The inclusion of a new group into the self-concept

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List of Abbreviations

Acculturation contact strategies	Contact and Participation with the secondary culture
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
HG	Hostgroup
OG	Outgroup
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural equation modeling
T 1 / T 2	Time 1 / Time 2
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index

Chapter 1   Motivated newcomer self-concept changes

In times of accelerated change, mobility and flexibility are required in the adaptation to an ever-changing world. As a consequence, people often choose or find themselves forced to enter new groups. In Germany, 19% of the people have a migration background, around 385 500 students started a major at university in 2008 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2006), and 15 % of the working population in Germany above 18 have changed working place within 2005 to 2006 (Sozio-ökonomisches Panel, 2006), for instance. Migration means being a newcomer in a society and culture, change of working place or becoming a freshman makes people be newcomers in teams or colleges. These examples illustrate that people recurrently in life become members in new groups that are central to their being.

Entering a new group challenges the newcomer to adapt to a new situation. The entrance into a new group might question behavioral routines and results in the adaptation to the new group's behavioral patterns (Berry, 1997; Moreland & Levine, 1982). Besides behavioral changes, I argue that the self-concept, that is the way newcomers perceive *themselves,* is affected by the new group membership. Traditionally, the self-concept is conceptualized as the individual's view of relatively stable characteristic in oneself (e.g., Snygg & Combs, 1949). Since group memberships constitute an important part of the self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), new group memberships should *change* the self-concept as groups become included into the self-concept. However, research has not demonstrated the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept, yet. Therefore, the present dissertation seeks to demonstrate that the self-concept adapts to the new group by including the group into the self-concept. Thus, instead of investigating effects of a long-term social identity in a static state, the current research investigates the dynamic adaptation of social identities to the social environment.

A large body of literature theorizes that the inclusion of groups into the self-concept protects the individual from risks for long-term psychological functioning (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Hogg & Abrams, 1993), affects personal and group-based behavior (e.g., Deaux, 1996; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and increases psychological and socio-cultural adaptation (e.g., in the context of migration, Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Hence, it is important to identify circumstances that facilitate or detain the successful inclusion of a group into the self-concept of newcomers. The current research is the first to apply a self-regulation perspective on the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept by investigating the impact of approach and

avoidance strategies on self-concept changes. In doing so, the newcomer is seen as an active protagonist in his or her self-concept adaptation to the new group.

The purpose of the current research is thus to investigate self-concept changes induced by new group memberships, and the active role that newcomers have in this process by the adoption of regulatory strategies.

The present chapter includes two main parts. In the first part, *being a newcomer – a summary of research*, an overview of research on newcomers and the inclusion of groups into the self-concept is given. In the second part, *motivated newcomers – the deficits in current research*, it is argued that a self-regulatory perspective contributes to the knowledge about the process of the inclusion of the new group into the self-concept.

Being a newcomer – a summary of research

As newcomer and group start to interact, there is evidence that newcomers induce changes in groups. Newcomers bring new knowledge, resources, and perspectives into the group. Hence, newcomers have the means to contribute to the group's diversity. On the one hand, this might stimulate the group's divergent thinking and thus improve group innovation and performance (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; De Dreu & West, 2001; Nemeth, 1986), and decrease risk of group think (Janis, 1971; Esser, 1998). On the other hand, there is evidence that these potentials are often not realized (van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The proneness to newcomer influence depends on the prior situation of the group, as it increases when group routines were both forced and unsuccessful (Choi & Levine, 2004) or with increasing need of group members (Cini, Moreland, & Levine, 1993). Moreover, the potential benefits of newcomers might come at the cost of disturbance of familiarity and the sense of a common identity in the group. Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, and Neale (1996) argue that newcomers induce losses in interpersonal knowledge and interpersonal attraction in familiar groups. They demonstrated that familiarity in groups improves conflict resolution, which is necessary in performances that require transfer of unshared knowledge. Kane, Argote, and Levine (2005) demonstrated that transfer of useful knowledge between newcomer and group is successful only if there is a superordinate identity. Hence, the potential for increased performance was not realized when newcomers were not perceived part of the common group. However, newcomers do not necessarily jeopardize the feeling of a common identity: when openness to change and criticism is normative in the group (Postmes, Spears, & Cihangir, 2001), and newcomers' differences are

clearly evident and congruent with the expectation, then newcomer induced diversity is beneficial for the group's performance (Rink & Ellemers, in press).

In sum, the newcomer has the potential to induce beneficial and disturbing changes in groups: the benefits of diversity come at the cost of losing familiarity and the feeling of a common social identity. The group's perception that the newcomer is a normative part of the group is particularly important in order to realize the potential benefits of the newcomer induced diversity.

The model of socialization (Moreland & Levine, 1982) argues that not only newcomers induce changes in groups, but group and newcomer induce changes in each other in different phases of time. The phase between newcomer entry and acceptance as a full member is when the newcomer changes the group (accommodation), but also the group changes the newcomer (assimilation). Newcomers adopt knowledge, skills, and motivation to behave prototypically, in order to become more similar to the group and fulfill their role in the group adequately (Moreland & Levine, 1982). Besides these behavioral changes, familiarity with the group changes the newcomers' perception of the group, as at first, perceived homogeneity increases (Oakes, Haslam, Morrison & Grace, 1995), but then the perception of the group becomes more differentiated by the time (Linville, Fischer & Salovey, 1989; Moreland, 1985). Thus, newcomer behavior and perception of the group change as a consequence of membership. However, research has not yet investigated how the way newcomers perceive *themselves* is influenced by their new group membership. Unlike these studies that focused on newcomer changes in behavior and perception of the group, the current research focuses on self-concept changes in newcomers induced by new group memberships. I suggest that newcomers begin to perceive themselves as member of the group when they enter it. Perceiving oneself as part of a group is, according to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), an important part of the self-concept.

The group as a part of the self-concept

The self-concept is one's theory about oneself (Brown, 1998), that contains a personal identity, a relational identity, and a social identity. Social identities are defined as "the part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). One of the clearer conceptualizations of the nature of social identities was put forward in the connectionist model of Smith (2002). In this model,

both the representation of the self and the representation of the group are seen as networks of knowledge that can be interlinked. The inclusion of a group in the self-concept is conceptualized as a strong association between these two mental representations, also called a *mental overlap* between self and group. If there is such an association, the representations of self and group activate each other automatically.

Social identification is the most common indicator of the strength of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. When members are identified with a group, they act, feel, and self-categorize on behalf of the group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A less studied dimension of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept is disidentification. Note that disidentification is not the opposite of social identification, which would be non-identification, when the group is irrelevant to the self-concept. When members disidentify, the group remains relevant to the self-concept, but members act, feel, and self-categorize *against* the group (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007).

So far, the development of social identification has received little attention in social psychological research (for an exception see Eisenbeiss, 2004). Social identities have thus been treated as a static, rather than a flexible and dynamic aspect of the self-concept. The self-expansion model (for a summary, see Aron et al., 2004), however, argues that individuals seek to expand, thus change their self-concept in order to increase their access to resources, perspectives, and identities. Therefore, close others are included into the self-concept. Consequences for the relational identity have been demonstrated: Aron and colleagues found that individual persons, such as marital partners, are a part of self-concept (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelsen, 1991). For the social identity, it has likewise been demonstrated that ingroups are a part of the self-concept (Smith & Henry, 1996). Thus, the inclusion of the *new group* into the self-concept should not only be possible, but newcomers should be motivated to include the new group into their self-concept. Indeed, there is evidence that individuals are prone to act on behalf of new social categories, even if these categories are without prior history, and allocation to these categories is merely coincidental (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971).

As newcomers enter a new group, the membership provides a new social category to base the self-definition upon. However, it has not yet been demonstrated that a social identity develops for a new group. Research has demonstrated the *consequence* of the inclusion, but

there is no direct evidence that the self-concept undergoes *changes* when a group gains ingroup-status.

New groups are nothing else but outgroups (as long as membership is not established) that become ingroups because of the change in membership status. For outgroups, it has been demonstrated that friendship to an outgroup member leads to the inclusion of the outgroup-friend into the self-concept (McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; cited in Aron et al., 2004), which indirectly includes the friend's group into the self-concept (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Thus, these findings imply that even outgroups can become part of the self-concept, but the inclusion of an outgroup into the self-concept is still directly to be demonstrated. Therefore, the first aim of the current research is to demonstrate that outgroups can be included into the self-concept and thus approximate or gain the status of an ingroup when newcomers enter the group. This issue will be addressed in the first part of this dissertation, entitled *The impact of exchange programs on the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept*.

In what follows, an overview about the process of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept and its influencing factors will be given.

The process of inclusion

As outlined above, in the connectionist model (Smith, 2002) social identities are conceptualized as strong associations between the mental representations of self and group. Moreover, the *process* of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept is specified. The association of the mental representations of self and group is the result of a repeated simultaneous activation of these representations. Hence, when the self and a group are activated together in memory, the association between the mental representations strengthens and the long-term inclusion of a group into the self-concept establishes.

I argue that new group memberships boost the simultaneous activation of the mental representations of the self and the group and are therefore likely to induce the association between self and group in memory that represents the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. In the following, factors that influence the simultaneous activation of self and group will be discussed. Afterwards, factors that consolidate the association, once a simultaneous activation takes place, are introduced.

Factors influencing the inclusion

Factors influencing the frequency of simultaneous activation
Self-prototypicality

Self-prototypicality is defined as perceived similarity to ingroup norms and characteristics, and perceived dissimilarity to the outgroup (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Self-prototypicality has, besides being a part (Turner et al., 1987) and consequence (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997) of social identification, also been suggested to be a predictor of social identification (Kashima, Kashima, & Hardie, 2000; Spears, 2001). Indeed, Eisenbeiss (2004) demonstrated that self-prototypicality facilitates social identification in novel groups, but the effect decreases and disappears with the time of group membership. Taken together, this implies that even before group membership, a certain amount of overlap between self and group pre-exists. Self-prototypicality prepares the long-term inclusion of the group into the self-concept and fosters the decision to enter the group (Amiot, Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007).

Simultaneous salience

When individuals become members in a group, the quantity of contact between newcomer and group is likely to increase. During encounters with the group, the self and the group are salient simultaneously, which strengthens the association between the self and the group. Moreover, even apart from encounters with the group, group membership increases the time that the group and the self are salient at the same time. When individuals become members of a group, they are concerned with their adaptation to the new group (Kramer, 1998; Moreland, 1985). This uncertainty of the situation renders the group strongly activated in memory (i.e., newcomers might increasingly think or talk about the new group). At the same time, being a newcomer increases self-consciousness (Kramer, 1998). As both self and group are heightened in salience in the first phase of group membership, both mental representations are activated frequently, which increases the likelihood that they are activated simultaneously. Thus, the simultaneous salience during and outside the encounters with the group is a process through which the group is included into the self-concept.

Factors contributing to a consolidation during contact

There is research that has shown that a new group, once the newcomer has entered and gotten in contact with it, can be included into the self-concept. Mere categorization into a

social group, that is, mere entrance even before contact takes place, induces behavior on the basis of the social category (Tajfel et al., 1971). However, it is unlikely that these categories become self-defining over a longer period of time without repeated salience of the categorization. Research that addresses the long-term inclusion of the group into the self-concept assumes that there has to be some kind of contact between newcomer and group for the development of a social identification and investigates factors that facilitate and detain the inclusion of the group into the self-concept during encounters with the group. In other words, once the self and the group are activated simultaneously during and through contact, there are catalysts of the establishing association between the mental representations of self and group. High quality contact, behavioral contact strategies, contextual, and structural factors during the contact experiences have been suggested to affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept.

High quality contact

As newcomers enter the group, high quality contact is considered to foster social identification. In small groups, interpersonal attraction between members is important in the early formation of groups (Tuckman, 1965). Likewise, Aron and colleagues (Aron et al., 2004) argue that closeness to others is the key factor in the inclusion of others into the self-concept. Thus, the relational self is most strongly affected by others with whom individuals have high quality contact. But there is evidence that even the social self is affected by high quality contact (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), though interpersonal contact and attraction are not a necessary prerequisite of social identification (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the formation of novel groups, interpersonal attraction at the beginning of group existence predicts long-term social identification with the group, though the impact disappears with longer duration of the group (Eisenbeiss, 2004). In standing group members, interpersonal attraction is related to higher collective self-esteem (Bettencourt, Charlton, Eubanks, Kernahan, & Fuller, 1999; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002), whereas the presence of negative interpersonal relations impedes social identification with the group (Reade, 2001).

Acculturation strategies

In the context of migration, migrants are newcomers in the receiving societies (i.e., the new group). Acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) assumes that migrants can form a social

identification with the receiving society. As migrants experience that their behavioral repertoire is not appropriate in the new context, they undergo psychological changes to adapt to the receiving culture. The psychological changes depend on certain strategies that are worked out in daily contact experiences with the new group. These strategies are based on two dimensions: (a) cultural maintenance and (b) contact and participation with the receiving culture. Resulting from these dimensions, four acculturation strategies can be derived: *Integration* is defined as high cultural maintenance combined with strong interaction with the receiving society, *assimilation* is defined as low interest in cultural maintenance but high contact with the receiving society, *separation* is strong cultural maintenance without contact to the receiving society, whereas *marginalization* is neither interest in cultural maintenance, nor contact to the receiving society. As social identification is considered a part of acculturation, the acculturation strategies affect the self-concept. Social identification with the primary culture and the receiving culture can vary in strength, thus, along with the acculturation strategies, four identity clusters occur: integrated (bicultural) identity, assimilated identity, separated identity, and marginalized identity (Phinney et al., 2001). An integrated or assimilated identity comprises the inclusion of the new group into the self-concept.

Several factors have been proposed to moderate the choice of acculturation strategies and, as a consequence, affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. Of demographic factors, younger age (Berry, 1997; Phinney, 1990), and being female (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005) have been suggested to foster identification with the receiving society. Moreover, personal factors have been suggested to affect strategy adoption: extraversion was positively related to the contact and participation dimension (Ward & Kennedy, 1992), cultural pride and self-prototypicality predicted separation and were negatively related to assimilation (Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzálek, 2000). As contextual factors, cultural distance between home and receiving culture was demonstrated to be positively related to the primary culture maintenance dimension, whereas length of residence predicted the contact and participation dimension (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Low perceived permeability of the receiving culture predicted (depending on self-prototypicality) either separation or marginalization in migrants (Piontkowski et al., 2000). Likewise, the interactive acculturation model (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997) suggests that the choice of acculturation strategy depends on the social and political norms of the receiving society, as they provide or restrict possibilities to exert contact and participation.

Taken together, acculturation research demonstrates that newcomers' contact strategies to old and new groups impact the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. The choice of strategy is affected by demographic, personality, and contextual factors.

Contextual and structural factors

Besides choice of strategy in acculturation, contextual and structural factors have been suggested to impact directly on the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. Amiot and colleagues (2007) argue that feelings of personal threat or threat to prior identities, as well as status and power asymmetries in superordinate categories inhibit the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept. Coping and adaptation, being defined as behavioral and cognitive efforts to meet situational demands, facilitate the inclusion of the group (Amiot, Terry, Jimmieson, & Callan, 2006; Amiot, Blanchard, & Gaudreau, 2007). Likewise, social support by significant others (e.g., family members) can, besides increasing coping resources, help resolving identity conflicts and thus strengthen social identification with a new group (Umana-Taylor & Fine, 2004).

Summary

In sum, before newcomers get into contact with the group, perceived similarity prepares the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. Upon entrance, the simultaneous salience of self and group leads to the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. Once newcomers are in contact with the new group, the quality of the contact to the group, acculturation (i.e., behavioral) strategies, personality factors (as predictors of acculturation strategies), and structural as well as contextual factors affect the inclusion of a group into the self-concept.

Taken together, research that has considered the dynamic characteristics of the self-concept has investigated factors that lie either outside the newcomer, or are stable and inflexible characteristics in newcomers. Thus, the newcomer has been treated like a passive object, whose self-concept is, on the basis of his or her disposition, exposed to the outside world. So far, research on the self-concept development that new groups bear the potential to induce, has not taken motivation into account[1]. In the current research, the newcomer is considered to be a motivated, self-regulated protagonist of the situation.

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[1] The self-expansion model (Aron et al., 2004) is an exception for the relational self, as it discusses the motives to include others into the self-concept.

Motivated newcomers – deficits in current research

Need-based models of social identification

Research that has taken motivation in the development of social identities into account has been concerned with *needs* and *motives* that drive individuals to form social identities. In other words, the contents of motivation have been the focus of this reasoning. As outcome criteria, both social identification and prejudice against outgroups have been investigated.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals have a fundamental desire to achieve and maintain a positive social identity. Individuals identify with a group and discriminate against outgroups in order to derive positive self-esteem from the membership in intergroup comparisons. However, empirical support for this so-called *self-esteem hypothesis* in its original form was weak. Rubin and Hewstone (1998) argue that the ambivalent support is due to different operationalizations of self-esteem and propose that a measurement of specific, social and state forms of self-esteem would provide stronger support for the self-esteem hypothesis.

Optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) suggests that individuals seek identification with groups in order to fulfill the needs for inclusion and differentiation simultaneously. The strength of identification depends on the extent to which a certain group satisfies both needs at the same time. In empirical studies, the salience of the need for inclusion and differentiation were usually manipulated and the evaluation of a social category was measured. Results confirmed that individuals have a stronger preference, value and accessibility of inclusive groups (e.g., majorities, large groups), when their need for inclusion is salient, whereas individuals show a relatively stronger preference, value and accessibility for distinctive groups (e.g., minorities, low status groups), when their need for differentiation is salient (Brewer, Manzi, & Shaw, 1993; Brewer & Picket, 1999; Picket, Bonner, & Coleman, 2002).

