



Small Group Meeting
on
Self Regulation Approaches to Group Processes

June 21st till 24th 2009

Hosted by

**Knowledge Media Research Center
Social Processes Lab**

Tübingen

Organizers:

Kai J. Jonas, University of Amsterdam

Kai Sassenberg, Knowledge Media Research Center, Tübingen

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Self Regulation Approaches to Group Processes

Program Overview

Sunday, June 21st 2009

Evening Arrival and Pick-up Service in Tübingen

Monday, June 22nd 2009

9:00 – 10:40 **Self-Regulation in Intragroup Settings**

How to find a hidden profile? Planning enhances group decision-making

Frank Wieber, Jan Lukas Thürmer, & Peter M. Gollwitzer

The effects of regulatory focus on dynamic team decision making

Bianca Beersma, Carsten K. W. de Dreu, Gerben van Kleef, & Astrid C. Homan

10:40 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 – 12:40 A regulatory systems perspective for group performance on dynamic tasks

Verlin B. Hinsz

Self-Regulation by Groups: Why Isn't Reflection More Helpful?

Richard L. Moreland & Jamie G. McMinn

12:40 – 14:20 *Lunch*

14:20 – 16:00 **Self-Regulation in Intragroup Settings, contd.**

This group is not my home: Membership fluctuation as adaptive response to divergent individual and group goals
Susanne Täuber, Amélie Mummendey, & Rupert Brown

Doing the time warp: Self-regulation and time orientation
Karl- Andrew Woltin & Kai J. Jonas

16:00 – 16:30 *Coffee break*

16:30 – 18:00 **Ego-depletion in intra and inter-group contexts**

When and why intergroup conflict is draining: The role of ego depletion

Winnifred R. Louis, Joanne R. Smith, & Kathleen D. Vohs

The challenge of regulating conformity in a culture that idealizes independence

Jessica Salvatore & Deborah A. Prentice

19:00 *Dinner in the Hotel*

Tuesday, June 23rd 2009

9:00 – 10:40

Challenging contexts

Preventing threat or promoting challenge? Similarities and differences between Prevention Focus and threat and Promotion Focus and challenge

Claudia Sassenrath & Kai Sassenberg

Self-regulatory orientations and individuals' behavior in social dilemma situations

Johannes Keller

10:40 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:40

Power and Status

Regulatory focus and decision-making in groups: The moderating role of group-status and accountability

Daan Scheepers, Naomi Ellemers, & Kai Sassenberg

Power, behavioral variability, and situated focus

Ana Guinote

12:40 – 14:20

Lunch

14:20 – 16:00

From Collective Regulatory Focus to Regulatory Climate: Group-level self-regulation in organizational teams

Eric Rietzschel

The interplay of external stimuli and self-regulation

Protecting performance under stereotype threat: The role of regulatory focus and task demands

Thomas Ståhl & Colette van Laar, Naomi Ellemers, & Belle Derks

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee break

16:30 – 17:20

The effect of regulatory focus on collective responses to group-based discrimination

