

# PhD Theses defended in 2015

## January

On January 9, 2015 **Maartje Elshout** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Vengeance" at Tilburg University.

### **Promotor**

Prof.dr. Ilja van Beest (Tilburg University)

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. Rob Nelissen (Tilburg University)

---

## Summary

Vengeance is often defined as “inflicting harm in return for harm”. In line with these generic definitions, empirical research on vengeance has elicited and measured vengeance in diverse ways. As such, almost any act of reciprocated harm is considered vengeance. However, in real life and theoretical literature on vengeance, vengeance is viewed in a richer and more specific way. The current dissertation addresses two limitations in the current empirical literature on vengeance: The lack of rich operationalizations of vengeance and the use of student samples in studies that do use a comprehensive view of vengeance by studying autobiographical descriptions of vengeance. Chapters 2-3 identify core characteristics of vengeance. In Chapter 2 this is done with a prototype analysis (examining lay people’s conceptions of vengeance). In Chapter 3 vengeful responses are compared to anger-driven responses to examine the specific characteristics of vengeance. Chapters 4-5 examine research questions on vengeance in a diverse sample, adopting a rich view of vengeance by using autobiographical recalls. Chapter 4 focuses on situational precursors of vengeance (“when do people take revenge?”). Chapter 5 focuses on debated characteristics and intrapersonal consequences of vengeance (“how do people take revenge?”). Taken together, the studies reveal that vengeance is more than just “harm for harm”. Vengeance appears to be an act of harm as a response to a personal offense, an offense that threatened the self, such as damage to one’s reputation. Such offenses lead to a mix of emotions, including anger, humiliation, and contempt, as well as rumination. In addition, when examining acts of revenge, it is important to ascertain that they contain the following features: The act of revenge is personal, aggressive, and planned (usually takes place after some time has passed) and often leads to relationship deterioration. It seems to be motivated by intrapersonal (as opposed to interpersonal) concerns, such as restoring self-esteem, power, or reputation. These intrapersonal concerns may explain why vengeance is often severe (proposed in theoretical literature), delayed (Chapters 1, 2, 5), and may feel “sweet” (Chapters 3-5).

On January 15, 2015 **Dagmar Beudeker** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "On regulatory focus and performance in organizational environments" at Leiden University.

### **Promotors**

Prof. dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

Prof. dr. Roland Blonk (TNO; Utrecht University)

Dr. Floor Rink (University of Groningen)

---

### **Summary**

Much of the prior research on regulatory focus and performance has been conducted in the lab. A central goal of this dissertation is to investigate how regulatory orientations relate to the performance of people in complex organizational environments. Not only do people in organizations have individual regulatory preferences, but they work on tasks that have regulatory characteristics (i.e. promotion and prevention tasks, Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011) and they are being managed by leaders who have their own regulatory orientations. Little is known about how these different aspects interact to influence performance in organizations. I also aim to draw attention to the tendency in many organizational settings to accentuate and reward behaviors relating to the promotion orientation. Even though the use of the promotion orientation has been shown to give rise to valuable work behaviors such as being innovative (Friedman & Förster, 2001; Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko & Roberts, 2008; Lanaj, Chang & Johnson, 2012), I argue that a good performance of individuals as well as organizations requires more than just innovative work behavior. A large part of the work in many organizations constitutes 'doing the due diligence'. Performance on these kind of tasks could benefit from using a prevention orientation. Taking the tasks that people need to perform as a starting point, I've investigated whether the use of the prevention orientation can be of added value for individual and organizational performance.

The results reported in Chapter 1 show that there is indeed a high probability that jobs are regulatory heterogeneous (i.e. contain both prevention and promotion oriented tasks). In line with this finding, the results reported in Chapter 3 and 4 reveal that performance benefits can be gained when leaders are able to use a prevention orientation. Arguably, the use of the promotion orientation in leaders is already facilitated by organizational dynamics. As such, there is little added value in the individual's inclination to adopt this orientation. The prevention orientation on the other hand, helps leaders fulfill a broader range of goals associated with their complex task. In the final chapter (Chapter 5) of the current dissertation I tested two interventions that can be used (by leaders or fellow employees) to optimize individual performance on tasks that do not fit people's regulatory preferences. With the help of performance incentives and work strategy guidelines, promotion oriented people were able to perform well at a non-fit prevention task.

On January 21, 2015 **Charlotte Koot** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Making up your mind about a complex technology: An investigation into factors that help or hinder the achievement of cognitive closure about CCS" at Leiden University.