Hogg and Abrams (1993) argue that a fundamental need to reduce subjective uncertainty motivates people to seek agreement with those considered to belong to the same social category. As uncertainty reduction can only be realized by group belongingness, individuals seek social identification with social categories. Empirical research in which self-uncertainty, task, or situational uncertainty was manipulated demonstrated that high uncertainty made individuals identify stronger with groups high in entitivity, homogeneity, or extremity (Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007; Jetten, Hogg, & Mullin,

2000; Mullin & Hogg, 2000; Hogg, 2007). Thus, uncertainty indeed motivated individuals to identify with social categories.

Besides these so-called "hot" reasons for social identification, cognitive economy motives were put forward as "cold" sources for the development of social identification (Stangor & Thompson, 2002). Cognitive economy models propose that groups provide a categorization that helps to simplify social reality. Individuals with heightened cognitive economy motives are prone to use simplified and abstract notions of the world. Therefore, they particularly value their groups and identify with them. It was indeed demonstrated that stronger need for structure leads to a stronger use of stereotypes in ambiguous situations (Neuberg & Newsome, 1993). Similarly, increased need for closure leads to stronger in-group favoritism and outgroup-derogation, stronger liking and perceived similarity to ingroup-members and less liking of outgroup members (Shah, Kruglanski, & Thompson, 1998; Webster, Kruglanski, & Pattison, 1997). Stangor and Thompson (2002) comprised a measure of the need for cognitive economy out of several established measures (e.g., need for closure, need for structure, and need for cognition). Need for cognitive economy was indeed predictive for ingroup favoritism and outgroup categorization.

All these models have in common that social identification protects the individual from undesirable states (e.g., threatened self-esteem or uncertainty). Indeed, there is evidence that social identification with minorities contributes to well-being (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009; Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003), as it increases the perceived coping options (Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009).

Representatives of the functional perspective of social identification (e.g. Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Cotting, 1999; Ahapour & Brown, 2002; Riketta, 2008) point out that it is unlikely that social identification serves one function only. Different functions for different sorts of groups (e.g. self-understanding, cohesion or material and emotional interdependence) are suggested.

Taken together, individuals are motivated by various needs to become members in social groups. However, the need-based models have certain shortcomings. Firstly, as outlined above, they partly received inconsistent empirical support. Secondly, some of the empirical research has focused on short-term shifts in social identification, thus reflecting salience of the social identity rather than of long-term inclusion of groups into the self-concept. Thirdly, the models fail to specify conditions that cause individuals to try to fulfill

their needs in specific ways and with a specific degree of persistence. In other words, they cannot *predict* the specific occurrence of social identification and social discrimination. To give an example, the different needs may elicit social discrimination, but need-based models cannot explain why and under which circumstances social discrimination takes the form of a stronger allocation of positive resources to the ingroup, or a stronger allocation of negative resources to the outgroup (the so-called *positive-negative asymmetry*; Sassenberg, Kessler, & Mummendey, 2003). In other words, need-based approaches can explain that group membership affects behavior, but not its specific form. Likewise, need-based approaches can explain why individuals identify with social groups. Eisenbeiss (2004) adopted the need-based approach in the dynamic self-concept development and demonstrated that uncertainty predicted social identification of newcomers with their groups. However, need-based approaches cannot predict in which forms the needs that make people seek the inclusion of a group into their self-concept are fulfilled. The self-concept can include positive and negative relations to different groups in form of social identification or disidentification (e.g., ingroup identification vs. outgroup disidentification). A prediction of these differences requires more process-oriented approaches of motivation that specify circumstances leading to specific outcomes in the inclusion of a group into the self-concept.

Therefore, the current research applies a self-regulatory perspective on the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept. Self-regulatory approaches assume that individuals differ in their ways to pursue desired end-states (i.e., goals) and standards. As a consequence, goal-related events elicit specific emotional and behavioral responses. Thus, self-regulation deals with the processes, rather than the contents of motivation. Independently from the reasons for identification, individuals differ in their strategies to achieve full group membership status and, as a consequence, include the group into the self-concept. I propose that these different strategies contribute to variance in the dynamic changes in self-concepts induced by new group memberships. More specifically, I argue that regulatory strategies affect the form and strength of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept.

A self-regulatory perspective on social identification

Recently, research has begun adopting self-regulation approaches to the social self. Self-regulation "comprise the volitional and cognitive processes individuals apply to reach a (subjectively) positive state" (Sassenberg & Woltin, 2008, p. 127). Instead of focusing on the contents of motivation, self-regulation addresses the *process* individuals use to pursue their

goals, including the formation of goals, the behavior to pursue these goals, and the monitoring of progress in goal pursuit (Förster & Denzler, 2006). The application of self-regulatory theories shed light onto the positive-negative asymmetry of social discrimination, for instance. Sassenberg and colleagues (2003) demonstrated that when the social self is in a promotion focus, discrimination occurs during the distribution of positive resources, whereas in a prevention focus, discrimination occurs during the distribution of negative resources. Since self-regulation approaches have been applied to the social self, it has been demonstrated that the individual self is regulated in relation to social groups (e.g., Förster, Higgins, & Strack, 2000; Keller & Bless, 2008; Sassenberg, Moskowitz, Jacoby, & Hansen, 2007), the social self regulates similarly to the individual self (e.g., Bizman, Yinon, & Krotman, 2001; Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007; Sassenberg et al., 2003), and that group appraisals influence individual self-regulation processes (e.g., Faddegon, Scheepers, & Ellemers, 2008; Levine, Higgins, & Choi, 2000; Oyserman, Uskul, Yoder, Nesse, & Williams, 2007; Seibt & Förster, 2004; Trawalter & Richardson, 2006).

In the current dissertation, I apply a self-regulation approach to the achievement of a social identification. In doing so, I turn to the *process* of the development of a social identity that newcomers pursue when they enter new groups. Thus, the present research examines the interface between individual self-regulation and the dynamic perspective on social identities: it investigates how newcomers use *individual* self-regulation strategies in the development of their *social* self.

There are several theoretical suggestions for self-regulatory strategies that can be adopted in goal-pursuit. In the context of achievement, *mastery* and *performance goals* have been distinguished (Dweck, 1986), as well as *approach* and *avoidance strategies* (Elliot, 1999). Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory characterizes the specific effects of discrepancies between the *actual self* and the *ideal self* or the *ought self*, regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) introduced *promotion* and *prevention focus* as different regulatory strategies, and Kruglanski and colleagues (2000) distinguished between *locomotion* and *assessment* in goal-pursuit. In empirical research about regulatory strategies in the social context, regulatory focus theory, followed by self-discrepancy theory has dominated the field.

To the best of my knowledge, none of the other concepts has been applied to the social domain, let alone to the social self. Only recently, the distinction between approach and avoidance has been applied to the domain of interpersonal relations. It was demonstrated that

approach and avoidance strategies[2] in the pursuit of interpersonal relationships affect long-term relationships (Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006; Gable, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008). Relationships to others are included into the self-concept (Aron et al., 2004), thus approach and avoidance strategies affect changes in the *relational* identity. As reasoned above, I argue that new groups are included into the self-concept. Therefore, I propose that approach and avoidance strategies likewise affect changes in the *social* identity. I suggest that newcomers adopt approach and avoidance strategies in the pursuit of new group memberships. Like interpersonal strategies affect interpersonal relationships, I propose that approach and avoidance strategies affect the relation to the new group that is reflected in the self-concept. Thus, approach and avoidance strategies are suggested to influence the inclusion of the group into the self-concept.

The following section gives an overview of research on approach and avoidance in the interpersonal domain, and aims for the current research will be derived.

Approach and avoidance in the social domain

The distinction between approach and avoidance has long been established in the achievement domain. "Approach motivation may be defined as the energization of behavior by, or the direction of behavior toward, positive stimuli (objects, events, possibilities), whereas avoidance motivation may be defined as the energization of behavior by, or the direction of behavior away from, negative stimuli (objects, events, possibilities)" (Elliot, 2006, p. 112). Thus, approach and avoidance are a focus on events that differ in valence: approach motivation directs behavior towards positive events, whereas avoidance motivation directs behavior away from negative events (Elliot, 1999). The adoption of approach and avoidance motivation in achievement has been demonstrated to affect achievement outcomes (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; van Yperen, 2003, 2006).

Recently, the distinction between approach and avoidance has been applied to the social domain. Gable and Strachman (2008) argue that approach and avoidance motivation are fundamental, functionally independent dimensions in the social domain that affect cognition, emotion and behavior in social and relational contexts. In their hierarchical model, Gable and Strachman propose that approach and avoidance motives predict the application of the respective strategies. Individuals with interpersonal approach strategies try to enhance

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[2] Though Gable and her colleagues name the construct social approach and avoidance *goals,* their instruments rather measure on the level of goal *strategies* applied to reach a goal (i.e., have a good relationship). I therefore refer to approach and avoidance strategies.

bonding and intimacy in their relationships, and try to share fun and meaningful experiences, for instance. Individuals with avoidance strategies, on the other hand, try to avoid disagreement and conflict within relationships, and make sure nothing bad happens to their close relationships, for instance (Elliot et al., 2006). Approach and avoidance strategies affect specific relationship outcomes: Approach strategies are related to outcomes that are defined by the presence or absence of rewarding social bonds. Avoidance strategies are related to outcomes defined by the presence or absence of punishing social bonds. The impact of approach and avoidance motives and strategies on relationship outcomes is suggested to be mediated by specific processes. The resulting relationship outcomes, in turn, affect long-term relationship quality and well-being.

Empirical findings support the model. Gable (2006) conducted three studies, two of them longitudinal, in order to test the effect of approach and avoidance motives and strategies on the quality of social bonds. Participants were university students whose interpersonal approach and avoidance motives and strategies were measured. Six to eight weeks later, students filled in measures about their interpersonal relationships. The influence of social motives on strategy adoption was only supported for approach motivation: approach motives predicted approach strategies, but avoidance motives did not predict avoidance strategies. However, the impact of interpersonal strategies on specific outcomes was demonstrated: Approach strategies were predictive for higher relationship satisfaction, more positive relationship attitudes and less loneliness a few weeks after. Avoidance strategies predicted more loneliness, stronger negative social attitudes, and stronger relationship insecurity. These effects were also found when the effects of approach and avoidance motives were controlled for.

Elliot and colleagues (2006) tested the model in the context of friendships and investigated the long-term effects of approach and avoidance motivation on friendship outcomes and well-being. In two studies (cross-sectional and longitudinal), they asked student samples to indicate their friendship approach and avoidance strategies and their friendship outcomes and well-being (in the longitudinal study three months later). In these studies, results supported the model in that approach motives predicted the adoption of approach strategies, and avoidance motives predicted the adoption of avoidance strategies. Furthermore, the results replicated the effects of approach and avoidance strategies on the specific relationship outcomes. More importantly, the findings demonstrated that the strategies directly affected well-being: approach strategies led to higher levels of subjective

well-being, whereas avoidance strategies predicted more physical symptoms in students three month later.

Taken together, approach and avoidance strategies in the pursuit to establish interpersonal relations affect relationship outcomes and long-term well-being. As both interpersonal relationships and social groups become part of the self-concept, the present research applies approach and avoidance strategies to the domain of new group memberships. I argue that approach and avoidance strategies likewise affect the inclusion of a group into the self-concept and long-term well-being. As outlined above, well-being is also affected by social identification (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999), and social identification and well-being are both affected by behavioral contact strategies (Berry, 1997). The second aim of the current research is the integration of the different findings concerning strategy and membership effects on well-being into a larger model. Research in the second empirical part of the current research is entitled and investigates *The supporting and impeding effects of membership approach and avoidance strategies on newcomers' psychological adaptation.*

Sensitivity towards certain events

In her earlier papers, Gable (2006) suggests that approach and avoidance motive and strategy effects are mediated by different processes: approach effects were proposed to be mediated by a stronger exposure to positive events, whereas avoidance effects were proposed to be mediated by a stronger reactivity towards negative events. In empirical studies (Gable, 2006), support for the predicted mediating processes was ambivalent. Approach motives and strategies indeed led to stronger exposure to positive events, and avoidance motives and strategies to stronger impact of negative events. However, direct mediation tests were not conducted (Elliot et al., 2006) or only confirmed for approach motives, but neither for avoidance motives nor for approach or avoidance strategies (Gable, 2006). In their later model, Gable and Strachman (2008) propose that approach strategies lead to sensitivity for positive events, and avoidance strategies to sensitivity to negative events. More specifically, they suggest that approach and avoidance affect attention and memory of events of the respective valence, interpretation of ambiguous events, the experience of specific emotions as a consequence of goal pursuit, and judgment of the importance of positive and negative relationship events. In support of these assumptions, Strachman and Gable (2006) found that avoidance strategies facilitated memory of negative events, a more negative evaluation of others and a negatively biased interpretation of ambiguous social events.

In sum, there is evidence in the interpersonal domain that approach and avoidance lead to a specific sensitivity towards positive and negative events, but only approach strategies contribute to the exposure to these events. Applying this to the context of newcomers, I propose that approach and avoidance strategies in the pursuit of membership in a new group affect the sensitivity to positive and negative events in goal pursuit (i.e., positive and negative feedback concerning membership status). The third aim of the current research is the investigation of the impact of this specific sensitivity to positive and negative events on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. This aim will be addressed in the empirical parts entitled *Approach strategies and internal motivation facilitate the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept* and *Does rejection lead to disidentification? The role of internal motivation and avoidance strategies.*

The present research

Chapter 2, entitled ***The impact of exchange programs on the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept*** seeks to demonstrate that new group memberships induce changes in the newcomer's self-concept, as new groups bear the potential to expand the social self. More specifically, this empirical part aims at demonstrating that a former outgroup can be included into the self-concept as newcomers enter the group. Two studies address this issue in the intercultural context of exchange years. Participants with exchange experience, with interest in exchanges and without exchange experience are compared in quasi-experimental designs. By comparing these subsamples, the effects of the actual contact to the new group and interest in contact can be specified. In both studies the subsamples are compared on affective, behavioral and cognitive measures of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. This empirical chapter demonstrates that the self-concept is dynamic and flexible in its adaptation to new groups.   Figure 1.1 displays the prediction tested in chapter 2.
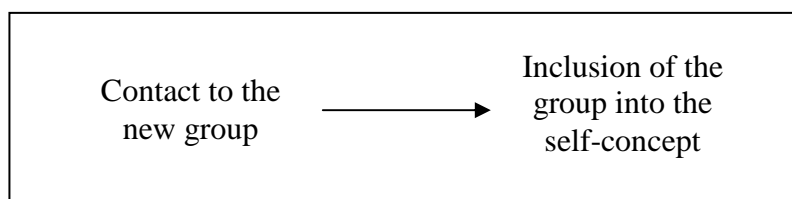
Figure 1.1: *Proposed model tested in chapter 2.*

Chapter 3, entitled ***The supporting and impeding effects of membership approach and avoidance strategies on newcomers' psychological adaptation,*** adopts a self-regulation perspective to the changes of the self-concept. The aim of this empirical part is to investigate the long-term impact of approach and avoidance strategies in newcomers on the inclusion of the new group into the self-concept and well-being. In this part of the dissertation, approach and avoidance strategies, behavioral contact strategies and the inclusion of the group into the self-concept are related to each other in a larger model. Moreover, their effects on well-being and achievement effort are investigated. In order to reach this aim, a longitudinal study with Germans that came to study at a university in the Netherlands was conducted. Prior to the start of the term, before group entrance, Germans indicated their approach and avoidance strategies. Three months later, acculturation strategies, the inclusion of the group into the self-concept, well-being and achievement effort were measured. This empirical chapter demonstrates the long-term effects of approach and avoidance strategies and the importance of self-concept changes for psychological functioning. Figure 1.2 demonstrates the proposed model in this empirical chapter.
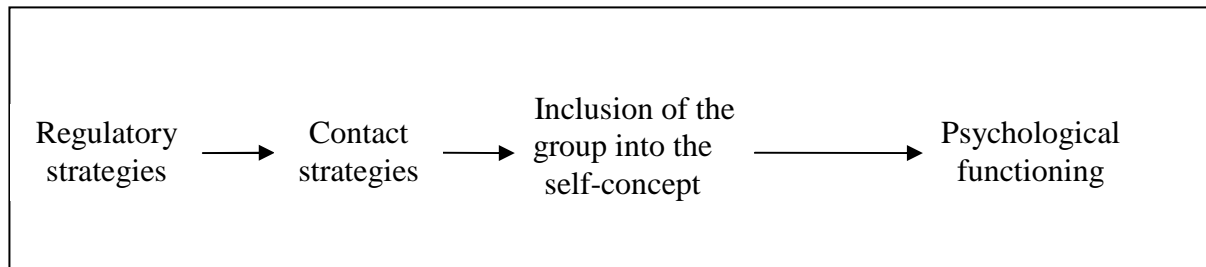
Figure 1.2*: Proposed model tested in chapter 3.*

The following empirical parts aim at the investigation of sensitivity to certain events in newcomers, that approach and avoidance strategies have been demonstrated to induce in other contexts. More specifically, I address the impact of approach and avoidance strategies on the reaction to positive and negative group feedback according membership status on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. Thus, the findings from the former empirical chapters are extended by taking the *quality* of contact experiences with the new group into account. Moreover, unlike the first empirical chapters, in which newcomers were examined who sought and chose to enter the group on their own behalf, the majority of the studies in this part investigate newcomers in a more controlled setting that forced the choice of a group upon newcomers. Therefore, it cannot be taken for granted that newcomers are internally

motivated to enter the group. In respect to this, there is evidence that internal motivation in goal-pursuit affects the reaction to negative feedback (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1986; Fehr & Sassenberg, in press). Hence the question arises whether the internal motivation to enter the group affects the effects of approach and avoidance strategies on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept as a response to the group's feedback. Therefore, in the last two empirical chapters, besides contact quality, the *internal motivation* to enter the group is added to the investigation of self-concept changes. Figure 1.3 displays the model tested in these chapters.
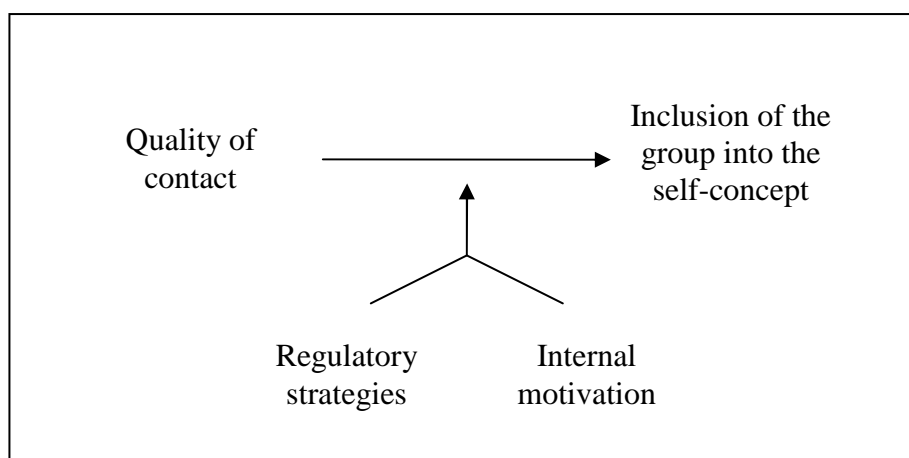
Figure 1.3: Proposed model tested in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

Two studies in **chapter 4**, entitled ***Approach strategies and internal motivation facilitate the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept,*** focus on the development of social identification, being a positive outcome criterion of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. More specifically, the impact of group feedback, depending on approach and avoidance strategies, and internal motivation, on the development of social identification is investigated. In a scenario study, using existing groups, and an experiment, using simulated groups without prior history, the group's feedback is manipulated and approach and avoidance strategies as well as internal motivation are measured. These studies demonstrate the effects of strategy-induced sensitivity to certain events on social identification.