Maarten Zaal, Colette van Laar, Tomas Ståhl, Naomi Ellemers, & Belle Derks

19:00

External Dinner

Wednesday, June 24th 2009

Morning

Departure after breakfast

Abstracts

How to find a hidden profile? Planning enhances group decision-making

*Frank Wieber & Jan Lukas Thürmer
University of Konstanz*

*Peter M. Gollwitzer
University of Konstanz & New York University*

When pursuing joint goals, the relevant knowledge is often unequally distributed among the group members. As a consequence, effective communication is required to come to optimal outcomes. In fact, previous research demonstrated that communication in groups tends to be ineffective and often results in suboptimal decisions (e.g., Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, & Schulz-Hardt, 2007; Cannon-Bowers, Salas, & Converse, 1993; Stasser & Titus, 1985, 2003). The present research therefore aimed to examine whether group decision-making can be enhanced by the use of an easily applicable self-regulation strategy, namely by forming specific if-then plans (Gollwitzer, 1999). To test the effects of planning on group decisionmaking, a so called hidden profile paradigm was employed, which exploits the common knowledge effect (i.e., shared information is more likely to be discussed than unshared one). Finding the correct solution in this paradigm requires that group members discuss the goalrelevant knowledge that is unshared between them (i.e., only one group member has this information). To manipulate participants' planning, they either included the strategy to name unmentioned arguments and to double-check the pros of the non-preferred decisions in an ifthen format or not. Next, participants received individual information about three different options in a decision-making scenario (e.g., hiring a new employee). After making an individual decision for one option, a group discussion followed, in which they had to agree on a concordant group decision. Altogether, each of twenty-eight groups of three completed four different scenarios. The results confirm our hypothesis. Processes and implications will be discussed.

The effects of regulatory focus on dynamic team decision making

*Bianca Beersma, Carsten K.W. De Dreu, Gerben A. Van Kleef
University of Amsterdam*

*Astrid C. Homan
VU University, Amsterdam*

Research on motivational influences in groups has not examined the impact of self-regulatory mechanisms, although individual-level studies have shown that these mechanisms are strongly related to decision-making processes and outcomes. In three studies, in which four-person teams performed an interactive command and control task, we argue and find that the extent to which tasks require coordination (information sharing and processing) moderate the effects of regulatory focus, such that a prevention focus can be beneficial for group performance, but only when tasks require high levels of coordination, and when team members share a cooperative motive. Experiment 1 uncovered that the extent to which team members were chronically promotion- rather than prevention focused was positively related to team decision-making performance when the task had low coordination requirements, but not when the task required a lot of coordination. In line with this, Experiment 2 showed that in a task characterized by low ambiguity, the extent to which team members were promotion- rather than prevention focused was again positively related to performance. However, in an ambiguous task that required team members to share and process information to adapt to changing circumstances, the extent to which team members were prevention- rather than promotion focused was positively related to performance. Focusing on such ambiguous situations, in Experiment 3 we manipulated regulatory focus (promotion versus prevention) and reward structure (cooperative versus competitive). As predicted, prevention focused teams only performed well under a cooperative reward structure, and effects were mediated by team coordination and speed.

A Regulatory Systems Perspective for Group Performance on Dynamic Tasks

Verlin B. Hinsz
North Dakota State University

Groups performing dynamic tasks are commonplace in modern societies. Consider emergency response teams as an example of groups performing dynamic command and control tasks. The major functions of these types of command and control groups are to process information, make decisions, and act to impact the environment. To help us understand the activities of these kinds of groups, we offer a regulatory systems approach to the dynamic aspects of command and control groups (e.g., attentional focus, objectives, feedback). We propose a set of models that represent a hierarchy of embedded and interactive systems that reflect regulatory processes at multiple levels of group functioning: (1) an individual performing tasks, (2) the interactive processes of a collection of co-located individuals performing related tasks, (3) the coordinated network of group members performing a set of interdependent tasks, (4) the performance of the group as an entity, and (5) the intergroup relationships of multiple groups performing tasks in concert or conflict. The analysis of these embedded systems highlights several important themes of groups performing dynamic tasks: (a) interdependence of outcomes, tasks, and interaction, (b) coordination of effort and action, (c) parallelism in the models' structures and functions at the different levels, and (d) the impact of effects that involve processes that cross levels. We show that this hierarchy of embedded systems framework is applicable to a variety of intragroup processes and intergroup environments. The framework also provides guidance for considering unique issues such as affective reactions and motivation of group members and multi-team systems.

Self-Regulation by Groups: Why Isn't Reflection More Helpful?

*Richard L. Moreland
University of Pittsburgh*

*Jamie G. McMinn
Westminster College, PA*

Experience is a common source of learning, but its value might increase if people reflected on their experiences. After reflecting, people often change for the better what they have been doing. Reflection is thus a form of self-regulation.

