of individuals' pro-environmental beliefs, are the main barrier to an increase in pro-environmental behavior.

On November 27, 2014 **Hillie Aldering** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Parochial and universal cooperation in intergroup conflicts" at University of Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

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

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

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### **Summary**

This dissertation investigates what kind of people under what circumstances will display universal versus parochial cooperation (the tendency to serve one's own group, potentially at a cost to rivaling other groups). We specifically investigate how cues from a person's personality (intrapersonal), cues from other members of the own group (intragroup), and cues about the relation between the groups (intergroup) direct an individual in an intergroup conflict towards either universal or parochial cooperation. Seven experiments are reported using two different paradigms, which reflect different forms of handling intergroup conflict. The first three empirical chapters employ negotiation paradigms. In negotiations, searching for a mutually beneficial agreement and making concessions reflects universal cooperation while refusing to concede and forcing the other party into concessions reflects parochial cooperation. The last empirical chapter employs an experimental game paradigm, where individual and group outcomes depend on individuals' and (opposing) group members' contributions to their own group or the collective of both parties.

Our results show that individuals, and especially pro-socials, are inclined to show parochial cooperation. However, they are sensitive to intragroup factors such as constituencies' preferences and approval. Representatives will increase their universal cooperation when a preference for cooperation towards the out-group is clearly communicated by their constituency, or when the constituency communicates emotional approval of a cooperative first offer towards the out-group. They are also influenced by intergroup factors, such that their universal cooperation increases when parochial cooperation comes at the cost of the other party- But only when there is a clear option accessible for mutual gain. Thus, their parochial cooperation efforts can be redirected to potentially value creating outcomes.