**Promotor**

Prof. Dr. Naomi Ellemers (Leiden University)

**Co-promotor**

Dr. Emma ter Mors (Leiden University)

---

**Summary**

Many of the technological innovations introduced into modern society have a clear impact on people's daily lives. As a consequence, public opinion is often a decisive factor for the successful implementation of a complex technology. The research in this dissertation examines psychological factors that affect the ease with which people form a definite of view, or achieve cognitive closure, on complex technologies. Attitudes on which people have achieved cognitive closure are of interest as they are more stable and better predictors of people's behavior (e.g., protesting a complex technology) than open, unfinished attitudes. The studies in this dissertation focus on attitude formation about the complex technology of carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS). Results show that the extent to which people feel able to form an attitude about a complex technology affects the level of cognitive closure they actually achieve. People's ability to achieve cognitive closure depends on the risks they perceive and negative emotions they experience in association with the technology as well as on characteristics of communication about the technology. Together these findings add to the understanding of public opinion regarding the implementation of complex technologies and provide novel insight into the mechanisms underlying the achievement of cognitive closure.

On January 30, 2015 **Seval Gundemir** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Minority Glass Ceiling Hypothesis: Exploring Reasons and Remedies for the Underrepresentation of Racial-ethnic Minorities in Leadership Positions" at VU University Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. M. van Vugt (VU University Amsterdam)

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

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. A.C. Homan (University of Amsterdam)

---

## **Summary**

In the Western world racial-ethnic minorities are underrepresented in leadership positions. For instance, in the Netherlands, non-Western minorities are overrepresented in lower level organizational positions, whereas they are underrepresented higher-level, leadership roles (CBS, 2007; Dekker, 2013). This pattern remains even after correcting for some of the objective differences (e.g., education; CBS, 2007). It seems that racial-ethnic minorities – much like women- face a glass ceiling that hinders their career development into higher-level, leadership positions (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). The main goal of this dissertation was to gain insight into the underlying psychological mechanisms of the glass ceiling for racial-ethnic minorities.

Achieving this is important for several reasons. Minorities in leadership positions help decrease implicit biases that members of majority groups may have towards minorities in general (Plant et al., 2009). Minority leaders also act as role models for others individuals from a similar background. Research shows that salient role models can help increase (cognitive) performance of minorities (e.g., Marx, Ko, & Friedman, 2009). Moreover, in a labor market that is rapidly diversifying, it is crucial to optimally utilize minority talent in order to gain competitive advantage (Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Given this importance, there has been surprisingly little research on minority leadership. Existing research is conducted mainly in the United States and many questions still remain. In this dissertation, I studied minority leadership in a European context. In doing so, I focused on two broad aspects of this phenomenon. In Part I of this dissertation I focused on perceptions of and reactions to minorities in leadership positions. In Part II the focus was on minorities as active participants in leadership development. Here, I studied how organizational factors affected minorities leadership relevant perceptions and leadership self-selection tendencies.

Chapter 2 zoomed in on the pro-White leadership bias in the European context. Empirical work in the United States shows that when people think of a leader, they tend to have a White-majority group member in mind (Rosette et al., 2008). As a result of these biases in leadership categorization, individuals with a minority background do not fit the “typical image” of a leader as well as majority group members. Consequently, they emerge less often as leaders, and when they do, they are not perceived as effective (Lord & Maher, 1993;

Rosette et al., 2008). In Chapter 2, we showed that the pro-White leadership bias is also present in the European context and that it can have an implicit nature. Our reaction time measure showed that both leadership roles and effective leadership traits are more strongly associated with native-Dutch than ethnic-minority stimuli. Both native-Dutch and minority participants showed this automatic bias. In the final study of Chapter 2, we studied whether pro-White leadership bias predicts discriminatory behavior during promotion decisions. Additionally, we investigated whether interventions focusing on suppressing the automatic categorization of individuals as members of ethnic groups would diminish the pro-White leadership bias. Results showed that higher levels of an implicit pro-White leadership bias were associated with an explicit willingness to promote a native-Dutch candidate and not an equally suitable minority candidate to a higher leadership position. Moreover, when situational cues emphasized dual levels of categorization (i.e., making both an ethnic and a superordinate group membership salient), the implicit pro-White leadership bias was—at least to some extent—decreased.

Chapter 3 focused on anticipated interactions between subordinates and leaders with different racial-ethnic backgrounds. Theoretical models describing the subordinate-leader dynamics propose that for leaders to be able to show actual leadership and have real influence, they need to be supported and endorsed by their subordinates (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Subordinates typically endorse prototypical leaders' leadership more than that of non-prototypical ones. Given our findings in Chapter 2, that showed that minorities are perceived as less prototypical as leaders than native-Dutch, we expected to find that subordinates would less readily accept minorities' leadership and that this would be visible in their nonverbal behavior. In this chapter, we focused specifically on interpersonal space. Earlier research showed that people lower in the hierarchy maintain greater interpersonal distances towards others, whereas the higher placed tend to do the opposite (e.g., Hall et al., 2005). Based on this, our prediction was that subordinates would distance themselves more from prototypical, native-Dutch leaders than less prototypical, minority leaders. Additionally, we predicted that increased physical proximity (versus increased physical distance) would indicate a willingness to challenge and take over the leadership position (versus accepting and endorsing it). The results showed that subordinates indeed kept more physical distance from a native-Dutch than from a minority (in this case Moroccan-Dutch) leader. This spatial discrimination effect occurred only when the anticipated task partner had a leadership role and not when he or she had a subordinate role. Increased physical distance was negatively related with participants' desire to show leadership behavior themselves. The final study of Chapter 3 showed that the observed spatial discrimination effect disappears when leadership emergence is explicitly qualification based.