Educational psychologists, studying individuals, have shown that reflection is indeed valuable, improving learning in various ways. This has led social and organizational psychologists, spurred also by claims made by practitioners (e.g., sports, business, military) for the value of group reflection, to study whether reflection benefits groups in similar ways. Unfortunately, such research has produced mixed results.

Intrigued by this contrast between practitioners' strong claims and weak research evidence, we performed a laboratory experiment in which small groups operated a business (using a computer simulation) for awhile, then either reflected on their performance or were prevented from reflecting, and finally returned to the business and operated it awhile longer. At issue was whether reflection (versus non-reflection) would improve group performance. Despite studying many groups, we found that it did not.

Why? We have considered several possible explanations, many relevant to studies by other researchers in this area, and we are now exploring some of those explanations through detailed analyses of group members' verbal behavior (recorded on videotapes) during the reflection sessions, and a follow-up experiment involving efforts to create a 'safety' climate in some groups, so that their members are more willing to reflect, and will reflect more deeply, on the performance of their groups.

At the meeting, we hope to discuss the details of our work, and the general topic of reflection as a form of self-regulation by groups.

This group is not my home: Membership fluctuation as adaptive response to divergent individual and group goals

*Susanne Täuber & Amélie Mummendey
Friedrich Schiller University Jena*

*Rupert Brown
University of Sussex*

The present research demonstrated that group members adaptively respond to divergence vs. correspondence of their own goals and the group's goals. It was argued that detecting and correctly reacting to such (mis-)matches likewise benefits individuals and groups. Three studies tested the prediction that, relative to goal-correspondence, goal-divergence is associated with greater intentions to leave the group. In line with expectations, goal-divergence related to greater willingness to leave the group, to withdraw from the group, and to less satisfaction with group membership than goal-correspondence. These findings indicate that a discrepancy-enlarging feedback loop monitors group members' reactions to mismatches between themselves and the group. Consistent with suggestions by Carver and Scheier (1998), Study 3 demonstrated that the discrepancy-enlarging feedback loop ultimately feeds into a discrepancy-reducing feedback loop. Particularly, the effect of goal-divergence on willingness to reengage with other groups (representing a discrepancy-reducing loop) was mediated by the motivation to distance from the group (representing a discrepancy-enlarging loop). Findings indicate that a sequence of impaired evaluations of the group's functionality and the motivation to increase the distance between the self and the group are underlying the effect of goal-divergence on group members' willingness to give up group membership. Also consistent across studies, an alternative explanation for the findings based on social identity theory was disproved. Findings are discussed in the light of adaptive self- and social-regulation, evolutionary psychology and distinct functions of groups.

Doing the time warp: Self-regulation and time orientation

*Karl- Andrew Wolfin
Catholic University at Louvain-la-Neuve*

*Kai J. Jonas
University of Amsterdam*

Some goals entail a fixed point in time for their attainment. So far, research has not investigated the interplay of such individual or group deadlines and self-regulation strategies. This is surprising as based on Regulatory Focus Theory one can assume that certain self-regulatory strategies (prevention focus) should be more prone to an orientation along deadlines as they involve losses (e.g. of time). In two initial studies we tested and could show that goals are used as landmarks in time. Individual goals used as primes in a lexical decision task lead to a facilitation of the day of goal attainment, but not for the other days of the week. For group goals this effect was moderated by identification, for individual goals by social comparison orientation. In two further studies we tested the assumed fit of prevention focus with deadlines. Indeed prevention focus led to describing behavior fitting deadlines in terms of loss characteristics. The results also indicated a fit of promotion focus with deadlines, albeit concerning the description of the deadline itself. The latter effect was replicated for individual goals. For group goals prevention focus led to a description of the deadline in terms of prevention, which may be due to loss of perceived outcome-control at the group level. Overall our results indicate that our time orientation is by no means a stable clock ticking, but shaped by our goals and that depending on group and individual goals and regulatory focus, deadlines are seen and dealt with differently.