Chapter 5, entitled ***Does rejection lead to disidentification? The role of internal motivation and avoidance strategies,*** addresses the negative potentials of contact with the new group. It investigates the impact of negative and positive group feedback, depending on approach and avoidance strategies and internal motivation on disidentification, being a negative outcome criterion of the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. In two studies,

one scenario study and one retrospective field study with international exchange students the group's feedback was manipulated or measured, and approach and avoidance strategies as well as internal motivation were measured. Like in chapter 4, the studies demonstrate the sensitivity to specific contact experiences that approach and avoidance strategies induce in newcomers. More generally, both chapter 4 and Chapter 5 show that by the adoption of approach and avoidance strategies, newcomers contribute to the way they are affected by certain contact experiences with the new group.

Figure 1.4 summarizes the full proposed model whose parts are addressed in the four empirical parts of this dissertation.
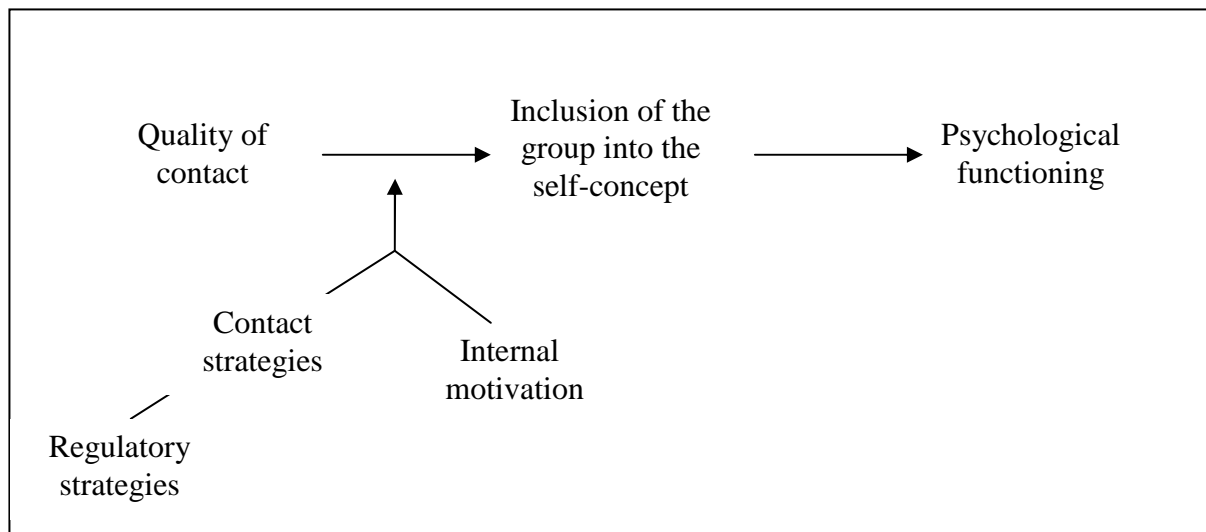
Figure 1.4: *Proposed model whose parts are tested in the empirical chapters.*

Finally, in **chapter six**, the *General Discussion*, the empirical evidence from the present research is summarized and strengths and limitations are discussed. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn with respect to research on newcomers, social identity, and self-regulation and practical implications are derived.

It should be noted that the empirical chapters are written in a way that they can be read independently of each other. Moreover, the studies were partly conducted simultaneously. As a result, there is a certain overlap between the chapters, and earlier chapters refer to later chapters in their use of instruments.

Chapter 2   The impact of exchange programs on the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept

International exchange programs receive extensive support from governments and non-profit organizations. To give an example, the European Union has supported 1.7 million students' stay abroad within the ERASMUS program starting in 1987 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table1.pdf). The joint aim of these programs is to increase mutual understanding between the peoples of different countries. Thereby, they should (a) reduce prejudice and (b) contribute to students' personality and identity development (Deutscher Bundestag, 2006; Oesterheld & Pahl, 2001/2006).

Research on intergroup contact suggests that exchange programs will most likely fulfill the first goal, because intergroup contact reduces prejudice under almost any conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The impact of exchange programs on personality and identity is much harder to predict, because there is hardly any research addressing the impact of extensive but temporary intergroup contact on personality. One of the few examples is the work by Schmitt and colleagues (2003). They demonstrated that international students are more likely to form a new social identity as an exchange student the more they feel rejected from the host society. Hence, exchange programs impact on the self-concept of their participants, more precisely on their social identity.

A social category that might be a more obvious candidate for an impact on the self-concept – if the stay abroad is less aversive – is the hostgroup (i.e., inhabitants of the host-country). This has also been demonstrated by research on temporally unlimited contact (i.e., acculturation). Therefore, the current chapter tests whether the hostgroup becomes part of the self-concept during an exchange year.

Intergroup contact and the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept

At the first glance the idea that the hostgroup, which is actually an outgroup (another nation), becomes part of the self-concept might seem odd. During an exchange year the minority status of the exchange student's nation might raise the awareness of this group membership (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). This would imply that differences between the national ingroup and the hostgroup will be perceived in an accentuated way (Corneille, Klein, Lambert, & Judd, 2002; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963).

However, based on the self-expansion model's assumption that people are motivated to expand their self to increase their resources, perspectives and identities (for a summary see Aron et al., 2004), Wright and colleagues (1997) argue that people might expand their selves even to outgroups. Two processes might provide pathways for the national identity of the hostgroup into the self-concept. One is known from research on intergroup contact and the other is based on the adoption of outgroup prototypical behavior.

Intergroup contact: McLaughlin-Volpe (2004, cited in Aron et al., 2004) demonstrated that intergroup friendship does not only improve the attitude towards an outgroup but leads just as any other friendship to the inclusion of the friend into the self-concept. In case of an intergroup friendship the friend's group membership is also integrated into the self-concept. Hence, high *quality* contact to an outgroup member can lead to the inclusion of the outgroup into the self-concept, because it leads to a feeling of closeness, which is the most important precondition for the inclusion of others (Aron et al., 2004; Smith, Coats, & Welling, 1999). This might also imply that high *quantity* contact to outgroup members as given during an exchange year could also lead to an inclusion of the outgroup into the self-concept, as the extensive contact certainly provides the opportunity for high quality contact (e.g., to make friends, as physical distance is indeed a good predictor of friendship; Back, Schmuckle, & Egloff, 2008).

Prototypical behavior: The exchange students might get more and more involved in the same activities as their co-students stemming from the host-country (e.g., European students starting to wear clothes with school symbols and playing American Football in the US). When they recognize that their behavior becomes similar to the behavior of the hostgroup, they might finally categorize themselves into the same group ("If I act like one of them I must be one of them"). In other words, they perceive a normative fit (in sense of Turner et al., 1987) between themselves and the hostgroup or – to put it more cognitively – they form an association between themselves and behavior that is closely associated with the hostgroup. Hence, the hostgroup becomes associated with the self.

Acculturation and the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept

Another body of literature addressing the inclusion of a "hostgroup" (in this case called majority group or majority) into the self-concept is research on the acculturation of migrants. In this research within developmental and social psychology it is taken for granted that migrants can include the majority culture and their ethnic identity into their self-concepts

at the same time as part of an acculturation strategy called integration (Berry et al., 2006; Deaux, 2006; Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001) Acculturation research suggests that understanding and accepting one's own ethnic identity (i.e., an achieved ethnic identity in the sense of Phinney, 1990) would lead to more openness for the majority culture and other groups in general (e.g., Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007). Moreover, the involvement with both the ethnic culture and the majority culture leads to higher levels of well-being (e.g., Zagefka & Brown, 2002). In other words, it has been demonstrated that picking up the majority culture is beneficial for migrants. Unfortunately, "compared to ethnic identity, there has been far less attention paid to conceptualizing and studying immigrants' identification with the new society" (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 497).

Acculturation research has assessed the relation of migrants to the hostgroup or majority culture with self-report measures such as in interviews (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997), evaluations of the hostgroup (Phinney et al., 2007) and of elements of the majority culture (Berry et al., 2006), as well as intentions to adopt the majority culture (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). The inclusion of the majority group into the self-concept was only rarely assessed in terms of social identification (for an exception, see Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) and there is to the best of my knowledge only one study assessing this construct implicitly: Devos (2006) demonstrated that Asian and Mexican Americans have a link just as strong to their Ethnicity as to the American culture. Unfortunately, Devos used the Implicit Association Test which has received some criticism concerning its concept validity (Blanton & Jaccard, 2006; Rothermund & Wentura, 2004). Nonetheless, acculturation research provided converging evidence that migrants integrate the majority culture into their self-concept. This conclusion seems justified, even though the applied measures were not always ideally suited for this purpose (which was admittedly also not the primary goal of these studies).

On the one hand, this conclusion suggests that exchange students might also integrate the hostgroup (i.e., the majority group and culture) into their self-concept as an outcome of an exchange year. On the other hand, there are substantial differences between migration and an exchange year. *First*, migration research mostly focuses on low status groups within a (high status) majority culture, whereas exchange students mostly come from countries of equal status and enjoy such a status also among members of the hostgroup. *Second*, investigations about migrants mostly target individuals and groups that plan to stay in the host country for a long time if not for the rest of their lives, whereas exchange students' stay is clearly limited. *Third*, exchange students are often even sent off as representatives of their own country and

therefore it is not their primary intention to become part of the host country. *Fourth*, migration research addresses the migrants when they are still in the host country and at times even in the language of the host country (which leads to positive evaluations of the hostgroup; Barreto, Spears, Ellemers, & Shahinper, 2003). In contrast, the *outcomes* of an exchange year are evaluated after the year is completed and the students returned to their home country to a situation that no longer requires identity change. *Fifth*, exchange students are not in need to take part in a program, whereas a substantial proportion of migrants need to go to another country. *Finally*, the duration of an exchange year is much shorter than the time most studied migrants spend in the host country. In many cases, acculturation research studies second generation migrants (e.g., Deaux, 2006). All these factors contribute to the fact that exchange students are in a different situation than migrants, which definitely affects their motivation to integrate the hostgroup into the self-concept. Due to the differences between exchange students and migrants, an empirical test of the prediction that exchange students integrate the hostgroup into their self-concept is required.

Overview

Based on contact research as well as on the acculturation literature, I predict that participants of exchange programs integrate the hostgroup into their self-concept during their stay abroad and thereby form a new social identity. The most important indicators for the inclusion of a group into the self-concept are social identification (Tajfel, 1981), the willingness to contribute to the group's state and outcomes (i.e., commitment; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999), and the association of the self with features of the group. The latter can either be measured by asking how much a person ascribes a group specific trait to him- / herself (i.e., self-stereotyping; Turner et al., 1987). More recently, Smith and Henry (1996) suggested a measure capturing the association of the self and a group in memory based on a procedure originally developed in the interpersonal relations literature (Aron et al., 1991): the inclusion of a group into the self-concept.

The current studies addressed the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept as an outcome of an exchange year. Two studies tested the prediction that exchange students include the hostgroup into their self-concept using different measures and including different groups of participants. Study 2.1 focused on the impact on social identification, commitment, and self-stereotyping in relation to the hostgroup and compared former and future exchange students. Study 2.2 replicated Study 2.1 with two alterations: the association of the self with

features of the group was not assessed via self-stereotyping but using the inclusion of the group into the self-concept (Smith & Henry, 1996), and a control group without exchange experience or plans to take part in an exchange was added to the design to be able to test not only the effects of an exchange year but also the differences between those who will participate in an exchange program and those who are not interested in participating.

Study 2.1

Method

Design and Participants

A quasi-experiment with two conditions (after exchange year vs. prior to exchange year) was conducted. Forty Germans (18 male, 22 female; age $M = 30$ years; range 21-49 years) who had returned from an under-graduate exchange year in the US in an average of 27 months ago (range 0-274 months)[3] and 13 German under-graduates (seven male, three female, three participants did not provide demographic data; age $M = 23$ years; range 20-28 years) who were going to the US in about seven months completed an online-questionnaire advertised as a study about long-term consequences of exchanges. As compensation they took part in a lottery.

Procedure

Participants were recruited via e-mail-lists of exchange organizations. Among other measures they filled in were scales for social identification, commitment, and self-stereotyping. Participants were thanked, debriefed, and informed about the results via e-mail.

Measures

Ten items assessed the *social identification* with the hostgroup (e.g., "I identify with the group of US-Americans"). Five items were adapted from the organizational context: items 2, 4, and 6 of the Affective Commitment subscale (Allen & Meyer, 1990) and items 6 and 13 of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Porter & Smith, 1970; German version Maier & Woschée, 2002). These items stem from scales labeled 'commitment', but they all capture social identification in the sense of Tajfel (1981). Four additional items were adopted

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[3] The time that passed after returning from the exchange year did not correlated with the dependent measures (-.2 < all rs < .3; all ps > .10).

from Simon and Massau (1991) and one item was developed by myself. All responses were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *I don't agree at all*, 7 = *I fully agree*, α = .86).

Commitment was measured with eleven items using the same 7-point scale (e.g., "I am thinking about how to improve things in the USA"). Nine items were adapted from the German version of the Organization Citizenship Behavior Scale (Items H-07 and H-15 of the subscale *helpfulness*, Items E-12, E-18, E-26, E-39, E-42 and E-47 of the subscale *initiative;* Staufenbiel & Hartz, 2000) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (item 2; Maier & Woschée, 2002). Two additional items were added (α = .81).

To measure the *self-stereotyping* six former US-exchange students that were not part of the sample of Study 2.1 generated characteristics that (from their point of view) describe how US-Americans ideally want to be. They agreed on five characteristics (*tolerant*, *attractive*, *sociable*, *team-working, open-minded*) that served as group norms. Participants rated on a 9-point scale to what extent the adjectives were descriptive for themselves (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much;* α = .69).

Social identification and commitment were strongly correlated, r =.78, N = 40, $p < .001$. Nonetheless, both scales are separately entered into the analyses reported below, because it has often been shown and discussed that both components of social identification have separate causes and implications (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1999). Self-stereotyping was neither correlated with social identification nor commitment, .15 < both rs <.22, both ps > .10. For the former exchange students, the time that lay between the exchange and the study was unrelated to the dependent measures, -.15 < all rs <.30, ps > .10

Results

I expected all three indicators for the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept (social identification, commitment, and self-stereotyping) to be stronger for former exchange students than for future exchange students. To test this prediction I computed a mixed ANOVA with the factors Exchange (former vs. future exchange students; between subjects) and Self-concept (social identification vs. commitment vs. self-stereotyping; within subjects). The analysis revealed a main effect of Self-concept, representing the different scale means of the three measures due to the specific items and differing rating scales used, $F(2, 50)$ = 167.29, $p < .001$, η^2 = .816. More importantly, the predicted main effect of Exchange occurred, $F(1, 51)$ = 6.05, p = .017, η^2 = .106, but it was unexpectedly qualified by an Exchange x Self-concept interaction, $F(2, 50)$ = 3.69, p = .032, η^2 = .013. To resolve this

interaction, simple comparisons were computed. In line with my prediction, former exchange students ($M = 3.91$, $SE = .17$) showed stronger social identification than future exchange students ($M = 3.25$, $SE = .29$), $F(1, 51) = 3.94$, $p = .052$, $\eta^2 = .072$. Likewise, the commitment to the hostgroup was stronger among former exchange students ($M = 5.26$, $SE = .14$) than among future exchange students ($M = 4.35$, $SE = .25$), $F(1, 51) = 10.17$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .166$. However, the two groups did not differ in self-stereotyping, $F(1, 51) = .08$ (former exchange students $M = 6.97$, $SD = .11$, future exchange students $M = 6.91$, $SD = .19$) .