Earlier research on minorities and leadership focused mainly on minorities as targets of bias. The first two empirical chapters fit this tradition as well. In the third and final empirical chapter, the focus shifted from biased perceptions of and reactions to minority leadership to leadership self-selection by minorities themselves. In this chapter we studied leadership relevant self-perceptions and behavioral tendencies of minorities. Because leadership self-perceptions almost always occur in an organizational setting (Hogue & Lord, 2007), we focused on these perceptions and behavioral tendencies as a function of a diversity-relevant organizational variable: organizational diversity ideology (Wolsko et al., 2000). Our presumption was that some diversity ideologies are more instrumental for minority employees than others because they create an environment in which (the expression of) differences are accepted. We predicted that minority employees working in these organizations would have more positive leadership self-perceptions and an increased desire to

occupy leadership positions. Our results were in line with these predictions. Minorities who imagined to work for organizations endorsing multiculturalism or colorblindness with a focus on inter-individual differences reported higher degrees of leadership self-efficacy, more positive outcome expectations regarding leadership roles and an increased willingness to apply for higher level leadership positions than minorities who imagined to work for an organization that endorsed a colorblind ideology with a mere focus on a superordinate identity. These effects were primarily indirect: via an increase in the perceptions of organizational openness for differences.

Part I of this dissertation showed that biases in leadership categorization can suppress minorities' emergence into leadership roles. These processes can also affect the leader-subordinate dynamics after minorities emerge into leadership roles. Their leadership is accepted less and challenged more by subordinates than leadership by majority group members. Part II showed that organizational diversity context can have an important effect on how minority employees perceive their own leadership. When organizations communicate openness to differences (e.g., openness for expressing different opinions), minorities will have more positive expectations regarding higher level leadership roles and will be more willing to pursue these roles.

This dissertation contributes to existing literature by widening our knowledge of biases in leadership perceptions and their behavioral consequences in a European context. Additionally, the focus on minorities' leadership relevant intra-personal processes (e.g., leadership relevant goals and aspirations) as a function of organizational context illuminated crucial aspects of minority leadership that as yet have not received the deserved research attention. In the empirical chapters, we consistently explored possible interventions to encourage minority leadership. As such, we offer organizations practical tools to encourage minority leadership and to optimally utilize the talent in the diversifying labor market.

## **February**

On February 6, 2015 **Özüm Saygi** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Bottom-up Influences in Representative Negotiations: How Representatives Affect Intra-Inter Group Relations" at University of Amsterdam.

### **Promotor**

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

### **Co-promotor**

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

# March

On March 4, 2015 **Marco van Bommel** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Reputable Bystander: The Role of Reputation in Activating or Deactivating Bystanders" at VU University Amsterdam.

## Promotors

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

prof.dr. H. Elffers (VU University Amsterdam, Faculty of Law and NSCR: Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement)

## Co-promotors

Dr. J.W. van Prooijen (VU University Amsterdam)

---

## Summary

The presence of bystanders causes people to help or intervene less often and less quickly in an emergency or during a crime. This was the consensus after the first four decades of research on the bystander effect. In recent years, however, researchers began to identify specific situations in which the bystander effect does not occur, and sometimes even becomes reversed. In the current dissertation I tried to understand the bystander effect while focusing on the role of reputation, and discovered that reputation can be utilized to reverse or attenuate the bystander effect. Reputation can be a double edged sword, in that it can withhold people from intervening because they are afraid to leave a bad impression on the other bystanders, but it can also increase intervention as acting prosocial can leave a good impression and could have many positive consequences. In the current dissertation, four empirical chapters focus on this twofold role of reputation in understanding whether people intervene or not in the presence of others. And, perhaps more importantly, they focus on how our understanding of the role of reputation in the bystander effect can be used to increase bystander intervention.

These chapters study the role of impression management and reputation in the bystander effect from very different angles, but come to similar conclusions. In the presence of others, not being concerned about reputation leads to faster helping (Study 5.1). Not feeling accepted leads to less helping (Study 4.1). Not being aware of the benefits of helping decreases helping (virtually each control group), and becoming very aware of how one's behavior has consequences for their reputation leads to an increase of pro-social behavior (Studies 2.1, 2.2 & 3.1). In short, like a double edged sword, the power of reputation may be an important underlying cause of the bystander effect, but it might also help prevent it.



On March 5, 2015 **Kira McCabe** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Role of Personality in the Pursuit of Context-Specific Goals" at University of Groningen.