When and why intergroup conflict is draining: The role of ego depletion

*Winnifred R. Louis
The University of Queensland*

*Joanne R. Smith
University of Exeter*

*Kathleen D. Vohs
University of Minnesota*

The phenomenon of ego-depletion refers to a state wherein people have significantly reduced the inner reserves that are used in instances of willpower. Ego-depletion can be created through self-regulation challenges like resisting eating tasty cookies, or not smoking (in a sample of smokers). However it can also be created by social tasks. A single experience of conflict, for example, may involve simultaneously 1) making active decisions about how to respond, 2) resisting persuasion, 3) crafting persuasive arguments, 4) managing one's public 'face', and 5) engaging in counter-attitudinal behaviours (e.g., being polite to a loathed other) - all of which have been shown to be ego-depleting in past research. We operationalized depletion in terms of intergroup conflict, which is a novel way to conceptualize between-group concerns. As predicted, among British non-Muslim participants (N=135), we found that ego-depletion was significantly higher after participants had completed a task focusing on conflict with Muslims in the UK, compared to a control condition. Moreover, the depleting effect was stronger for participants who were low in prejudice, which suggests that conflict is more draining when one does not dislike the other party. By increasing responsiveness to the environment, ego-depletion may foster both the chance of conflict escalation after provocation and the likelihood of cooperation after conciliation. The present paper discusses a program of research designed to illuminate the draining effects of intergroup conflict for self-regulation, as well as the theoretically interesting and socially important effects of conflict-induced ego-depletion upon intergroup identities and conflict behaviour.

The challenge of regulating conformity in a culture that idealizes independence

*Jessica Salvatore
University of Exeter*

*Deborah A. Prentice
Princeton University*

American culture strongly idealizes independence from normative influence. Is this idealized type of behavioral independence well captured by the field's popular measure of independent self-construal (Singelis, 1994)? Researchers have traditionally taken these self-reports at face value (high scorers are, as they claim, more independent than low scorers). Perhaps the dimension also taps into the tendency to conform to cultural norms (highs are actually, by default, more conforming than lows). This might suggest that high scorers would tend to see themselves in any socially valued terms. Indeed, an initial study confirms that they have a broad tendency to endorse unambiguously socially desirable traits as self-descriptive. Furthermore, self-construal scores predict anticipated (in)dependent behavior, but are not related to recollections of past (in)dependent behavior. Perhaps this proposed positive relationship between independence and conformity is normally masked by self-regulatory efforts to correct for it. If so, these efforts should rely on regulatory resources (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998) and awareness of the self-concept as a regulatory standard (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Results from two additional studies confirm that high independents show "ironic conformity," and low independents sometimes show anti-conformity, when self-regulatory capacity is impaired or attention is directed away from the self. These results speak to the dynamic and complicated nature of the process through which individuals develop a (more or less) culturally valued sense of self and attempt to regulate their social behavior in order to maintain consistency with that self-concept.

**Preventing threat or promoting challenge?
Similarities and differences between
Prevention Focus and threat and Promotion Focus and challenge**