Discussion

The current study provides first evidence for changes in the self-concept resulting from an exchange year. As expected, former exchange students identified stronger with the hostgroup and showed a higher level of commitment for that group (compared to future exchange students). Moreover, both groups showed very high levels of self-stereotyping, but they did not differ, potentially because the applied measure was not optimally suited to assess the self-perception in terms of the hostgroup. Among other things, it was not clear whether the measure captured American norms very well. In order to measure the inclusion of the hostgroup and its characteristics into the self-concept in a more direct way, the reaction time paradigm of Smith and Henry (1996) was applied in addition to social identification and commitment in Study 2.2.

Study 2.2

Besides altering the measure of self-stereotyping, this study also added another outgroup in addition to the hostgroup. This was done (1) because the Smith and Henry (1996) paradigm requires the consideration of two groups and (2) to test the prediction that the exchange year affects the inclusion of the hostgroup but not the inclusion of any outgroup into the self-concept. Moreover, besides former and future exchange students, a control sample of about the same age but without the intention or experience to spend a substantial amount of time abroad was included as additional control condition. This alteration of the design served to test whether the lacking difference in self-stereotyping is due to the already elevated inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept among future exchange students.

It was expected that the difference between the inclusion of the hostgroup and the outgroup into the self-concept (i.e., social identification, commitment, and the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept) would be stronger for former exchange students than for

future exchange students and the control group. The relation between the latter two groups was less clear. Even though the main difference should occur between former and future exchange students (i.e., be an effect of participating in an exchange year), future exchange students might already differ from those who are not interested in participating. Future exchange students might also show a stronger difference between hostgroup and outgroup on all three indicators of inclusion than the control group, because of the self-selection that certainly takes place: students who are interested in the US and apply for an exchange year most likely do so because they are attracted by the US, possibly caused by perceived similarity. Moreover, anticipating the interaction with outgroup members – such as the hostgroup in case of exchange students – has been found to have a variety of effects such as improving attitudes and behavior towards outgroup members (Insko et al., 2001; for a summary of other effects see Vorauer, 2006). Hence, the anticipation of an exchange year might also initiate the change of the self-concept.

Method

Design and Participants

A quasi-experiment with three conditions (after exchange year vs. prior to exchange year vs. no exchange control condition) was conducted. Fifty-eight Germans who had spent an exchange year in a US-high-school completed the study; four participants had to be excluded from the analyses (for details see below). The data of 54 students (16 male, 37 female, one of unknown gender; age $M = 17$ years; range 16-20 years), who had returned from their exchange year in an average of 7 months ago (range 0-26 months), were analyzed. Moreover, 66 future exchange students of German origin who were to leave for a year at an US-high-school within the next month completed the measures. Again, four students were excluded from the analyses. The remaining 62 future exchange students (39 female, 23 male) were on average 16 years old (range 15-17 years). Both former and future exchange students were recruited through exchange organizations for an online study on "long-term consequences of an exchange year". Additionally, 43 German freshmen of the University of Jena who were recruited on campus participated in a lab study with identical instructions. Of these, three participants were excluded from the analyses because of plans to spend a longer time in the US. The remaining 40 students (31 female, 9 male, age $M = 19$, range 18-20) served as control sample without exchange experience or special interest in the US.

Procedure

First the inclusion of the hostgroup (US-Americans) and a control outgroup (Japanese) were measured. Afterwards, participants filled in scales assessing social identification and commitment for both the hostgroup and outgroup. Participants were debriefed, thanked and informed about the results via e-mail. As compensation the online participants (i.e., the former and the future exchange students) took part in a lottery of book coupons and offline participants received 3 Euros.

Measures

The measurement of the *inclusion* followed the match-mismatch paradigm employed by Smith and Henry (1996). The participants rated the descriptiveness of 91 traits on a 7-point scale (1=*extremely unlike*, 7=*extremely like*) for their hostgroup, for themselves and for the outgroup. Afterwards, the same traits were presented individually on the screen in random order. Participants were asked to decide as quickly and as correctly as possible whether the presented adjective describes them or not (*yes* vs. *no*). In each trial a fixation cross appeared for 500 ms in the center of the screen followed by the trait presented in 24 pt. fonts until the participants responded. Before the next trial started, the screen was blank for 750 ms. After 10 practice trials, the 91 target trials started.

Responses on the scale-midpoint as well as responses given faster than 300 ms and slower than 5000 ms were excluded from the analyses (applying the criteria used by Smith & Henry, 1996). Furthermore, two former exchange students and one future exchange student whose average reaction times were extremely slow (more than 2000 ms) as well as two former exchange students and three future exchange students with less than 10 valid responses were excluded. Two inclusion indices were computed from the response times. For this purpose the ratings for the hostgroup- and the outgroup-descriptiveness were dichotomized, 1-3 = no, 5-7 = yes. To compute the *hostgroup-inclusion index* score mean response times to hostgroup-matching traits (same answer for hostgroup-descriptiveness rating and self judgment in the response time task) were subtracted from mean response times to hostgroup-mismatching traits (different answer for hostgroup and self). A corresponding index was computed for the outgroup.

The *social identification* and *commitment* scales used the items from Study 2.1 that were adaptable to the hostgroup *and* the outgroup. The identification scale for the hostgroup ($\alpha = .90$) and the outgroup ($\alpha = .79$) had 6 parallel items, the commitment scale had 6 parallel items for the hostgroup ($\alpha = .81$) and the outgroup ($\alpha = .78$). Social identification and

commitment were correlated for the hostgroup, $r =.77$, $p < .001$, and the outgroup, $r =.55$, $p < .001$. Correlations between these scales and the respective inclusion index were weak to moderate in size (hostgroup: social identification: $r =.33$, $p < .001$; commitment $r =.24$, $p = .002$; outgroup: social identification $r =.19$, $p = .017$; commitment $r =.14$, $p = .083$) and hence comparable to those reported in other studies using the inclusion measure (Coats, Smith, Claypool, & Banner, 2000). Again, for the former exchange students, the time between exchange and study was unrelated to the dependent measures, $.03 < $ all rs $<.20$, ps $> .10$

Results

I expected to find a larger difference between the inclusion of the hostgroup and the outgroup (on all three measures) for former exchange students than for future exchange students and the control group. Moreover, future exchange students might also show a larger difference between the inclusion of the hostgroup and the outgroup than the control group. These predictions were tested with a mixed ANOVA with Group (hostgroup vs. outgroup) and Self-concept (social identification vs. commitment vs. inclusion)[4] as within subject factors, and Exchange condition (after, before, control) as between subject factor. The analysis revealed a main effect of Self-concept, $F(2, 152) = 173.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .329$ (due to different measuring units of the rating scales and the inclusion measure), the predicted Group x Exchange interaction, $F(2, 153) = 3.50$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2 = .044$ and a Self-concept x Exchange interaction, $F(4, 306) = 3.34$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .027$. All these effects were qualified by a Group x Self-concept x Exchange interaction, $F(4, 306) = 4.74$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .039$ (see Figure 2.1). To further explore this interaction, separate ANOVAs for the three inclusion measures with the factors Group and Exchange were computed. The interaction between both factors was in all three cases significant. However, it was substantially stronger for social identification and commitment, both Fs $(2,153) > 36$, both ps $< .001$, both η^2s $> .12$, than for the inclusion indices, $F(2, 153) = 3.24$, $p = .042$, $\eta^2 = .041$. In what follows, simple main

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[4] I also analyzed the inclusion measure applying the procedure used by Smith and Henry (1996), as well as in the original study addressing interpersonal relations (Aron et al., 1991): an ANOVA with the participant as nested factor and single response times as dependent variable. This procedure led to the analogous effects that the analyses based on the inclusion score reported in the text: the expected Response (yes vs. no) x Hostgroup (target rated as descriptive vs. not descriptive for the hostgroup) x Exchange group interaction, $F(1, 8485) = 3.20$, $p = .041$, indicating that the hostgroup was integrated in the self-concept of former and future exchange students, but not into the self-concept of the control group. Moreover, unexpected Response x Outgroup-descriptiveness (target rated as descriptive vs. not descriptive for the hostgroup) interaction occurred, $F(1, 8485) = 46.42$, $p < .001$, that was not qualified by participants exchange experience. This effect indicates that all groups also showed some evidence for the inclusion of the outgroup into the self-concept.

effects and post-hoc tests are reported separately for the three inclusion measures to further resolve the interactions (see Table 2.1).

(a)
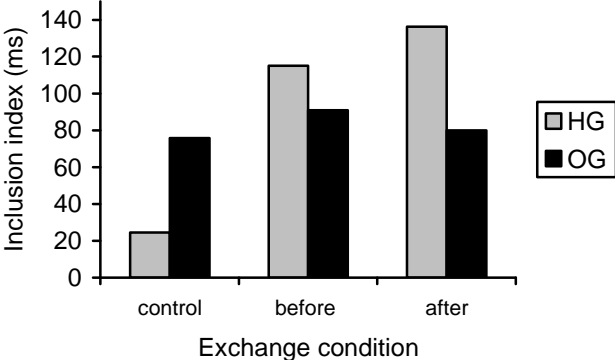
(b)
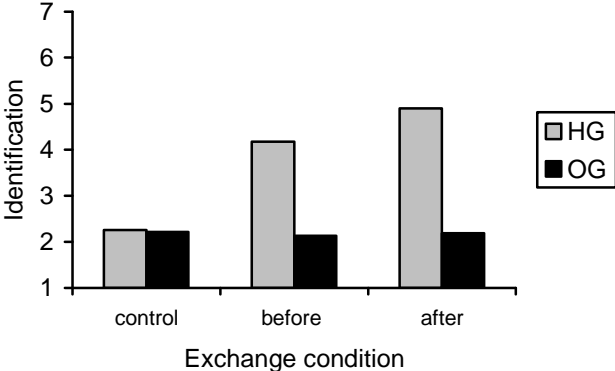
(c)
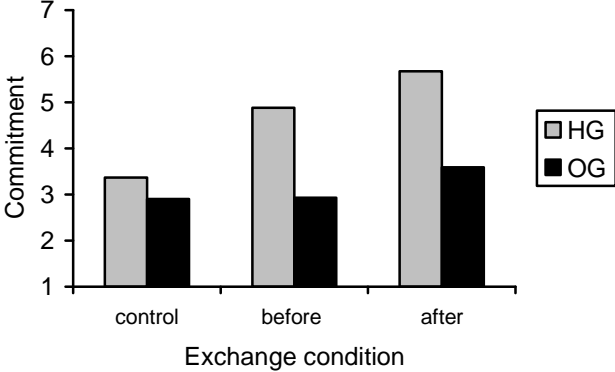
Figure 2.1: *Inclusion (a), Identification (b) and Commitment (c) for the Hostgroup (HG) and Outgroup (OG) as a function of Exchange condition, (Study 2.2, N = 156).*

Table 2.1*: Means (standard deviations) of social identification, commitment, and inclusion of the group into the self-concept for the hostgroup and the outgroup (Study 2.2, N = 156).*

	Social identification	Commitment	Inclusion
Target: hostgroup			
control students	2.26 (.99)	3.37 (.75)	24.38 (89)
future exchange students	4.17 (.95)	4.88 (.82)	114.97 (169)
former exchange students	4.90 (1.14)	5.70 (.79)	136.29 (173)
Target: outgroup			
control students	2.21 (.92)	2.90 (.75)	75.71 (126)
future exchange students	2.13 (1.00)	2.93 (1.02)	90.87 (191)
former exchange students	2.19 (1.06)	3.93 (1.08)	80.03 (129)

The *inclusion* of the hostgroup into the self-concept ($M = 136.29$, $SD = 173.24$) was only for former exchange students stronger than the inclusion of the outgroup into the self-concept ($M = 80.03$, $SD = 128.67$), $F(1, 153) = 4.06$, $p = .046$, $\eta^2 = .026$. No such difference occurred for future exchange students, $F(1, 153) = .86$, and the control sample $F(1, 153) = 2.50$, $p = .116$. Moreover, the inclusion of the hostgroup differed between the three exchange conditions, $F(2, 153) = 6.59$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .079$. Former exchange students and future exchange students ($M = 114.97$, $SD = 169.04$) did not differ from each other in the inclusion of the hostgroup (p = .459), but both showed more inclusion of the hostgroup than the control sample ($M = 24.38$, $SD = 89.08$; both ps < .005). No such effect of the Exchange group on the inclusion of the outgroup occurred, $F(2, 153) = .13$, but the mean level of outgroup inclusions was interestingly significant ($M = 83.23$, $SD = 154.97$), $t(155) = 6.71$, $p = .001$.

Social identification with the hostgroup was stronger than social identification with the outgroup for both former (hostgroup: $M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.14$; outgroup: $M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.06$, $F(1, 153) = 195.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .561$) and future exchange students (hostgroup: $M = 4.18$, $SD = .95$; outgroup: $M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.00$, $F(1, 153) = 127.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .454$), whereas no such difference occurred in the control sample (hostgroup: $M = 2.26$, $SD = .99$; outgroup: $M = 2.21$, $SD = .92$), $F(1, 153) = .04$. Social identification with the hostgroup was different between the exchange conditions, $F(2, 153) = 78.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .506$, but social

identification with the outgroup was not, $F(2, 153) = .90$. Social identification with the hostgroup was stronger among former exchange students than among future exchange students and the control sample, both ps $< .001$. Future exchange students' social identification was stronger than the control sample's, $p < .001$.

Commitment to the hostgroup was for former exchange students (hostgroup: $M = 5.67$, $SD = .78$, outgroup: $M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.01$, $F(1, 153) = 241.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .612$), future exchange students (hostgroup: $M = 4.88$, $SD = .82$, outgroup: $M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.02$, $F(1, 153) = 242.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .613$) and the control sample (hostgroup: $M = 3.37$, $SD = .75$, outgroup: $M = 2.90$, $SD = .75$, $F(1, 153) = 9.07$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .056$) stronger than the commitment to the outgroup. Moreover, hostgroup commitment, $F(2, 153) = 98.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .562$, and outgroup commitment, $F(2, 153) = 8.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .101$, differed between the exchange conditions. Former exchange students' commitment to the hostgroup was stronger than future exchange students' and the commitment of the control sample, both ps $< .001$. In addition, future exchange students had a higher level of hostgroup commitment than the control sample, $p < .001$. Outgroup commitment was stronger for former exchange students than for future exchange students and the control sample, both ps $< .002$, whereas the outgroup commitment of the latter two did not differ, $p > .10$.

Taken together, the results indicate in line with the predictions that only for former exchange students the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept is stronger than the inclusion of the outgroup on all three components. Already, future exchange students showed stronger social identification and commitment for the hostgroup than for the outgroup, but the inclusion was alike. The participants without exchange experience showed only more commitment to the hostgroup than to the outgroup, but no differences between both target groups concerning the other two concepts. Unexpectedly, the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept was much stronger among both former and future exchange students compared to the control group, whereas the difference between former and future exchange students was comparatively small.

Discussion

The current study replicated the findings of Study 2.1 and extended them in several ways. Study 2.1 demonstrated that social identification with and commitment to the hostgroup are stronger after rather than before an exchange year. Study 2.2 also found that after an exchange the social identification and commitment are stronger than before and added that

future exchange students already have higher levels of social identification and commitment than individuals without exchange plans. Former and future exchange students included the hostgroup to a similar extent in the self-concept (providing evidence for self-stereotyping). This inclusion was stronger than for the control group. Thus, the current studies provide clear evidence for the impact of the exchange experience on social identification and commitment but unexpectedly much less unequivocal support for the hypothesis that the exchange experience also affects the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept. The only indication in this direction is that former exchange students were the only group that showed stronger inclusion of the hostgroup than the outgroup into the self-concept (though this difference was not significantly bigger than for the future exchange students).

All in all, Study 2.2 demonstrated the strongest inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept (compared to the outgroup) after an exchange year with clear evidence from the self-report measures of social identification and commitment, but no clear evidence from the inclusion measure based on response times. Surprisingly, the difference between former and future exchange students (i.e., the impact of the actual exchange year) was smaller than the difference between the control group and the future exchange students. I will devote some more attention to this finding in the Discussion of Study 2.1 - 2.2..

In addition, Study 2.2 demonstrated that the commitment to the hostgroup is stronger than the commitment to the outgroup for all three groups of participants. This effect might indicate that all samples prefer Americans (the hostgroup) over Japanese (the outgroup) and might thus result merely from the chosen groups. The fact that the three groups of participants barely differed in their attitudes towards the Japanese gives some indication that they do not differ in their attitudes towards other groups in general but rather exclusively in their attitudes towards the hostgroup.

Replicating earlier research (Devos, 2006; Otten & Epstude, 2006), but still unexpectedly, I also found an inclusion of the outgroup into the self-concept (the absolute level of inclusion of the outgroup differed significantly from zero). This effect was independent of the exchange condition. The inclusion effect for the outgroup, which is smaller than that for the hostgroup, might be an artifact resulting from the fact that positive traits are more likely to be ascribed to the self (because of the striving for positive self-esteem) and to each other social target (for political correctness). It might also be the case that there is actually some overlap between the representation of Japanese and the participants' self-perception. The latter is how similar results of Devos (2006) can be explained. He

reported an association of the self and the Hispanic culture among European Americans. However, as the outgroup inclusion was not affected by the exchange experience, it is less important in the current context.