### **Promotors**

Nico W. Van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Andrew J. Elliot (University of Rochester)

---

### **Summary**

Kurt Lewin (1936) famously asserted that behavior is a function of both the person and the environment, and research questions should include both persona and environment in the investigation of psychological processes. This work served as one specific way to integrate personality and environment through the investigation of the relations between personality and context-specific goal pursuit. Various personality and goal constructs were used in this research. For personality, both the holistic Big Five model of personality and the specific personality trait of perfectionism were studied, at the broad, trait level and the specific, state level. Different types of goal pursuit were also investigated, including social goals, hedonistic goals, and primarily, achievement goals.

The core principle—the relations between personality and context-specific goals—was the main thread present throughout this work, and these relations appear to be common across constructs, domains, culture, and language. Social and hedonistic goals were strongly related to state levels of extraversion, while productivity goals were strongly related to state levels of conscientiousness. Moreover, assigned social goals caused increases in state extraversion, and assigned productivity goals caused increases in state conscientiousness. In a different study, achievement goals and Big Five traits had similar relations across two different samples (a U.S. college student sample and a Dutch working adult sample), and these patterns were unique for each achievement goal. Lastly, an investigation of the relations of state perfectionism and achievement goals showed that state perfectionism mediated relations between achievement goals and achievement outcomes. Across all these studies, the relations between personality and goal pursuit suggest that these two constructs should be studied together and that personality may function to help people pursue their goals in their daily life.

On March 27, 2015 **Xiaoqian Li** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "As time goes by: Studies on the subjective perception of the speed by which time passes" at Utrecht University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Gun Semin

**Co-promotor**

Dr. Michael Hafner

---

## **Summary**

This thesis deals with an overlooked dimension of time judgments, namely subjective judgments of the speed of time passage: how fast time is judged as passing. It has examined how people make judgments of the speed of time passage and what factors influence people's judgments of the speed of time passage. Chapter 2 first unravels the cognitive processes that underlie judgments of the speed of time passage: the more attention is paid to non-temporal information, the faster time is judged as passing; it also disentangles judgments of the speed of time passage from duration judgments (i.e., judgments about how long time lasted), demonstrating that it is not reliable to infer judgments of the speed of time passage from duration judgments. Chapter 3 builds upon the previous chapter and examines two factors: presentation speed of stimuli and comparison, which might interfere with the role of attentional processes in judging the speed of time passage. It shows that both presentation speed of stimuli and comparison could influence people's judgments of the speed of time passage, but they could not replace the role of attentional processes: when either presentation speed of stimuli or comparison is missing, people can always rely on attentional processes to make judgments of the speed of time passage. Chapter 4 examines the influence of unpredictability on people's judgments of the speed of time passage. It shows that time is judged as passing faster when people are in both temporal unpredictable situations where they cannot predict when the events would happen, and in content unpredictable situations where they cannot predict what events would happen next. Chapter 5 examines the influence of spatial directions of movements on judgments of the speed of time passage. It shows the effect that people judge time as passing faster for the left-to-right movements than the right-to-left movements. This effect was also replicated with Farsi speakers. Overall, the work in this thesis shows original empirical evidence about how people make judgments of the speed of time passage; specifically, it discloses the underlying mechanism of judgments of the speed of time passage (i.e., attentional processes) as well as the factors that influence people's judgments of the speed of time passage such as presentation speed of stimuli, comparison, unpredictability and spatial directions of movements.

# April

On April 17, 2015 **Aukje Verhoeven** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Facilitating food-related planning. Applying metacognition, cue-monitoring, and implementation intentions" at Utrecht University.

## Promotor

Marieke Adriaanse, Denise de Ridder, Emely de Vet, Bob Fennis

---

## Summary

Implementation intentions successfully change unwanted habits like unhealthy snacking. Its efficacy has mostly been demonstrated in controlled lab settings. Yet, when employing this strategy for every day goal pursuit, different challenges emerge, especially when complex habitual behaviors are targeted. The present dissertation set out to examine how the use of implementation intentions could be facilitated aimed at reducing unhealthy snacking.

It was firstly demonstrated among a large community sample that unhealthy snack intake is mostly predicted by habit strength, thereby emphasizing the need for strategies to focus on its habitual nature, e.g., using implementation intentions. Secondly, it was investigated how this strategy can be improved in applied contexts. A first issue concerns the specification of critical cues triggering the unwanted response. While this is essential for effective planning, people generally have limited insight into their habitual triggers. It was examined whether if-then planning could benefit from a cue-monitoring phase. Using a cue-monitoring diary, people reflected upon their reasons for unhealthy snacking in situ to aid cue identification during plan formation. Merely cue-monitoring effectively reduced unhealthy snacking on the short term (but not long term). A second challenge is that while implementation intentions target a single cue-response association, unhealthy snacking is triggered in various situations. Therefore, the behavioral and cognitive effects of forming multiple implementation intentions were investigated. It was found that making multiple plans targeting the same behavior negatively affects goal pursuit and, hence, a single plan should be formed. A final concern is the specific if-then link underlying implementation intention's success, which also makes this tool rather inflexible. Consequently, the presence of multiple triggers, possible changing circumstances, or varying needs for personal goal pursuit cannot be accommodated. Implementation intentions were taught as a 'metacognitive strategy'. Participants from the general population learned how to employ this strategy independently using three steps: planning (deciding when and how to act), monitoring (reflecting on the behavior and its triggers), and evaluating (determining if the plan needs modifications). This strategy was successful: after two months people consumed substantially fewer unhealthy snacks compared to before the exercise and to merely cue-monitoring or cue-monitoring followed by original planning instructions.