*Claudia Sassenrath & Kai Sassenberg
Knowledge Media Research Center*

Different self regulation theories address the need for security. Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) differentiates two separate regulatory systems based on the underlying needs that are regulated when the respective system is activated. Security needs underlie the prevention focus whereas eagerness needs underlie the promotion focus. Blascovich and Tomaka (1996) distinguish between threats - occurring in situations in which demands outweigh resources - and challenges - experienced in situations in which resources outweigh demands. Hence, threat as well as a prevention focus is concerned with the achievement and maintenance of a secure state of being. Therefore, both regulatory states are often discussed in close connection to each other. Two studies will be presented that have investigated differences between prevention focus and threat. The first study investigated the evaluation of power - a potential resource providing security. Results show that people experiencing threat evaluate power more positively than people experiencing challenge, whereas people in a prevention focus evaluate power more negatively than people in a promotion focus. The second study addresses the question whether prevention focus and threat have some commonalities on a more basic dimension of information processing. For this purpose attention toward threatening stimuli was investigated in the study. Threatening stimuli can indicate that the aspired security is possibly in danger and should therefore have an attention grabbing character in both prevention focus and threat. Results show the expected attention grabbing effect of threatening stimuli for prevention focus but not for threat. Instead attention grabbing of threatening stimuli was found for challenge. In sum, the results indicate that threat and challenge are defined by their affective character, whereas prevention and promotion focus operate as mindsets.

Self-regulatory orientations and individuals' behaviour in social dilemma situations

*Johannes Keller
University of Mannheim*

The present work addresses a basic issue that needs to be resolved in order to understand the hypersociality that can be observed in the human species: the origins of altruistic, prosocial behavior in the context of social dilemmas. The reported research was concerned with the analysis of distinct boundary conditions that may determine whether individuals cooperate in order to produce a public good. Specifically, the present research examined the role of individual differences in self-regulatory mechanisms as outlined in regulatory focus theory (promotion- and prevention-focused self-regulation) regarding individuals' behavior in social dilemma situations. Somewhat surprisingly, there is very little research on the role of self-regulatory mechanisms in social dilemmas. In fact, theories addressing behavior in social dilemmas have largely ignored the role of self-regulation. The current research aims to address this theoretical and empirical gap. The studies revealed that the more individuals' habitual self-regulatory orientation is dominated by a vigilant prevention focus, the more likely they are (a) to respond with distrust in the trust game paradigm, (b) to act selfishly in a public goods game situation under anonymous conditions, (c) to act cooperatively in a commons dilemma under conditions where a subtle cue of being watched renders reputational concerns salient, and (d) to punish defectors in a commons dilemma situation. These findings indicate that a prevention-focused style of self-regulation is particularly influential in the context of social dilemmas. In general, the observed findings suggest that investigations of prosocial behavior should consider self-regulatory orientation as a critical factor.

Regulatory Focus and Decision-making in Groups: The moderating Role of Group-status and Accountability

*Daan Scheepers & Naomi Ellemers
Leiden University*

*Kai Sassenberg
University of Tübingen – Knowledge Media Research Center*

This research examines how group status affects the impact of individual power positions on promotion vs. prevention choices in group decision making. We consider that high power not only implies control, but also indicates accountability for the achievement of group goals. We argue that the nature of these goals depends on the current status of the group. In Experiment 1 individuals who were accorded high power showed more promotion oriented decisions in the low group status condition while decisions were more prevention oriented under high group status. Experiment 2 replicated these effects, and further demonstrated that they emerge when those in power feel accountable for the achievement of group goals. These results are discussed in relation to regulatory focus theory, power theories, and the role of social identities and group goals in group dynamics.

Power, Behavior Variability, and Situated Focus

Ana Guinote
University College London

Members of powerful groups act in more variable ways than members of subordinate groups (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002). The present talk discusses self-regulatory mechanisms that contribute to greater variability in the behavior of powerful compared to powerless group members. According to the Situated Focus Theory of Power (Guinote, ERSP, 2007) powerful individuals have greater attentional focus and utilize more flexible information processing strategies. These tendencies increase situated responses. Specifically, factors that drive cognition such as motivation (e.g., needs, goals, expectancies), inner experiences (e.g., feelings, ease-of-retrieval), as well as properties of the environment (e.g., affordances), guide more selectively the responses of powerful compared to powerless individuals. Furthermore, the greater attentional focus of powerful individuals promotes 3 content-free behavior signatures of power: readiness to act, prioritization and behaviour variability across situations. Studies supporting these claims will be discussed. Together they point out that self-regulation processes driven by the group's social position affect objective group variability.