Finally, the stronger outgroup commitment among former exchange students than among the other two subsamples might indicate that an exchange year increases the openness for other cultures in general, which is in line with the assumption of Phinney (1990) that developing one's identity increases the openness for others. However, given that only one outgroup was taken into account in the current study, this interpretation requires additional empirical testing.

Discussion Study 2.1. - 2.2

The current studies demonstrated that exchange programs led to the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept of participating students. Both studies showed that after an exchange year students identify with the hostgroup and that they are willing to support the host-country and its interests to a stronger extent than before. Unexpectedly, the actual exchange experience did not strengthen the association between the self and characteristics that are typical for the hostgroup (i.e., self-stereotyping). At the same time, students that have been accepted to participate in an exchange program already show a stronger inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept on all three measures (social identification, commitment and inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept) compared to students that are not interested in participating in an exchange program. This could result from the anticipated interaction with the hostgroup, as anticipated intergroup interaction is known to improve intergroup attitudes (Insko et al. 2001) and to have a lot of other effects (for a review see Vorauer, 2006). Alternatively, being accepted as an exchange student might already improve the actual relation to the hostgroup. However, the elevated level of inclusion of the hostgroup in the self-concept already before the actual exchange year could also be a self-selection effect: Those perceiving themselves to be similar to the hostgroup and already having a positive relation to it tend to apply for an exchange year. Finally, the selection procedure of the exchange organizations might favor those who are already somewhat like the hostgroup. Further research is needed to ascertain which of these factors contribute to the differences found between future exchange students and the control group.

Beyond the unexpectedly strong differences between the control group and the future exchange students, the studies also found substantial (even if smaller) effects that can clearly

be attributed to the exchange experience. Former exchange students show stronger social identification with and commitment to the hostgroup. Hence, the exchange experience still contributes to the development of students' identity: The hostgroup becomes part of the exchange students' identity and the exchange students are willing to support the hostgroup and even other groups (as indicated by the stronger commitment to the Japanese). The lack of clear evidence for a stronger inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept (i.e., self-stereotyping) after the exchange year compared to before was unexpected. As the effect occurred in both studies, albeit based on different measures, it seems to be a valid finding. It can be attributed to several reasons. *First*, to change the content of the self-perception (i.e., self-stereotyping) might be much harder than to change the evaluative aspects of the self-concept (i.e., social identification). *Second*, the change of the content of the self-perception does not require the actual exchange experience, but can rather result from the anticipation of an exchange that is happening before, whereas the actual experience contributes to the development of an affective relation to the hostgroup as expressed in identification and commitment. *Finally*, the current results might also be attributed to the measures applied here (and usually in self-stereotyping research): These measures rely on participants' perception of the group. If, however, the perceptions of the hostgroup change during the exchange year (which is what earlier research suggests; Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996), then the extent of the overlap between the self and the hostgroup stereotype is not a valid measure of self-concept change. A measure of the actual content of the self-concept before and after the exchange would be required. In sum, it might be worthwhile to address the impact of the actual exchange experience on self-stereotyping in further research.

A limitation of the current findings is that they are not based on longitudinal data. However, the comparison between future and former exchange students comes close to a longitudinal design. The within subject design and the control group without exchange experience in Study 2.2 bolster my claim. Nonetheless, future research should replicate the current findings in a longitudinal design.

For the aim of the exchange programs the current findings are positive news. A year abroad changes indeed the self-concept of students. This is at the same time also important news for social psychology. Research on intergroup contact has mainly focused and provided evidence for the positive impact of contact on attitudes towards the respective outgroup (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The outcome of contact that was addressed in the current studies, namely the impact of contact on the self-concept, has rarely received attention in research on

intergroup contact, though it was addressed in acculturation research. Therefore, research on intergroup contact should address changes to the self much more than it has done during the past (for exceptions see Aron et al., 2004).

One might object that positive intergroup attitudes and the inclusion of a former outgroup into the self-concept are two sides of the same coin. This is not the case, as a positive attitude is enhanced by intergroup distinctiveness (i.e., the facts that two groups define themselves as clearly distinct from each other; Spears, Jetten, Scheepers, & Cihangir, in press), which is just the opposite of the inclusion of a former outgroup into the self-concept.

Because of the duration of an exchange year, the current findings are not only relevant for intergroup contact, but also for acculturation. After immigrating to another country migrants experience a change in their identity. Similar to the exchange students, they integrate the host-country into their self-concept (Devos, 2006). The current study is another example for research on the development of an achieved identity as discussed in acculturation research (Phinney, 1990). Until now, research in this domain mainly used self-reports about the self-concept. However, the response time paradigm applied here might be a useful tool that allows for the assessment of aspects of the self-concept that are not assessable via self-reports, because of social desirability, dissonance reduction etc. Hence, the current studies suggest that research on identity development might profit from the application of social-cognitive methods.

To conclude, the current studies demonstrated that exchange years have a significant impact on students' self-concept, mainly concerning their identification with and commitment to the hostgroup. Hence, the programs fulfill the goal to impact on the students' personality and identity, since they can make a significant contribution to the identity development of students. As the most substantial self-concept differences occurred already between participants that were not interested in an exchange year and *future* exchange students, future research needs to clarify the extend of the impact that the mere anticipation of an exchange year has on self-concept changes.

Chapter 3   The supporting and impeding effects of membership approach and avoidance strategies on newcomers' psychological adaptation

Imagine an international student at a foreign university. In order to integrate into the local student society, he might focus on dressing like his fellow students, using similar language, or behaving like a typical local student, for instance. Imagine, on the other hand, an expatriate who is sent to work in a foreign country. In order to grow into the local society, she might want to avoid expressing unpopular opinions, taking wrong decisions at work, or dressing improperly according to local standards. The first example illustrates the adoption of membership approach strategies in migrants: the application of behavior that encourages integration into the receiving society. The latter example illustrates membership avoidance strategies in migrants: the avoidance of behavior that risks integration in the receiving society. Approach and avoidance strategies occur naturally in the social domain and are often related to each other (Elliot, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008; Elliot et al., 2006). However, little is known about the functionality of approach and avoidance strategies in the context of new group memberships, such as migration to another country. The purpose of the current study is to identify the effects of membership strategies on the psychological functioning of newcomers in groups.

The effect of approach and avoidance strategies on well-being

Membership approach strategies in newcomers are a focus on positive outcomes in the relation to the new group: newcomers adopt behavior that increases the likelihood of integration. Membership avoidance strategies, on the other hand, are a focus on negative relational outcomes: newcomers avoid behavior that increases the likelihood of a negative relation to the new group. Both strategies focus on the integration in the new group, even if the pathways to integration differ. It has been demonstrated that the adoption of approach and avoidance strategies in the pursuit of interpersonal relations affects long-term well-being: approach strategies are positively related to well-being, whereas avoidance strategies are negatively related to well-being (Elliot et al., 2006). Applying this finding to intercultural relations, I predict stronger membership approach strategies to lead to higher levels of well-being, and membership avoidance strategies to lead to lower levels of well-being. These effects might occur due to a relation between membership strategies and acculturation strategies.

Acculturation strategies

I first discuss the effects of acculturation strategies on well-being, and then propose a relation between membership strategies and acculturation strategies. In the intercultural domain, well-being is affected by certain behavioral strategies in migrants (i.e., newcomers in the receiving society): (a) The maintenance of primary cultural identity and (b) contact and participation with the receiving society (Berry, 1997). The adoption of both strategies is related to migrants' higher levels of well-being (Berry et al., 2006; Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Phinney et al., 2001, Nguyen, Messé, & Stollak, 1999). As the current study focuses on strategies referring specifically to the new group, the effects of the contact and participation strategy (which will be referred to as *acculturation contact strategies*), being the strategy that relates to the new group, will be considered. Moreover, even though theoretically the interaction of both acculturation strategies affects well-being, it was found that the effects were often driven by acculturation contact strategies (Liebkind, 2001; Nguyen, et al., 1999; Zagefka & Brown; 2002). It is thus likely that acculturation contact strategies in newcomers lead to higher levels of well-being.

In the interpersonal domain, there is evidence that approach strategies, but not avoidance strategies, facilitate behavioral strategies. Gable (2006) proposes that approach strategies are related to stronger seeking of positive social events, whereas avoidance strategies are related to a stronger impact of negative social events. I therefore predict that stronger approach strategies lead to stronger acculturation contact strategies. I predict no such effect of avoidance strategies. Furthermore, I propose that acculturation contact strategies affect (dis)identification with the new group.

(Dis)identification

Firstly, the impact of (dis)identification on well-being is discussed. Secondly, I propose acculturation strategies and membership strategies to affect (dis)identification. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), new group memberships induce self-concept changes: The relation to the group is included into the self-concept (Smith & Henry, 1996). A positive relation, hence a successful integration into the group, results in the development of a social identification. Members feel, self-categorize, and act on behalf of their group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also the evidence from chapter 2). A negative relation to a self-relevant group, hence an unsuccessful integration, is mirrored in disidentification. Members feel, self-categorize, and act *contrary* to the group (Elsbach &

Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). There is a large body of literature proposing the beneficial effects of social identification on well-being (Branscombe et al., 1999; Brewer, 1991; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Schmitt et al., 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). I therefore predict stronger social identification with a new group to be related to higher levels of well-being. The relation of disidentification to well-being is yet to be investigated. However, negative interpersonal relations have a negative impact on well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and membership in a group with which one has a negative relation should lead to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Thus, I predict stronger disidentification with a new group to be related to lower levels of well-being. On the other hand, success in the academic domain can compensate for problems in the social domain. Schwartz, Hopmeyer Gorman, Duong, and Nakamoto (2008) demonstrated that academic achievement buffers the negative effect of having relatively few friends on depressive symptoms in children. In a similar vein, Sleebos, Ellemers, and de Gilder (2006b) found that disrespect in groups makes members increase their self-serving effort in achievement tasks aimed at leaving the group. I therefore expect stronger disidentification to lead to stronger achievement effort.

Furthermore, I propose that acculturation contact strategies and membership strategies affect (dis)identification. Acculturation contact strategies lead to better socio-cultural adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Nguyen et al., 1999), in other words they increase the likelihood of a positive and decrease the likelihood of a negative relation to the new group. Therefore, I predict acculturation contact strategies to lead to stronger social identification and weaker disidentification. Moreover, there might also be a positive relation between avoidance strategies and disidentification. In the interpersonal domain, avoidance strategies are related to more loneliness, negative social attitudes, and relationship insecurity (Elliot et al, 2006; Gable, 2006). Thus, avoidance strategies lead to negative relationship outcomes. As the negative relation to a group is reflected in the self-concept in form of disidentification, I assume that avoidance strategies facilitate disidentification.

Overview

A longitudinal study with two measurement times was conducted. At Time 1 (T1), the continuous predictors membership approach and avoidance strategies were measured. Moreover, friendship approach and avoidance strategies were measured in order to control whether effects are driven by interpersonal strategies instead of membership strategies. Given that most of the outcome criteria were not measurable at T1, they were firstly measured at Time 2 (T2). Three continuous mediators (acculturation contact strategies, social identification, and disidentification) and two dependent variables (well-being and achievement effort) were measured at T2.

Figure 3.1 demonstrates the full hypothesized model. I predict that stronger membership approach strategies lead to higher levels of well-being, whereas stronger membership avoidance strategies lead to lower levels of well-being. I expect stronger approach strategies, but not stronger avoidance strategies, to be related to stronger acculturation contact strategies. Avoidance strategies are predicted to lead to stronger disidentification. Stronger acculturation contact strategies are predicted to be positively related to social identification, and negatively related to disidentification. Stronger social identification is expected to be related to higher levels of well-being. I predict that disidentification leads to lower levels of well-being, but to stronger achievement effort.

In other words, I predict four mediations. I expect acculturation strategies to mediate a relation between membership approach strategies and social identification. Social identification, in turn, is predicted to account for the relation between acculturation contact strategies and well-being. Disidentification, on the other hand, is predicted to mediate the relation between avoidance strategies and well-being. Moreover, I predict disidentification to be a second mediator for the positive relation between acculturation contact strategies and well-being.
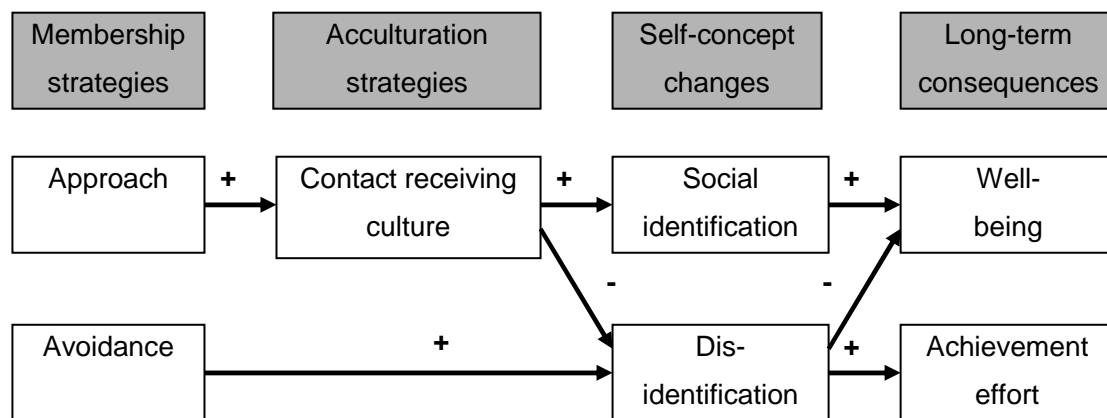
Figure 3.1: *The hypothesized model of membership strategies, acculturation contact strategies, self-concept changes, and long-term consequences.*

Study 3

Method

Design and participants

Ninety-four German students (79 females, 15 males, age $M = 20$, range 18-23) who had just come to the Netherlands (on average 32 days ago) in order to study at the University of Groningen took part at T1. Fifty-one of these students (44 females, 7 males) also participated at T2 approximately 12-16 weeks later. For participation at T1, participants received a token from the university, for participation in both measurement times, participants received book vouchers.

Procedure

Participants were recruited in language courses (83 participants) and via advertisement in the university (11 participants) for a study about the experiences of German students in Groningen. At T1, participants filled in a German-worded questionnaire at the end of a Dutch language lesson before the start of the term, or online upon the start of the term. 85 % of the participants did not have any contact to Dutch students at T1. Within a larger battery of measures, participants indicated their approach and avoidance strategies to integrate into the group of students in Groningen, their friendship approach and avoidance strategies, gave demographics, and their e-mail address. Participants who filled in the paper-pencil T1

questionnaire were only stronger in friendship approach strategies ($M = 6.22$, $SD = .65$) than those who filled in the T1 questionnaire online ($M = 5.64$, $SD = .48$), $t(49) = 2.25$, $p = .029$. There were no other differences in T1 measures between the groups, all ts < 1.78, all ps >. 10. Therefore, I assume that the mode of completion did not affect the relevant criteria, and analyses were conducted across the two groups.

Approximately 12-14 weeks later, the online follow-up questionnaire was advertised via e-mail. Participants completed measures of their acculturation contact strategies, social identification with the students of Groningen, disidentification, well-being and achievement effort within the following two weeks (before the start of the Christmas holidays) online. After participation in both measurement times participants were thanked and debriefed.

Measures

Approach strategies (α =.76) and *avoidance strategies* (α =.76) were measured with a 12-item questionnaire (for questionnaire development see chapter 4, items can be found in Appendix I). The items were adapted to the context. Approach strategies ($M = 5.29$, $SD = .93$) and avoidance strategies ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.08$) were intercorrelated, ($r = .36$, $p = .009$), as has been reported earlier in the social domain (Elliot et al., 2006).

Friendship-approach strategies (e.g., "I try to deepen my relationships with my friends", α =.63) and *friendship-avoidance strategies* (e.g., "I try to avoid disagreement and conflicts with my friends", α =.65) were measured with the questionnaire of Elliot and colleagues (2006). Like membership strategies, approach and avoidance strategies were positively related, ($r = .38$, $p = .006$).

Acculturation contact strategies were measured with four items (α = .90). Two items were adapted from Zagefka and Brown (2002), one item from Geschke, Mummendey, Kessler, and Funke (2007), and one own item was added.

An eleven-item scale measured *social identification* (α =.83). Seven items were taken from the identification scale introduced by Kessler and Hollbach (2005), one item was taken from the identification measure of Hinkle, Taylor and Fox-Cardamone (1989), two items were adapted from the German version of the Organization Citizenship Behavior Scale (Staufenbiel & Hartz, 2000), amended by another item developed by myself. A longer version of the scale can be found in Appendix II.

Disidentification (α = .90) was measured with ten items. All items were taken from the longer scale version that can be found in Appendix III.

Well-being (e.g., "I consider myself a happy person", α = .92) was measured with the 13-item scale of Dalbert (1992). Three items in an open response format measured *achievement effort* (α = .70).

All items (except for achievement effort) were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *I don't agree at all*, 7 = *I fully agree*). Means served as scale values.

Results

Drop-out analysis

Between T1 and T2, 43 students dropped out of the study. Participants who dropped out did not differ in age, approach strategies or avoidance strategies from those who participated in the second wave, all *t*s < 1.02, all *p*s >.10. Thus, drop-out was not systematically related to the regulatory strategies investigated here.

Regression analyses

The full correlation matrix of predictor and dependent variables can be found in Table 3.1. In order to test the paths of the hypothesized model, separate regression analyses were conducted including those predictors where I either expected a direct effect or explicitly no effect (see Table 3.2).

Acculturation contact strategies were regressed on membership approach strategies, membership avoidance strategies, friendship approach strategies, and friendship avoidance strategies. As expected, only membership approach strategies predicted acculturation contact strategies, *ß* = .38, *p* = .042, whereas none of the other predictors were related to acculturation contact strategies, all *ß*s < │.24│, all *p*s > .10.