Inspired by complications with goal pursuit in daily life, this research assessed vital issues when applying if-then plans. By combining lab and applied studies, new insights were acquired to make implementation intentions accessible for the population at large, facilitating them to change their unhealthy snacking habits.

On April 20, 2015 **Wiebren Jansen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Social inclusion in diverse work settings" at University of Groningen.

### **Promotors**

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

Prof.dr. K. van Oudenhoven-Van der Zee (University of Groningen)

---

### **Summary**

Perceiving to be socially included at work is essential for the well-being and performance of employees. Yet, while inclusion is relatively easy to establish in homogeneous work setting, this is more of a challenge when coworkers are very different from each other. This dissertation aimed to provide an understanding of how inclusion in demographically diverse work settings can be fostered. To do so, the inclusion construct was first conceptually refined. In particular, inclusion was defined as the degree to which an individual perceives that the group provides him or her with a sense of belonging and authenticity. Next, using this definition, the 16-item perceived group inclusion scale (PGIS) was developed and validated. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that the way organizations strategically approach workforce diversity has different effects on perceived inclusion for majority and minority group members. In particular, the results indicate that the extent to which an organization is (perceived to be) open towards and appreciative of subgroup differences (i.e., pursues a multicultural approach or has a positive diversity climate) is especially beneficial to minority members. Conversely, it was found that a colorblind approach to diversity, in which differences between subgroups are ignored, is most effective for majority members. In addition, the results from this dissertation demonstrated that majority members feel more included and show more support for organizational diversity efforts when they are explicitly made part of organizational diversity. Together, this dissertation substantially improves our understanding of how inclusion in diverse work settings can be established and hopefully opens many new avenues for investigating and managing inclusion in a diversifying world.

# June

On June 12, 2015 **Jasper de Groot** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Chemosignaling Emotions: What a Smell can Tell" at Utrecht University.

## Promotors

Prof.dr. Gün R. Semin (Utrecht University)

Prof.dr. Monique A.M. Smeets (Utrecht University)

---

## Summary

The continuous stream of social stimuli impinging on us are mainly registered by our eyes and ears and the typical modalities one would associate with social communication are vision and hearing. However, the current dissertation is concerned with a particular branch of social communication, namely that of emotional states, and it examines the role of a potentially neglected modality in human communication: the sense of smell. As there is substantial overlap in limbic brain regions processing emotional and olfactory information, olfaction is often considered to be the “most emotional” sense. Indeed, odors can easily become associated with emotional experiences (e.g., fear). This dissertation constitutes a systematic examination of whether fear can be communicated from sender to receiver via body odor, by testing hypotheses derived from an embodied social communication framework.

Chapter 3 showed that receivers exposed to the body odor of fearful individuals (vs. neutral, disgust) showed signs of emotional contagion evidenced by fearful facial expression and vigilant behavior (more effective eye scanning, increased sniffing behavior, enhanced accuracy during visual search). Chapter 4, 5, and 6 were aimed at examining the boundary conditions of the chemical communication of fear. More specifically, Chapter 4 examined whether olfactory information (fear-related and neutral) would be overridden by (in)congruent, simultaneously presented audiovisual information. Interestingly, fear-related information was communicated to receivers regardless of whether fear was communicated via the audiovisual or olfactory modality. Chapter 5 showed that women who are generally more sensitive to odors and emotions emulated the fearful state of the senders, whereas men did not. Chapter 6 showed that the capability to communicate by means of olfactory signals may not only be limited to negative emotions, but could be extended to (high arousal) positive ones as well. Chapter 7 closed in on the mechanisms of the chemical communication of fear. As sweat glands in the armpit region have receptors for adrenalin, it was expected that “fear odor” would be produced as a function of adrenalin release. Indeed, what drove the chemical transfer of fear from sender to receiver was the product of the rapid stress system, adrenalin, rather than cortisol resulting from the slow stress system.

Overall, the combined set of studies indicated that humans have the capacity to become emotionally affected by body odors produced during distinctive emotional states. Hence, human odors can serve as a communicative medium by transferring dynamic emotional states from a sender to a receiver.

On June 25, 2015 **Hedy Greijdanus** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Intragroup Communication in Intergroup Conflict: Influences on Social Perception and Cognition" at University of Groningen.