From Collective Regulatory Focus to Regulatory Climate: Group-level self-regulation in organizational teams

*Eric Rietzschel
University of Groningen*

The shift from the individual to the group level marks an important development in work on self-regulation. Like individuals, groups need to regulate their collective efforts to perform effectively. Research on group self-regulation confirms that the group level is no less relevant than the individual level. However, little attention has been paid to the question whether group self-regulatory processes should be viewed as a truly collective phenomenon that exists on the group level, or should be viewed as an aggregate of the individual (chronic or induced) regulatory tendencies of the group members. In this presentation, I will address this issue in the context of Higgins' regulatory focus theory, and apply it to organizational teams. I use the working hypothesis that there is in fact such a thing as a regulatory climate, i.e., a shared perception of norms and practices within the team. Thus, teams may have a promotion climate, aimed at attainment of successes and at growth, or a prevention climate, aimed at avoidance of failures and at security. This regulatory climate can and should be distinguished from the aggregated foci of the individual team members. In my view, regulatory climate is likely to predict team performance and member well-being over and above these individual foci. In my presentation, I will evaluate this regulatory climate hypothesis in light of new data that are currently being collected within several organizations.

Protecting performance under stereotype threat: The role of regulatory focus and task demands

*Tomas Ståhl, Colette Van Laar, Naomi Ellemers, & Belle Derks
Leiden University*

It is well-established that the activation of task relevant negative stereotypes can impair performance in various domains. However, the processes through which stereotypes exert their influence on performance vary depending on task requirements. On cognitively demanding tasks, stereotype threat can impair performance by taxing limited regulatory resources. In such situations, we argue that people can protect their performance under threat by adopting a prevention focus; a regulatory orientation that facilitates recruitment of regulatory resources in response to threat (cf. Koch, Holland, & Van Knippenberg, 2008). Consistent with these ideas, data will be presented demonstrating that stereotype threat leads to regulatory impairments among people who are *not* in a prevention focus. However, people in a prevention focus show no regulatory impairments under stereotype threat. Additional data suggest that the protective properties of a prevention focus are not restricted to cognitive control per se, but generalize to performance on stereotype relevant tasks relying on regulatory resources. By contrast, on tasks that rely on more automatic processes (e.g., proceduralized motor skills) rather than on effortful self-regulation, stereotype threat can impair performance by causing people to monitor processes that function optimally without direct attention. In such situations, we argue that people who have a prevention focus are particularly susceptible to stereotype threat effects, as they respond to threat by recruiting additional regulatory resources that should interfere with task-execution.

The effect of regulatory focus on collective responses to group-based discrimination

*Maarten Zaal, Colette van Laar, Tomas Ståhl,
Naomi Ellemers, & Belle Derks
Leiden University*

In two lines of research, we investigated the effects of regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) on the choice for collective responses to group-based discrimination. In line with earlier work (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990; Lalonde, Stroink, & Aleem, 2002), we operationalized collective responses to discrimination as a two dimensional construct. The first dimension, personal commitment to the goal of collective action, was examined in Line 1. In three studies we show that promotion oriented individuals are willing to engage in collective action when they expect that important outcomes can be attained through such actions. Prevention oriented individuals were generally unaffected by the expectation of success, and were willing to engage in collective action to the extent that they agreed with its goals. In Line 2, we investigated the effect of regulatory focus on the second dimension of collective responses to discrimination; the choice between normative and non-normative forms of action. We show that the perceived immorality of non-normative forms of collective action causes the prevention oriented, but not the promotion oriented, to be hesitant in supporting these kinds of actions. However, when discrimination is perceived as highly immoral, prevention focused individuals (but not promotion focused individuals) overcome their moral objections and support non-normative collective action. Taken together, these results demonstrate the importance of considering the influence of regulatory focus on collective responses to group-based discrimination.

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