Social identification was regressed on acculturation contact strategies, membership avoidance strategies, and friendship avoidance strategies. Acculturation contact strategies were, as expected, positively related to stronger social identification, *ß* = .47, *p* = .001. Neither membership avoidance strategies nor friendship avoidance strategies predicted social identification, both *ß*s < │.08│, both *p*s > .10.

Table 3.1: *Pearson product moment correlations of predictor and outcome variables in Study 3 (N = 51).*

Measure	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Membership approach	.36**	.50***	.23	.31*	.14	.03	-.02	-.02
2. Membership avoidance		-.17	.12	-.10	-.04	.11	-.29*	-.03
3. Friendship approach			.38**	.25+	.07	.05	.17	-.06
4. Friendship avoidance				.06	-.05	.05	.13	.10
5. Acculturation contact					.46**	-.33*	.31*	.16
6. Social identification						-.46**	.47***	-.22
7. Disidentification							-.38**	.34*
8. Well-being								-.06
9. Achievement effort								

Note. + = $p < .10$, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

The regression analysis of disidentification included the predictors membership avoidance strategies, friendship avoidance strategies, and acculturation contact strategies. The expected relation between membership avoidance strategies was not found, $ß = .07$, $p = .598$. As expected, there was neither an effect of friendship avoidance strategies on disidentification, $ß = .06$, $p = .680$. Higher levels of acculturation contact strategies were, as expected, related to weaker disidentification, $ß = -.33$, $p = .021$.

Well-being was regressed on social identification and disidentification. As expected, stronger social identification was related to higher levels of well-being, $ß = .38$, $p = .010$. Descriptively, stronger disidentification led to lower levels of well-being, but the relation did not reach conventional levels of significance, $ß = -.21$, $p = .139$.

Disidentification and social identification served as predictors for achievement effort. As expected, stronger disidentification was related to stronger achievement effort, $ß = .31$, $p = .049$, whereas there was no relation between social identification and achievement effort, $ß = -.08$, $p = .597$.

All standardized regression weights from the multiple regression analyses can be found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: *Standardized regression weights from multiple regression analyses of acculturation contact strategies, social identification, disidentification, well-being, and achievement effort in Study 3 (N = 51).*

	Dependent measure				
	Acculturation contact	*Social identification*	*Dis-identification*	*Well-being*	*Achievement effort*
Membership approach	.38*				
Membership avoidance	-.23	.01	.07		
Friendship approach	.02				
Friendship avoidance	-.01	-.07	.06		
Acculturation contact		.47**	-.33*		
Social identification				.38*	-.08
Disidentification				-.21	.31*

Note. + = $p < .10$, * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

Taken together, regression analyses supported most of the predicted relations in the hypothesized model and demonstrated that membership strategies, instead of friendship strategies, are predictors of the group-related dependent measures. However, the predicted relation between membership avoidance strategies and disidentification on the one hand, and the relation between disidentification and well-being on the other, were not found. Therefore, these paths were omitted from the hypothesized model. In the modified model, a direct path from avoidance strategies to well-being was allowed (as in the interpersonal domain; Elliot et al., 2006).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis testing the full model

In order to test the paths of the full model simultaneously and assess the fit of the modified model to the observed data, SEM was used. As the measures of acculturation contact strategies, social identification, disidentification, and achievement effort were not measurable at T1, cross-legged analyses were not conductible. A confirmative factor analysis

was conducted on the seven available measures using AMOS 7 (Arbuckle, 2006). Following prior research, the measurement errors of the approach and avoidance strategies were allowed to correlate (Elliot et al., 2006; Elliot & Church, 1997). Likewise, the error variables of the two self-concept-related measures social identification and disidentification were allowed to correlate. As suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit.

All predicted relations in the modified model received empirical support, all βs > $|.27|$, all ps > .05. Figure 3.2 displays the path regression coefficients. The modified model fitted well to the observed data, χ^2 (13, $N = 51$) = 15.08, $p = .302$, CFI = .962, TLI = .939, RMSEA = .057.

The original hypothesized model (see Figure 3.1) fitted the data only poorly to moderately, χ^2 (12, $N = 51$) = 17.14, $p = .145$, CFI = .906, TLI = .836, RMSEA = .093, (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). Likewise, alternative models testing the reversed causal relations and different causal relations between the variables collected at T2 were poor in fit to the data, all CFI < .85, TLI < .75, RMSEA > .11.
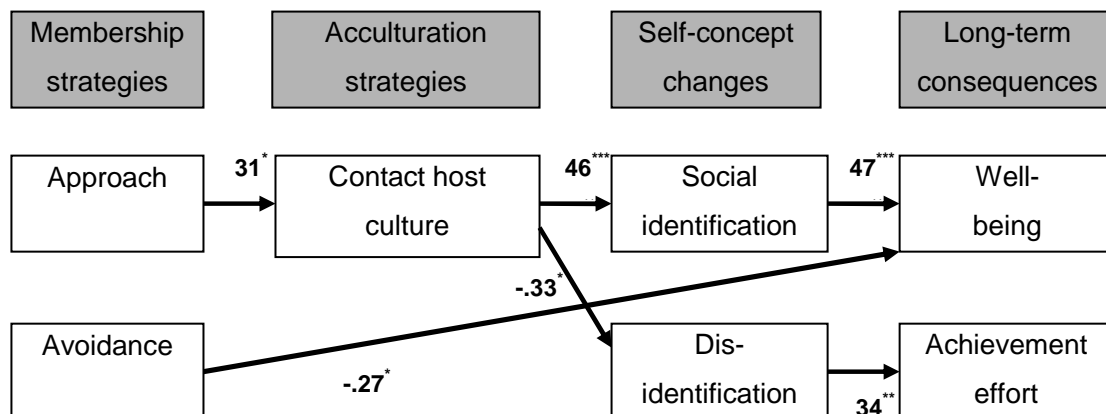

Figure 3.2: *The modified empirical model of membership strategies, acculturation contact strategies, self-concept changes, and long-term consequences (N = 51).*

Mediation analyses in the full model

In order to test the predicted mediations separately, indirect effects were calculated with Amos 7 (Arbuckle, 2006). The indirect (twice mediated) effect of membership approach strategies on well-being was $\beta = .07$. Firstly, I expected and found acculturation contact strategies to account for the relation between approach strategies and social identification, $\beta = .14$. Sobel's test indicated that this indirect effect was marginally significant, $z = 1.95$, $p = .063$. Secondly, the relation between acculturation contact strategies and well-being was, as expected, accounted for by social identification, $\beta = .22$, $z = 2.67$, $p = .012$. In the modified model, there was no direct effect of disidentification on well-being, thus the relation between acculturation contact strategies and well-being was not mediated by disidentification. Likewise, as there was no relation between avoidance strategies and disidentification, the relation between avoidance strategies and well-being was not mediated by disidentification.

Taken together, SEM analyses confirmed the predictions of the modified model.

Discussion Study 3

The current study investigated the effects of approach and avoidance strategies on psychological functioning in newcomers longitudinally in the intercultural context. I expected and found that approach strategies upon entrance led to stronger acculturation contact strategies, which were in turn related to stronger social identification. Social identification led to higher long-term well-being. Thus, approach strategies affected long-term well-being positively. Avoidance strategies, on the other hand, led to lower levels of long-term well-being. This effect was not, as originally hypothesized, accounted for by disidentification, but disidentification led, as expected, to stronger achievement effort. Stronger acculturation contact strategies, in turn, led to weaker disidentification.

The process induced by membership strategies

The findings contribute to a better understanding of the underlying processes of approach strategies' effects on well-being. In the interpersonal domain, Gable (2006) argues that both behavioral strategies (i.e., stronger seeking of positive events) and positive relationship outcomes account for the relation between approach strategies and well-being. Likewise, in the present study, the effects of approach strategies on well-being are mediated by behavioral strategies (i.e., stronger seeking of contact to the receiving society), but the current data add the layer of self-concept changes to the model. I demonstrate that it is the

inclusion of positive relations into the self-concept (i.e., social identification) which accounts for the effects of approach strategies on well-being.

Avoidance strategies had, like in the interpersonal domain (Elliot et al., 2006), a negative effect on long-term well-being. This relation was, however, not mediated by negative relationship outcomes (as suggested by Gable, 2006) that are included in the self-concept (i.e., disidentification). Research in the interpersonal domain suggests that the impact of avoidance strategies on negative relationship outcomes is mediated by a stronger reactivity towards negative events (Elliot et al., 2006; Gable, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008). Indeed, avoidance strategies lead to facilitated memory of negative social events, and a negatively biased interpretation of ambiguous social information (Strachman & Gable, 2006). However, it is striking that in this reasoning, avoidance strategies affect relationship outcomes *in combination* with negative events. Unlike approach strategies, avoidance strategies do not affect the *exposure* to the events that induce strategy effects (Gable, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008). More simply, if there are no negative events, it is possible that avoidance strategies do not affect relationship outcomes. The present study did not collect information about actual experiences with the group, thus it is possible that there were little negative experiences. Moreover, disidentification is an explicitly negative outcome criterion, which is hardly socially desirable in highly motivated newcomers. Participants might not have wanted to express an explicitly negative relation to their new group without reason. Future investigations should control for the quality of contact experiences and include newcomers' motivational strength to enter the group in order to further clarify the process of the negative effects of avoidance strategies on well-being.

Implications for acculturation research

For acculturation research, the current findings are a contribution to the explanation of acculturation strategy adoption. So far, demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, education), contextual factors (e.g., cultural similarity, permeability, social-political norms), and personal factors (e.g., self-efficacy, locus of control, pride) have been shown to influence acculturation strategy choice (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Liebkind, 2001; Piontkowski et al., 2000). However, these predictors are either outside the migrant, or address rather stable and uncontrollable characteristics in migrants. By demonstrating that approach strategies lead to stronger acculturation contact strategies, the present research considers regulatory, thus procedural and flexible characteristics of newcomers.

Apart from short-term outcomes of disidentification (e.g, public criticism or counter-group actions, Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001), there is little research about the consequences of disidentification. The present data did not support the assumption that disidentification leads to lower levels of well-being, but it was demonstrated that disidentification (i.e., unsuccessful integration) leads to stronger engagement in alternative dimensions (i.e., achievement; Schwartz et al., 2008). Germans who perform well at a Dutch university might do so in order to have access to the German job-market, hence "perform themselves out of the group" (as reasoned in Sleebos et al., 2006b). The rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999) suggests that the identification with alternative groups in face of prejudice buffers the negative effect of prejudice on well-being. Likewise, it is possible that success on alternative dimensions buffers the negative effects of unsuccessful integration on newcomers' well-being, which might be the reason for the missing relation between disidentification and well-being. Further longitudinal investigations of creative coping with disidentification and consequences of successful coping on well-being would be a valuable contribution to the current evidence.

Context dependence

Differently than in earlier investigations of acculturation strategy effects on well-being (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen et al., 1999), I did not conceptualize achievement effort as a part of well-being. However, if achievement effort was considered part of well-being, an alternative hypothesis can be derived from acculturation research: As acculturation contact strategies positively affect well-being (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), and this relation is mediated by (dis)identification, the relation between disidentification and achievement effort should be negative. I propose that the nature of this relation depends on the context: There are groups where achievement is normative and integration relies on good performance. In these contexts, disidentification would impede achievement effort. If, however, achievement is an irrelevant characteristic in the group, integration is independent of performance. In these contexts, achievement is an alternative dimension to compensate disidentification on. In support of this notion, I find a positive relation between disidentification and achievement effort in the current study, where the reference group was students at a Dutch university. Among these, the norm is to achieve just good enough ("zesjescultuur") to pass exams (VSNU, 2007; cited in AD Binnenland, 2007), probably especially at the beginning of studies. However, additional data from expatriates in

development work demonstrate that there is a norm *not* to *dis*identify from the receiving culture ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.93$, which differed significantly from the midpoint of the 7-point-scale, $t(16) = -4.02$, $p = .001$). In this context, stronger disidentification is related to less achievement effort ($r = -.52$, $p = .031$, $N = 17$). Future research should investigate the impact of disidentification on achievement effort in contexts with varying group achievement norms.

Conclusions

The current findings demonstrate the importance of a smooth integration in new groups for newcomers' psychological functioning. In a world that craves recurring adaptation to new groups, individuals can contribute to their own psychological functioning by adopting certain strategies upon entrance: approach strategies improve, avoidance strategies decrease well-being. Moreover, in the intercultural domain, acculturation contact strategies advance self-concept adaptation and psychological functioning of migrants. These findings have practical implications for the selection of newcomers as well as training and coaching of migrants. In many countries, political actions aimed at a successful integration of migrants in the receiving society begin months, if not years after arrival. The current findings underline the importance of an early beginning of training and integration arrangements, as certain motivational strategies begin to work upon arrival, but lay the foundation of newcomers' long-term functioning in the receiving society.

Chapter 4   Approach strategies and internal motivation facilitate the inclusion of a new group into the self-concept

In times of flexibility and mobility, the ability to integrate smoothly becomes more and more crucial. Imagine a graduate who accepts an unattractive job-offer in order to prevent unemployment. Having started, she would behave like a prototypical company member, use their language and dress like the others in the company to consolidate her standing in the group. Now imagine a student that joins the local theater club because he thinks it seems fun to act. In order to grow into the group, he avoids being too different from the others, avoids making mistakes and expressing unpopular opinions in rehearsals. These examples illustrate that newcomers differ widely in their reasons to join a group and their strategies to become a real member of the group. The purpose of the current studies is to investigate the impact of motivational characteristics in newcomers on self-concept changes induced by a new group membership.

Self-concept change in newcomers

Moreland and Levine (1982) pointed out that newcomers influence groups and vice versa. Small group research has demonstrated that, under certain circumstances, newcomers increase a group's performance (e.g., Gruenfeld et al., 1996; Choi & Levine, 2004), change routines (Kane et al., 2005), increase innovation (Nemeth, 1986), decrease risk of group think (Janis, 1982; Esser, 1998), and disrupt elaboration of relevant information (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). As to changes in newcomers, the new membership changes the newcomers' perception of the group's homogeneity (e.g., Oakes et al., 1995; Linville et al., 1989; Moreland, 1985) and their behavior (e.g., Moreland, 1985; Moreland & Levine, 1982).

Self-concept changes in newcomers as targeted here have been addressed in acculturation research rather than in small group research. Work in this domain demonstrated that migrants (i.e., newcomers in a culture) who want to become a part of the group include the receiving culture (i.e., new group) in their self-concepts when they are interested in adopting the new culture (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; Deaux, 2006; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Flores, 2008). Acculturation research has measured self-concept changes in migrants with varying methods, but little attention has been devoted to social identification with the receiving culture (Phinney et al., 2001). However, following social identity theory, social identification is the crucial indicator for the inclusion of a group into the self-concept

(Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, the self-concept *changes* when newcomers identify with a group. Indeed, in chapter 2 I provide one of the few studies demonstrating that new groups can be included into the self-concept: Intense contact, experienced by exchange students who spent a year abroad, led to affective and behavioral identification with the new group. Similarly, Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) provided evidence for the social identification of migrants with their receiving culture. Taken together, in the intercultural context, there is evidence that new group memberships induce the inclusion of the group into the self-concept, especially when there is an interest in the receiving culture. In other words, individuals' motivation to become a group member is a prerequisite for the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. Besides the strength of motivation, regulatory strategies influence goal-pursuit. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the impact of regulatory strategies and motivational strength on interindividual differences in self-concept changes.

Regulatory strategies

Recently, the distinction between approach and avoidance strategies, well-established in the domain of performance (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; van Yperen, 2006), has been applied to the social domain, more precisely to interpersonal relations. Applied to newcomers, approach strategies would mean selecting behavior that increases the likelihood of becoming a real member of the group. In the example above, the newcomer chose to dress and speak prototypically. Newcomers that adopt avoidance strategies would avoid behavior that questions group membership. In the second example, the newcomer avoided differing from other group members or resembling outgroup members. Both approach and avoidance strategies occur naturally in the social domain and are two dimensions that are related, but distinct (Elliot, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008).

In the context of interpersonal relationships, individuals often form the goal to have positive relationships or make friends. Gable (2006) demonstrated that approach and avoidance strategies in pursuing this goal influence relationship outcomes. Approach strategies are related to more satisfaction and less loneliness in relationships, whereas avoidance strategies are related to more loneliness, negative social attitudes, and relationship insecurity. Besides these short-term consequences, approach strategies are positively related to changes in subjective well-being, whereas avoidance strategies were related to an increase in physical symptoms (Elliot et al., 2006). Gable and Strachman (2008) argue that the effects of approach and avoidance strategies are captured on different outcome criteria: Approach

strategies influence *positive* outcomes of relationship, such as closeness of a relationship, whereas there is stronger evidence of avoidance strategies on *negative* outcomes, such as insecurity in a relationship. Applied to the context of group memberships, this suggests that approach strategies, but not avoidance strategies, affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept, as social identification is a positive relationship outcome criterion with a group.

There is evidence that different strategies lead to sensitivity for specific events. Therefore, the group's feedback towards the newcomer will be considered in the following section.

Group feedback and regulatory strategies

Research on the group's feedback has shown that rejection decreases social identification with the group (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), whereas confirmation of a self-chosen group increases social identification and commitment (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002). In a similar vein, the group-engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) argues that when members feel accepted, they value the group more and show stronger commitment. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that peripheral group members show stronger commitment (Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003), collective self-esteem (i.e., a part of social identification), and group-serving behavior (Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2002) when they anticipate acceptance of the group. Newcomers are per se peripheral members and should likewise be able to adapt their social identification to the group's feedback. It is thus crucial to include the feedback of the group to newcomers when investigating the development of social identification in newcomers.