**Promotors**

Prof.dr. Tom Postmes (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Ernestine Gordijn (University of Groningen)

**Co-promotor**

Dr. Martijn van Zomeren (University of Groningen)

---

**Summary**

Most people agree that intergroup conflict can have devastating consequences. Yet no consensus exists about how to de-escalate conflict. The current dissertation aimed to investigate the thus far underrepresented role of intragroup processes in (de-)escalation of intergroup conflict, in order to develop an intragroup communication-based intervention. This approach takes into account that, in intergroup conflict, intragroup communication is more abundant and influential than intergroup communication. The experiments highlight influences of the content and form of intragroup processes on intergroup cognitions that ultimately define intergroup relations. What we discuss about others and how we discuss this influences what we think of them. Regarding the content of intragroup processes, this dissertation demonstrated that the broader intergroup context influences what group members discuss. Specifically, group members who anticipate face-to-face intergroup contact create a shared reality of the outgroup as hostile and, hence, steel themselves against a confrontation. Concerning the form of intragroup processes, results revealed that individuals' processing of outgroup-related information takes on a different form (becomes more abstract) once they anticipate intragroup communication, thereby enabling abstract construal of stereotype-inconsistent information. Importantly, only abstract processing of stereotype-consistent information increased stereotyping whereas abstract processing of stereotype-inconsistency did not. These insights regarding content and form of intragroup processes were applied in an intervention. Results from different intragroup and intergroup contexts provided converging evidence that abstract intragroup refutation of negative outgroup stereotypes is the most successful intervention to improve intergroup perceptions. Intragroup communication content and form can thus be targeted in interventions to de-escalate intergroup conflict.

# September

On September 24, 2015 **Bart de Vos** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Communicating Anger and Contempt in Intergroup Conflict: Exploring their Relational Functions" at University of Groningen.

## **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Ernestine Gordijn (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. Tom Postmes (University of Groningen)

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. Martijn van Zomeren (University of Groningen)

---

## **Summary**

Although the experience of anger in intergroup conflict is typically viewed as a destructive force that is best kept under wraps, the current dissertation suggests that its communication can help de-escalate intergroup conflict because of its relational function. Specifically, this entails that the communication of group-based anger emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive long-term intergroup relationship in the context of signaling perceived injustices. As such, the communication of group-based anger may serve as a plea to the outgroup to empathize with the in-group's plight and to engage in reconciliation. This dissertation demonstrated this relational function in three different ways. First, an outgroup communication of group-based anger (but not contempt) was found to lower ingroup destructive conflict intentions because it increased empathy for the outgroup. Second, two antecedents were identified that may underlie this process, namely that the anger is based on clear injustices caused by the ingroup and/or that the anger is clearly based in the outgroup as a whole (i.e., it is group-based). And finally, contrasting anger and contempt's opposite relational functions showed that in history-laden conflicts anger is most effective when communicated as presently felt ('contemporizing' the conflict), rather than felt in the past, with the reverse being true for contempt. Taken together, results across different contexts, populations, and historical backgrounds provided converging evidence for the relational functions of communicating group-based anger and contempt and, particularly, underline the important role they can play in facilitating intergroup conflict de-escalation.

On September 25, 2015 **Gerdientje Danner** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Psychological Availability. How work experiences spill over into daily family interactions" at Utrecht University.

### **Promotor**

Prof.dr. Tanja van der Lippe, Utrecht University

### **Co-promotors**

Dr. Esther Kluwer, Utrecht University

Elianne van Steenbergen, Utrecht University

---

## **Summary**

Op sommige werkdagen gaat een werknemer gefrustreerd of uitgeput naar huis, terwijl andere dagen het werk enthousiasme en voldoening met zich meebrengt en de werknemer fluitend naar huis fietst. Eerder onderzoek heeft laten zien dat de toestand waarin iemand na het werk naar huis gaat invloed heeft op de gezinsrelaties, zowel negatief als positief (e.g., Repetti, Wang, & Saxbe, 2009; Story & Repetti, 2006). In dit proefschrift heb ik onderzocht hoe deze 'bagage' van de werkdag de dagelijkse interacties van tweeverdieners met hun partners en kinderen beïnvloedt.

Om het mechanisme dat tussen het werk en het gezin plaatsvindt te ontrafelen, heb ik in dit proefschrift het concept 'psychologische beschikbaarheid' geïntroduceerd. Psychologische beschikbaarheid wordt gedefinieerd als de mogelijkheid en de motivatie om psychologische bronnen in te zetten voor de omgang met de partner of het kind. Dit houdt in dat een persoon er mentaal helemaal voor zijn of haar partner of kind kan zijn, zich goed kan inleven in de ander, en interacties zodanig op de ander kan afstemmen dat in de behoeften van de ander wordt voorzien.

Bovendien heb ik in dit proefschrift gekeken naar welke kenmerken van personen er voor zorgen dat mensen hun werk mee naar huis nemen of juist niet. De resultaten van het onderzoek lieten zien dat mensen die de neiging hadden om werk en gezin van elkaar te scheiden, geen negatieve 'spillover' maar wel positieve 'spillover' rapporteerden, terwijl dit voor mensen die hun werk en gezinsleven juist integreerden precies andersom gold; zij ondervonden wel negatieve 'spillover' van werk naar interacties met hun kind, maar geen positieve. Daarnaast ondervonden mensen met een hoge dispositionele zelfregulatie alleen positieve 'spillover' van werkervaringen op de kwaliteit van interacties met de partner, terwijl mensen met een lage dispositionele zelfregulatie alleen negatieve effecten van het werk ondervonden, via een verminderde psychologische beschikbaarheid voor de partner, op de kwaliteit van hun interacties thuis. De resultaten van een quasi-experimentele studie lieten zien dat de mensen met een lage dispositionele zelfregulatie die de dankbaarheidstaak hadden uitgevoerd, minder negatieve 'spillover' ondervonden dan mensen met een lage dispositionele zelfregulatie die deze taak niet hadden uitgevoerd. Deze resultaten impliceren dat men kan voorkomen dat een veeleisende werkdag een negatieve impact heeft op de dagelijkse gezinsinteracties; of door een goede dispositionele zelfcontrole, of door het stimuleren van dankbare gevoelens voor de ander.



# October

On October 22, 2015 **Stacey Sanders** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Unearthing the Moral Emotive Compass: Exploring the Paths to (Un)Ethical Leadership" at University of Groningen.

## Promotors

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

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

---

## Summary

Unethical and abusive supervision have been associated with substantial psychological and financial costs (e.g., Tepper, 2007). In contrast, ethical leadership is associated with favorable outcomes in the work place (e.g., Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Slavador, 2009). However, our scientific understanding of drivers of leader (un)ethical behavior is constrained by an exclusive focus on more cognitive and rational determinants (e.g., moral reasoning). As people do not always act rationally and do not always seem to be guided by rational decision-making processes (e.g., Ariely, 2010), this dissertation aimed to shed light on the role of discrete emotions as predictors of (un)ethical leader behavior as well as employees' supervisor-directed deviance.

In a series of experimental and field studies, across four empirical chapters I have outlined (1) how different discrete moral emotions (i.e., authentic pride, hubristic pride, contempt) may predict leader (un)ethical behavior, and (2) how emotions (i.e., anticipated feelings of guilt) may play a mediating role in the link between (un)ethical leadership and employee deviance. First, I found that that authentically proud leaders show higher levels of ethical behavior than hubristically proud leaders, especially when their moral identity is salient. Second, I found that feelings of contempt diminish the negative link between moral identity and unethical leadership and that power increases the negative relationship between contempt and ethical leadership. Finally, I showed that faced with an abusive supervisor as compared with an ethical supervisor, employees experience less anticipated guilt about deviating against their supervisor, which, in turn, leads to higher levels of deviant behavior.

On October 30, 2015 **Hannah Nohlen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Solving ambivalence in context. The experience and resolution of attitudinal ambivalence" at University of Amsterdam.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Agneta Fischer (University of Amsterdam)

**Co-promotors**

Dr. Frenk van Harreveld (University of Amsterdam)

Dr. Mark Rotteveel (University of Amsterdam)

---

**Summary**

In the present dissertation I sought to further understanding of how individuals are affected by and subsequently deal with attitudinal ambivalence. Three main issues were distinguished. The aims were (1) to investigate the circumstances under which ambivalence elicits negative affect, (2) to examine the (neural) processes underlying the resolution of ambivalence in choice situations, and (3) to investigate delaying a choice as a way of coping with having to make a choice about an ambivalent topic. By combining physiological (fMRI, facial EMG), self-report, and behavioral methods in as well as outside of the lab, we aimed to shed further light on these questions. First, the circumstances under which ambivalence elicits negative affect were examined using physiological (fMRI, facial EMG) methods (Chapter 2 and 3). Second, the role of evaluative context in processing of ambivalence was examined with a specific focus on the development and resolution of choice conflict (Chapter 3 and 4). Third, choice delay was examined as a way of coping with ambivalence that does not necessarily involve resolving ambivalence, but has been argued to reduce negative affect by distraction from ambivalence (Chapter 5).

Taken together, results of this dissertation suggests that how individuals are affected by and deal with ambivalence is not static, but context-dependent. Context may determine whether the inconsistency of ambivalence is expressed and translates into affective and behavioral changes that motivate us to resolve it. Contextual information determines how an ambivalent stimulus is processed, responded to and how affective responses to ambivalence develop over time by allowing individuals to weigh some evaluative aspect more than another. Attitudinal ambivalence is thus not such a bad thing after all - ambivalence does not always elicit negative affect and it is often resolvable. However, if it is not, ambivalent decision-makers can experience the negative side of ambivalence, and coping by delaying a choice about an ambivalent topic seems to even increase negative affect. Attitudinal ambivalence thus can, but does not have to trigger a host of negative consequences, and I hope that future research will support the idea that ambivalence can also have positive effects dependent on context.