More so as there is evidence that individuals with approach and avoidance strategies respond differently to positive and negative events. Carver (2001) argues that in an approach mode positive events result in more activating responses, whereas in an avoidance mode negative events result in more activating responses (compared to the respective other type of events). Accordingly, avoidance strategies facilitate memory of negative information, and a negatively biased interpretation of ambiguous social information (Strachman & Gable, 2006). Furthermore, avoidance strategies lead to stronger perceived importance of negative social events (but not positive events), whereas approach strategies lead to more seeking and exposure to positive events (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006). Applied to newcomers, this suggests that approach strategies are related to social identification when newcomers are accepted, but not when they are rejected (*Hypothesis 1*). Avoidance strategies, on the other

hand, should be unrelated to social identification, because there is no effect of avoidance on positive outcome criteria (*Hypothesis 2a*).

An alternative prediction can be derived from regulatory fit hypothesis (Higgins, 2000). This hypothesis suggests that the fit between regulatory strategy and behavioral opportunity leads to an increased value and stronger engagement of the target that provides such behavioral opportunities (Higgins, 2006). This hypothesis has been suggested for different regulatory strategies, such as regulatory focus (Higgins, 2000; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegel, & Molden, 2003) and locomotion vs. assessment orientations (Avnet & Higgins, 2003), and is therefore likely to apply to approach and avoidance strategies as well. Regarding group choice it was demonstrated that the fit between regulatory focus and the behavioral opportunity provided by groups of different power leads to a greater preference of groups with regulatory fit (i.e., high power in promotion focus and low power in prevention focus; Sassenberg, Jonas, Shah, & Brazy, 2007), stronger positive associations with the group, and stronger social identification (Sassenberg, Brazy, Jonas, & Shah, 2006). Thus, applied to the current research questions, regulatory fit hypothesis suggests higher levels of social identification when the regulatory strategy and the possibility to exert the respective strategy in the group coincide. Hence, for approach strategies and positive group feedback, the same prediction as above can be derived from regulatory fit hypothesis: When newcomers are accepted, approach strategies are related to social identification with the group (*Hypothesis 1*). However, according to regulatory fit hypothesis, stronger social identification can also result from a fit with avoidance strategies, more precisely when avoidance strategies can be applied successfully. Thus, an alternative prediction derived from regulatory fit hypothesis is that avoidance strategies are related to social identification when newcomers are *not* rejected (*Hypothesis 2b*).

The moderating role of internal motivation

When newcomers are rejected, then again, an additional prediction can be derived when one takes internal motivation into account. It is a commonplace experience that you would not easily give up something you *really* want. Goal pursuit based on internal motivation leads to greater persistence (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992; Green-Demers, Pelletier, & Menard, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000, for an overview). In a similar vein, self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982) argues that reaction to failure in goal pursuit depends on how identity-relevant the goal is. Failure in identity-

relevant goal pursuit leads to a feeling of incompleteness and frustration, which makes people strive even stronger for the goals in order to compensate the failure (Fehr & Sassenberg, 2008; Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996; Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998). Therefore, as I focus on the impact of regulatory strategies on social identification, I predict that the internal motivation moderates this relationship: For newcomers high in internal motivation who experience social failure (i.e., rejection by the group), approach strategies should be related to social identification in spite of the rejection (*Hypothesis 3*). As social identification is a positive outcome on the one hand, and fit between strategy and possibility to exert the strategy in the group, on the other hand, is not given, the effect of avoidance strategies on social identification should be unaffected by internal motivation.

Overview

Two studies assessed the internal motivation as well as approach and avoidance strategies in newcomers. Moreover, the group's feedback (acceptance vs. rejection) was manipulated. The effects on self-concept changes were tested. It has been suggested that social identification consists of three dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Tajfel, 1978). Affectively, identification is an emotional involvement with the group (Ellemers et al., 1999); cognitively, one should consider oneself to fit into the social category (Turner et al., 1987). Behaviorally, identification is the willingness to contribute to the group's benefit (i.e., commitment). As research has demonstrated that the components have different consequences (Jackson, 1999; Ellemers et al., 1999), I measured them separately.

I expected the regulatory strategies and internal motivation to moderate the impact of the group's feedback on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. More specifically, I expected approach strategies to be related to social identification when newcomers are accepted (*Hypothesis 1*). When newcomers are rejected, I expect the effect of approach strategies to be moderated by internal motivation: There is no relation between approach strategies and social identification for those low in internal motivation. For those high in internal motivation, approach strategies are related to social identification (*Hypothesis 3*). For avoidance strategies, two alternative hypotheses were tested: *Hypothesis 2a (outcome criteria hypothesis):* There is no relation between avoidance strategies and social identification. *Hypothesis 2b (regulatory fit hypothesis):* When newcomers are accepted, avoidance strategies are positively related to social identification. Study 4.1 used scenarios to test these

hypotheses; Study 4.2 used bogus groups and thus real, but controlled experiences with the new group.

Study 4.1

Method

Design and participants

An experiment with two conditions (acceptance vs. rejection) and three continuous independent variables (internal motivation, approach and avoidance strategies) was conducted. One hundred and twenty one German-speaking students of the University of Jena (82 females, 39 males, age $M = 22$, range 19-33 years) took part in exchange for a chocolate bar.

Procedure

Participants were asked to name a group that they would like to be a member of. This free choice was used to induce a high personal relevance and a proximity to actual experience. Afterwards they filled in measures of their motivation to enter that group and were asked to imagine that they were a newcomer, followed by measures of approach and avoidance strategies. In order to manipulate the group's feedback, participants read the following situations (for German translation, see Appendix IV):

(Acceptance) *Rejection:* Since a few weeks you are part of the group. The common idea and the activities are still interesting and important to you. You notice quickly that important group issues are often discussed outside the group activities. (Already after a short while you are asked for your opinion by the other group members.) *But you realize that you are not asked for your opinion by the other group members.* At the recent distribution of tasks, (a central task for which you are especially suited was assigned to you.) *no task was assigned to you, though you are especially suited for a certain task.* Accidently you overhear a conversation where one group member says to another (that you are already a real group member and "really part of the group".) *that you are not a real group member and "not really part of the group".*

Participants were asked to put themselves in that situation and received the dependent measures of affective identification, cognitive identification and commitment. After completing the questionnaire, the participants were thanked and debriefed.

Measures

The *manipulation check* consisted of three items: "I felt rejected by the group", "I felt accepted by the group", and "I could imagine myself well in the situation".

The *internal motivation* was measured with two items: "I want to belong to that group because it is fun" and "I want to belong to that group because I enjoy the activities of the group" ($r = .52$, $N = 121$, $p < .001$). The mean of the items was used as internal motivation score.

Membership strategies were measured with a questionnaire developed by myself prior to the studies reported here. Several pilot studies were conducted in order to develop a brief, reliable and valid measurement instrument of membership-approach and avoidance strategies. An initial pool of items was drafted on the basis of 20 informal interviews and intensive literature review. The items were openly commented by another sample of students, which lead to the selection of 23 items (12 approach items, 11 avoidance items). These items were tested and revised in two pilot studies. A two-factor structure with 12 items (six for approach and avoidance each) could be cross-validated in both studies (see Appendix I for items).

A six-item scale was used to measure *affective identification* ($\alpha = .92$). Four items were taken from the identification scale introduced by Kessler and Hollbach (2005), one item was adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990), and the final item was taken from the identification measure of Hinkle and colleagues, (1989). *Cognitive identification* was measured with a five-item scale ($\alpha = .89$) taken from the identification measure of Kessler and Hollbach (2005). *Commitment* was measured with five items ($\alpha = .88$). Four items were taken from the German version of the Organization Citizenship Behavior Scale (Staufenbiel & Hartz, 2000), completed by another item developed by myself.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *I don´t agree at all*, 7 = *I fully agree*). A complete list of dependent measure items can be found in Appendix II.

Results

Manipulation checks

Participants in the acceptance condition felt more accepted ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.01$) than participants in the rejection condition ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(105.58) = 11.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .538$. Participants in the rejection conditions felt more rejected ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.73$) than participants in the acceptance condition ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.45$), $t(115.60) = 8.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .367$. The ability to imagine oneself in the situation was significantly above

the midpoint of the scale ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(120) = 12.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .569$. Overall, these results demonstrate that the materials were well conducted.

Confirmatory factor analysis of the approach-avoidance strategy scale

On the 12 strategy items a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006). The hypothesized model designed the items of each strategy to load exclusively on the respective latent variable. Four error variables of items using similar words were allowed to correlate. Following the suggestions by Hu and Bentler (1999), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit. The results supported the fit of the hypothesized model to the data, χ^2 (49, $N = 121$) = 64.9, $p = .063$, CFI = .969, TLI = .958, RMSEA = .052. All latent variable variances and factor loadings were significant with an average primary factor loading of .62 (maximum of .85, minimum of .35, see Table 4.1 for loadings). For each factor, means served as scale values (approach strategy $\alpha = .81$, avoidance strategy $\alpha = .79$). The approach strategy ($M = 5.60$, $SD = .81$) and avoidance strategy ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .95$) were moderately correlated, $r = .24$, $N = 121$, $p = .008$, as has been reported earlier (Elliot et al., 2006). The internal motivation was neither correlated with approach strategy ($r = .10$, $p = .256$) nor with avoidance strategy ($r = -.04$, $p = .686$).

Table 4.1*: Membership strategy items and their loadings in Study 4.1 (N = 121).*

	Factor loadings	
Strategy item	*Approach*	*Avoidance*
1. I am trying to mentally grow into the group.	.46	
2. I am striving to be accepted as a full member of the group.	.75	
3. I am striving to be seen as a real group member by the other people in the group.	.69	
4. I am striving to see myself as a real group member.	.85	
5. I am trying to grow into the group with my behavior.		
6. I am striving to see myself as a compatible group member.	.40	
7. I avoid deviating from the image of a typical group member.	.66	
8. I am trying to distinguish my behavior from people that are not in the group.		.35
9. I want my behavior to deviate as little as possible from the other group members.		.71
10. I avoid being too similar to people that are not part of the group.		.35
11. It is important to me not to differ too much from the others in the group.		.85
12. I avoid being similar to people that are not members of the group.		.49
		.84

Note. The hypothesized model designed the items of each strategy to load exclusively on the corresponding factor. Loadings between strategy items and the respective other factor are therefore not displayed.

Inclusion of the new group into the self-concept

I expected approach strategies to lead to stronger social identification when individuals feel accepted. When rejected, only for individuals high in internal motivation approach strategies should be related to social identification. Regarding avoidance strategies, I either expected no relation with social identification (outcome criteria hypothesis) or a positive relation when newcomers are accepted (regulatory fit hypothesis).

In order to test these predictions, a mixed GLM with the between subject factors Feedback (1 acceptance vs. -1 rejection), the continuous centered factors Internal motivation, Approach and Avoidance, and the within subject factor Component (affective identification vs. cognitive identification vs. commitment) was conducted. I predicted a three-way interaction of Feedback x Internal motivation x Approach on social identification (Hypothesis 1 and 3). I either expected no effect of Avoidance (outcome criteria hypothesis) or a Feedback x Avoidance interaction (regulatory fit hypothesis) on social identification.

In support of hypothesis 1 and 3, the analysis[5] revealed a Feedback x Internal motivation x Approach interaction, $F(1, 109) = 4.45$, $p = .037$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .039$, that qualified a main effect of Feedback indicating that acceptance led to stronger social identification than rejection, $F(1, 109) = 64.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .373$, a main effect that revealed a positive relation of Approach , $F(1, 109) = 19.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .150$, and Internal motivation, $F(1, 109) = 6.04$, $p = .016$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .052$, on social identification, and a Feedback x Approach interaction, $F(1, 109) = 9.28$, $p = .003$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .078$. Since there was no four-way interaction with Component, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 1.26$, $p = .281$, simple slope analyses were conducted across the components of social identification for the Feedback conditions separately (Aiken & West, 1991). In the *acceptance* condition, there were main effects of Approach for both those low (1 *SD* below the mean) in internal motivation, $ß = .68$, $p < .001$, and high in internal motivation (1 *SD* above the mean), $ß = .42$, $p = .009$. In other words, when accepted, approach strategies were related to stronger social identification independent of the internal motivation. In the *rejection* condition, for those low in internal motivation, Approach was unrelated to social identification, $ß = -.19$, $p = .345$. However, as expected, for those high in internal motivation, higher levels of Approach were related to stronger social identification, $ß = .39$, $p = .019$. In sum, when newcomers were rejected, in line with hypothesis 3, approach strategies only led to stronger social identification when internal motivation was high. Figure 4.1 displays the results.

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[5] If the data did not confirm the assumption of sphericity, *F*-values were Greenhouse-Geisser adjusted. In all analyses, this is marked by *df*-values that are not integer.
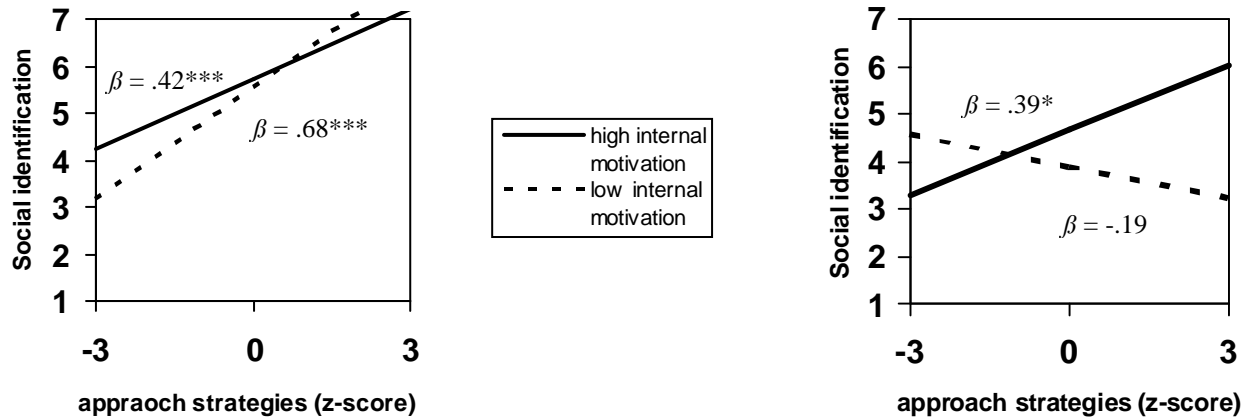
Figure 4.1: *The inclusion of the group into the self-concept as a function of approach strategy and feedback for acceptance (left) and rejection (right) in study 4.1 (N = 121).*

The Feedback x Avoidance interaction, which was predicted in regulatory fit hypothesis 2b, was not found, $F(1, 109) = .08$. Thus, in support of outcome criteria hypothesis 2a, avoidance strategies were not related to social identification when newcomers were accepted.

Additional findings were a main effect of Component, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 19.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .154$, qualified by a Feedback x Component interaction, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 12.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .103$, which revealed that Feedback influenced affective identification, $B = -1.58$, $SE = .18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .403$, and cognitive identification, $B = -1.54$, $SE = .19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .383$, to a stronger degree than commitment, $B = -.90$, $SE = .19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .167$. Likewise, Internal motivation affected affective identification, $B = .20$, $SE = .12$, $p = .083$, but not cognitive identification, $B = .05$, $SE = .12$, $p = .675$, and commitment, $B = .05$, $SE = .12$, $p = .700$, as was revealed by an Internal motivation x Component interaction, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 3.81$, $p = .034$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .034$. Moreover, there was a Feedback x Approach x Component interaction, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 5.30$, $p = .011$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .046$. The Feedback x Approach interaction was significant for both affective identification, $B = -.64$, $SE = .19$, $p = .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .093$, and cognitive identification, $B = -.71$, $SE = .19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .109$, but not for commitment, $B = -.24$, $SE = .20$, $p = .245$. The lack of the Feedback x Approach interaction for commitment might be due to the Feedback x Approach x Internal motivation interaction, which was not qualified by a four-way interaction with Component. Finally, an Avoidance x Component interaction was found, $F(1.56, 169.61) = 6.60$, $p = .004$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .057$, though Avoidance had no effect on social identification on either component when dissolved (affective identification, $B = -.04$,

SE = .13, *p* = .751, cognitive identification, *B* = .08, *SE* = .14, *p* = .579, commitment, *B* = -.21, *SE* = .14, *p* = .138). No other main or interaction effects reached conventional levels of significance, all *F*s < 2.12, all *p*s > .10.

Discussion Study 4.1

Study 4.1 investigated the moderating effect of approach and avoidance strategies and internal motivation on the impact of the group's feedback on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. It was expected that approach strength facilitates social identification when newcomers feel accepted by the group. When newcomers feel rejected, I expected to find this relation only for those high in internal motivation. Avoidance strategies were either expected to be unrelated to social identification (outcome criteria hypothesis) or to be related to social identification when newcomers were accepted only (regulatory fit hypothesis). The results supported the predictions for approach strategies: As expected, newcomers high in approach strategies reacted to acceptance with stronger social identification. The internal motivation changed the impact of approach strategies in reaction to rejection in the predicted way: For those low in internal motivation, approach strategies had no effect on social identification after rejection. For those high in internal motivation, however, even though newcomers felt rejected, approach strategies were positively related to social identification.

I did not find any effect of avoidance strategies on social identification. Unexpectedly, there was an interaction effect with the components of social identification, but the effect did not hold when this interaction was dissolved into the components. This finding supports the outcome criteria hypothesis: The effects of approach and avoidance strategies are to be found on the respective outcome criteria. Since social identification with a group is a positive outcome criterion, it is influenced by approach strategies only. There was no support for the regulatory fit hypothesis: Thus the fit between avoidance strategies and the possibility to continue displaying avoidance strategies did not suffice to foster social identification.