# November

On November 13, 2015 **Marc Heerdink** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Regulating deviance with emotions: Emotional expressions as signals of acceptance and rejection" at University of Amsterdam.

## Promotors

Prof.dr. Gerben A. van Kleef, University of Amsterdam

Prof.dr. Agneta H. Fischer, University of Amsterdam

## Co-promotor

Dr. Astrid C. Homan, University of Amsterdam

---

## Summary

An individual group member's deviant behavior can provoke strong emotional reactions from other group members. In my dissertation, I investigate the role that these emotional reactions play in the regulation of deviance. Is the deviant affected by these emotional reactions, and, if so, in what way? I predict that angry reactions will lead the deviant to feel more rejected, whereas happy reactions will lead the deviant to feel more accepted. Because conformity is typically valued and appreciated by groups, a deviant group member may strategically conform to gain (re-)acceptance in a group when they feel rejected. Thus, because angry expressions signal rejection, they may elicit conformity from a deviant individual when two conditions are met: (a) re-acceptance in the rejecting group is desirable to the deviant and (b) conformity is (perceived as) instrumental. I investigated these ideas in three empirical chapters.

In the first empirical chapter, I measured implicit associations between emotional expressions and acceptance and rejection in six experiments, and found support the ideas that happy signal of acceptance and that angry expressions are taken as signs of rejection.

In the second empirical chapter, I investigated the mathematical relation between the number of angry reactions and the extent to which a deviant feels rejected in two experiments. I found that every single angry reaction to deviance increases the extent to which the deviant feels rejected.

In the third empirical chapter, I investigated the role of the proposed moderators of the effect of angry reactions on conformity in five studies, and found that angry reactions to deviance can indeed elicit lasting conformity if (a) re-acceptance is desirable and (b) conformity is instrumental in gaining re-acceptance.

Together, these findings indicate that group members influence each other through the emotional reactions to each others' behavior. Furthermore, this dissertation shows that there is more to the emotional reactions to deviance than previously assumed: These emotional reactions help regulate deviance in groups.

On the basis of these findings, I propose an extended theoretical model in which emotional

reactions to deviance influence the deviant's behavior through two simultaneous motives, retaliation and reconnection. I discuss new insights that follow from this model, as well as more general implications that follow from these findings for theorizing about the social functions of emotions in general, and in groups specifically.

On November 19, 2015 **Danny Taufik** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled ""Can you feel it" The role of feelings in explaining pro-environmental behavior" at University of Groningen.

## **Summary**

Recycling used paper, taking shorter showers and cycling to work instead of going by car are just a few examples of human behaviors that can be deemed as pro-environmental behavior. Even though these behaviors typically involve some degree of effort or cost, many people still decide to act in ways that are beneficial for the environment. But why?

The findings described in the current dissertation suggest that feelings can play an important role in people's environmental decision-making: people are more likely to act environmentally-friendly when they believe this will make them feel good. These anticipated positive feelings can guide one's actions, even more so than people's cognitive calculations of benefits (such as how much money people think they can save with a pro-environmental action). Moreover, these feelings can originate from the fact that environmental actions have implications for one's self-concept: going green signals to people that they are good and moral human beings and elicits positive feelings, which can manifest itself in a so-called 'warm glow'. This 'warm-glow' may manifest itself even rather literally in the form of perceiving higher temperatures when learning one acted pro-environmentally, thus giving people a warm feeling when they act environmentally-friendly because their self-concept is boosted.

While environmental decision-making is often viewed as a cognitive process, by scientists as well as policy makers, the overall findings in the current dissertation indicate that feelings can have an important role in people's environmental decision-making.

On November 26, 2015 **Sarah Elbert** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Auditory information and its parameters in health persuasion. The development of a tailored smartphone application to support behavior change"

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Arie Dijkstra (University of Groningen)

---

**Summary**

The auditory mode of communication offers new possibilities and challenges to present persuasive health information. The current dissertation aimed to investigate how health information with regard to fruit and vegetable intake can be communicated most effectively via the auditory channel. First, we found that parameters of the behavior change method influenced persuasion. These parameters refer to the use of intonation, background music, source introductions and tailoring ingredients. In addition, individual differences played a role, showing that the effects were only found under specific conditions related to the involvement and self-efficacy expectations of the individual. After a series of experimental studies with regard to these parameters, the findings were applied in a smartphone application intervention to compare the efficacy of textual and auditory tailored health information. After six months, a higher fruit intake was reported after listening to the auditory information, and conditions were identified under which the textual or auditory information could influence vegetable intake. All in all, auditory health persuasion does not always seem to be effective in the context of health behavior change. Therefore, it is important to take into account the relevant parameters as studied in the current dissertation. Furthermore, next steps are to optimize the process of auditory health persuasion and to discover how vulnerable groups of people (e.g., people with low health literacy) may benefit from a smartphone application intervention to support health behavior change.