As rejected newcomers high in internal motivation seem to identify as strongly as accepted newcomers, one might wonder whether the internal motivation made participants fade out the rejection experience. This was not the case, as the Feedback x Internal motivation interaction on the perception of rejection (the manipulation check) was not significant, *ß* = .04, *p* = .615. The rejection experience was similarly experienced by those high and low in internal motivation.

All in all, Study 4.1 provided evidence for the moderating effect of approach strategies and internal motivation in newcomers on the impact of the group's feedback on social identification. These findings are particularly noteworthy, as none of the participants actually was a newcomer in the group and, though groups were real and of interest to the participants, the manipulation was imagined. Therefore, Study 4.2 tested whether approach and avoidance strategies and internal motivation moderate the effect of the group's feedback on social identification by exposing participants to controlled experiences with a new group.

Study 4.2

Study 4.2 seeks to replicate the findings from Study 4.1 using real experiences. Again, I expect approach strategies in combination with acceptance to foster social identification. In combination with rejection, I expect this relation only when newcomers are high internally motivated. Based on the findings of Study 4.1 I expect no effects of avoidance strategies on social identification (outcome criteria hypothesis).

Method

Design and Participants

As in Study 4.1, an experiment with two conditions (acceptance vs. rejection) and three continuous independent variables (internal motivation, approach and avoidance strategies) was conducted. Participants were recruited on campus for a study about achievement in groups. 84 students of the University of Tuebingen participated in exchange for 8 Euro. Two participants who did not follow the instructions and 15 participants who suspected the fictitious nature of the group or the manipulation in a final debriefing were excluded from the analysis. The data-sets of 67 participants (38 female, 29 male, age $M = 24$, range 20-30 years), were analyzed.

Procedure

Upon arrival, participants were seated in cubicles. They were instructed that the study investigated whether group achievement profits from the possibility for group members to work sequentially on the same task. Participants read that several groups had been formed earlier and that some groups admitted new members still. In order to increase the group's importance, participants were told that groups that solved 85% of the tasks correctly would win another 50 Euro. Participants were then asked to choose one of two groups that were introduced with a motto (*Rukos*: "Pragmatic, practical, good", *Dekons*: "Analyzing instead of

thinking of one's feet") All items were adapted to the chosen group. Before they started working on the tasks, participants were told that their attitudes and expectations towards the group work would be measured. They then filled in measures of internal motivation to work with the group, approach and avoidance strategies, and 12 bogus items presented as capturing team-relevant attitudes (e.g., "I think it is important that a group has the same goals and works together well"). These items were filled in twice: Firstly to measure their own attitudes, secondly participants were asked to indicate what attitude in their fellow group members they would at least expect to be acceptable (i.e., the "least expectations"). On this basis, the group's feedback was manipulated as follows:

> "In order to know more about the composition of the group, we compare the mean least expectations of the group with the expectations and attitudes of the newcomers. You might be interested in to what extent your profile matches the preference profile of the group."

Participants received a figure indicating either high (acceptance) or low (rejection) match with the group profile (see Figure 4.2). This prototypicality feedback was chosen in order to clearly circumscribe from interpersonal feedback and the threat of the need for social bonds. After having worked on three trial tasks, participants received the dependent measures of affective identification, cognitive identification and commitment. As advertised, they then worked on a number of insight problems, non-insight problems and common knowledge questions, partly with bogus solutions. Participants were told that only group solutions would be visible. In the end, participants received demographic measures, were thanked and debriefed.

a
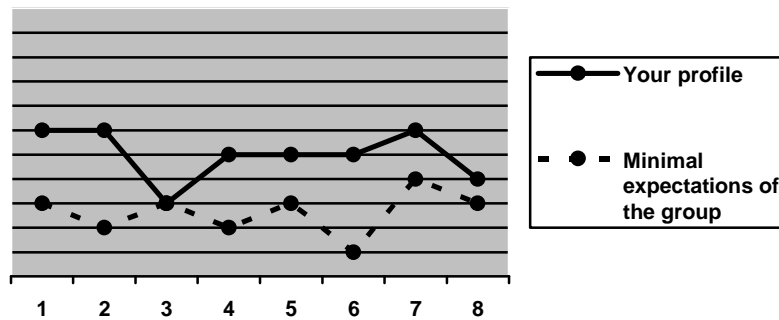
In 7 out of 8 dimensions you exceed the minimal expectations of the group. The match between your profile and the preference profile of the group is thus relatively high.

b
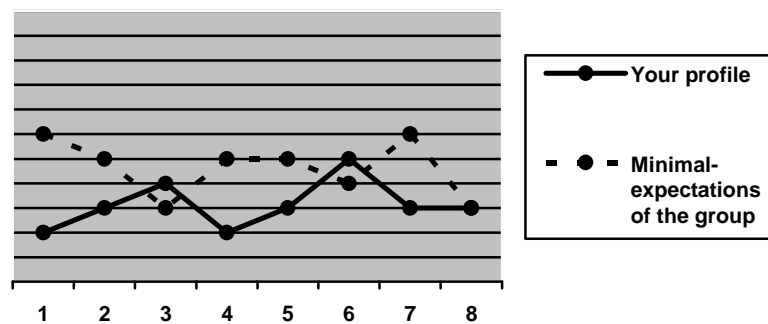
In 5 out of 8 dimensions you do not fulfill the minimal expectations of the group. The match between your profile and the preference profile of the group is thus relatively low.

Figure 4.2: *Manipulation of the group's acceptance (a) or rejection (b) in Study 4.2 (N = 67).*

Measures

To assess the *internal motivation,* the scale from Study 4.1 was extended to a four-item scale ($\alpha = .85$). The additional two items were "I want to belong to that group, because I feel like working with this group" and "I want to belong to this group, because I think it is interesting and exciting to work with this group".

The *approach strategy* ($\alpha = .89$) and *avoidance strategy* ($\alpha = .88$) were measured using the 12-item questionnaire described in Study 4.1. The strategies were again correlated, $r = .49$, $N = 67$, $p < .001$. The internal motivation was correlated with the approach strategy

($r = .48$, $p < .001$), but not with avoidance strategy, $r = .08$, $p = .542$. Such high intercorrelation of independent variables for which an interaction is computed threatens the preconditions for multiple regressions and makes regression coefficients difficult to interpret (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). In order to overcome this multicollinearity, the internal motivation was dichotomized based on a median split. Within the respective groups, the membership strategy scales were centered, thus reducing the correlation between the strategies and internal motivation, both rs $< \lfloor .10 \rfloor$, $p > .10$. The median split of the internal motivation was independent of the experimental manipulation of Feedback, χ^2 ($df = 1$, $N = 67$) $= .05$, $p = .831$. These variables were used in the analysis reported below.

Affective identification ($\alpha = .84$), *cognitive identification* ($\alpha = .89$) and *Commitment* ($\alpha = .84$) were measured with the same scales as in Study 4.1. All items were adapted to the chosen group.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale ($1 = I\ don't\ agree\ at\ all$, $7 = I\ fully\ agree$).

Results

Inclusion into the self-concept

As in Study 4.1, I expected approach strategies to be related to social identification when newcomers are accepted. When rejected, I expected this relation to hold only for newcomers high in internal motivation. According to the outcome criteria hypothesis, no effects of avoidance strategies on social identification were expected.

These predictions were again tested with a mixed GLM with the between subject factors Feedback (1 acceptance vs. -1 rejection) and Internal motivation (high 1 vs. low -1), the adapted continuous factors Approach and Avoidance, and the within subject factor Component (affective identification vs. cognitive identification vs. commitment). Hypotheses 1 and 3 predicted a three-way interaction of Feedback x Internal motivation x Approach on social identification, and Hypothesis 2a predicted no effects of Avoidance on social identification.

As expected in Hypotheses 1 and 3, the analysis revealed a Feedback x Internal motivation x Approach interaction, $F(1, 55) = 4.22$, $p = .045$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .071$, that qualified two main effects: Internal motivation, $F(1, 55) = 48.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .469$, and Approach, $F(1, 55) = 15.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .215$, were both positively related to social identification. There was no four-way interaction with Component, $F(1.64, 90.02) = 1.91$, $p = .162$, therefore simple slope analyses were again conducted across the components of social identification

(Aiken & West, 1991). In the *acceptance* condition, for those low in internal motivation, Approach was related to social identification, $\beta = .48$, $p = .019$, but not for those high in internal motivation, $\beta = .26$, $p = 202$. Figure 4.3 demonstrates that this might be due to a ceiling effect. In the *rejection* condition, when newcomers were low in internal motivation, Approach was unrelated to social identification, $\beta = .19$, $p = .322$. When high in internal motivation, however, Approach was related to stronger social identification, $\beta = .97$, $p = .008$, despite the rejection. Taken together, approach strategies were positively related to social identification when newcomers were accepted. When high internally motivated to enter the group, however, newcomers' approach strategies facilitate social identification even when they are rejected.
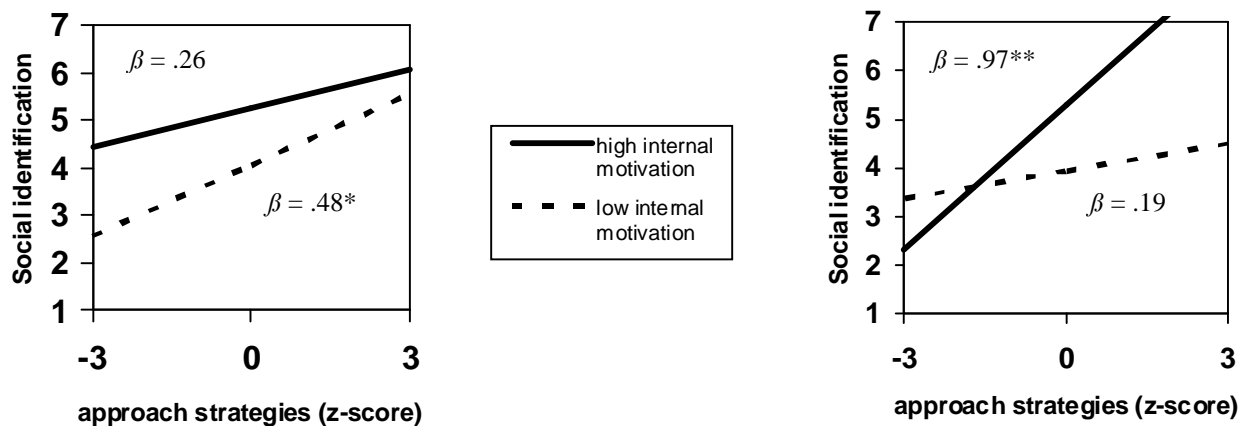
Figure 4.3: *The inclusion of the group into the self-concept as a function of approach strategy and feedback for acceptance (left) and rejection (right) in study 4.2 (N = 67).*

The Feedback x Avoidance interaction, expected in regulatory fit hypothesis 2b, was not found, $F(1, 55) = 1.35$, $p = .251$. Neither when accepted, nor rejected, were avoidance strategies related to social identification. Thus, results supported the outcome criteria hypothesis 2a that predicted no effect of Avoidance on social identification. However, there was a Feedback x Avoidance x Component interaction, $F(1.64, 90.02) = 82.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .601$. The Feedback x Avoidance interaction was not significant for commitment, $B = .03$, $SE = .49$, $p = .960$, but there were tendencies for affective identification, $B = -.825$, $SE = .42$, $p = .053$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .066$ and cognitive identification, $B = -1.06$, $SE = .59$, $p = .078$. These interactions were dissolved into simple slopes. Avoidance was neither significantly

related to affective identification when newcomers were *accepted*, $\beta = .21$, $p = .118$, nor when they were *rejected*, $\beta = -.35$, $p = .129$. For cognitive identification, when newcomers were *accepted*, there was a tendency of relation between Avoidance and cognitive identification, $\beta = .27$, $p = .070$. When *rejected*, there was no such relation, $\beta = -.11$, $p = .655$.

Additional findings were a main effect of Component, $F(1.64, 90.02) = 82.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .601$, qualified by a tendency towards an Internal motivation x Component interaction, $F(1.64, 90.02) = 2.81$, $p = .076$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .049$, indicating that Internal motivation was differently related to affective identification, $B = -1.23$, $SE = .24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .327$, cognitive identification, $B = -1.37$, $SE = .34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .232$, and commitment, $B = -.98$, $SE = .28$, $p = .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .187$.

No other main or interaction effect was significant, all Fs < 1.63, all ps $> .10$.

Discussion Study 4.2

Study 4.2 replicated the impact of approach strategies and internal motivation on the newcomer's self-concept changes as reaction to the group's feedback in real group situations. As expected, approach strategies facilitated social identification when newcomers were accepted. Upon rejection, this relationship ceased for those low in internal motivation, but high internal motivation shielded the effect of approach strategies on social identification. Thus, the effects found in Study 4.1 using imaginary experiences were replicated with real, but controlled experiences.

As to avoidance strategies, there were marginal interactions of Feedback and Avoidance on affective and cognitive identification, which points in the direction of regulatory fit hypothesis. However, this was weak support for the hypothesis as in Study 4.1, which gives stronger evidence for the outcome criteria hypothesis: Avoidance strategies are not related to social identification.

Discussion Studies 4.1. - 4.2.

The current studies demonstrate that self-concept changes undergone by newcomers when they enter a new group are affected by the group's feedback, regulatory strategies and internal motivation. As expected, when newcomers were accepted (but not when rejected), approach strategies facilitated social identification. Upon rejection, only for newcomers high in internal motivation approach strategies were related to social identification.

There were no effects of avoidance strategies on social identification. This finding is in line with research in the domain of interpersonal relations that finds avoidance strategy effects on foremost negative outcome criteria (Gable & Strachman, 2008; Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006). As the present studies investigated self-concept changes, for social identification being an outcome criterion that reflects a positive relationship between individual and group, I only found effects of approach strategies.

The prediction derived from regulatory fit hypothesis (Higgins, 2000) was not supported by the data: Even when the group provided behavioral opportunities to exert avoidance strategies (i.e., in case of regulatory fit), social identification was not facilitated by avoidance strategies. However, regulatory fit hypothesis predicts value and engagement upon regulatory fit. In the current studies, the only way to express value was social identification. In regulatory fit research, value has been measured using one anchor (e.g., by monetary value; Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2000; enjoyment of goal pursuit; Freitas & Higgins, 2000; positive response to messages; Cesario, Grand, & Higgins, 2004) and using two anchors (e.g., feeling good / bad about decisions, Idson et al., 2000; feeling right / wrong, Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003). In the latter examples, value could be expressed by an increase of positive outcomes or a decrease of negative outcomes. It is possible that the value which arises from the fit with avoidance strategies can only be captured with measures that include negative outcome values. On the other hand, the effects of regulatory fit on social identification were found using regulatory focus strategies (Sassenberg et al., 2006; 2007) without adding negative outcomes. More research is needed in order to specify with *which* regulatory strategies the fit between a certain strategy and behavioral opportunities affects *specific* criteria of value.

The distinction of approach and avoidance motivation is fundamental and basic (Elliot, 2006). In the social domain it has implications on attention, memory, interpretation of social stimuli, and emotional reactions to social situations in interpersonal relations (Gable & Strachman, 2008). The current findings extend the evidence by applying approach and avoidance strategies to the person-group relation and introduce a measurement instrument for this context. Moreover, the findings contribute to the evidence that approach and avoidance motivations lead to a specific sensitivity to positive and negative events, finding that approach strategies facilitate a reaction (i.e., social identification) towards positive events (i.e., acceptance).

For social exclusion research, the results imply that the effects of social acceptance or rejection are not independent of motivational characteristics of newcomers. Positive feedback of a group affects newcomers stronger the more they adopt approach strategies. The facilitated development of social identification was found for both personal feedback (Study 4.1) and prototypicality feedback (Study 4.2). Thus, in investigating the effects of social feedback on social identification, more attention should be paid to member characteristics (e.g., Jetten et al., 2003) in general, and member motivation in particular. Comparable to the context of social discrimination (Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007; Shelton, 2000), without the consideration of motivation in the investigation of newcomer changes, newcomers are treated as passive objects. However, the current findings demonstrate that their self-concepts are not exposed to the group, but that newcomers regulate their reaction to experiences with the group by adapting regulatory strategies and internal motivation. Thus, the newcomer is a motivated protagonist in his or her personal development.

As to the active role of newcomers in social identity development, internal motivation has been in the focus of attention. The current studies show that besides effort and affect resulting from rumination (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996; Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998), compensation after negative feedback can take yet another form: the maintenance of positive relational outcomes in face of difficult circumstances. In other words: Negative consequences for a relation are buffered by internal motivation. However, this specific form of compensation was not catalyzed by internal motivation alone, but had to be combined with strong approach strategies. Future research should consider taking regulatory strategies into account and capture different ways of compensation when investigating reactions to negative feedback in identity goal pursuit.

One might object that the causal direction of the impact of regulatory strategies and internal motivation on social identification was not tested in the current studies. Research from the interpersonal domain (Gable, 2006), on identity relevant goals (Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996), and in the evidence from chapter 3 clearly suggests the causal direction assumed here. Nonetheless, future studies should investigate the impact of the interaction between approach and avoidance strategies and group feedback on self-concept changes longitudinally in the field in order to clarify causal directions.

For practical purposes, a better understanding of short- and long-term consequences of strategy adoption has implications for training and preparation of newcomers (e.g., in companies, expatriates or first-year students). In situations where rejection is likely, but social

identification crucial, the combination of high internal motivation and strong approach strategies seems to be adaptive.

To conclude, being a newcomer in a group is a challenging experience that, whether intended or not, induces changes in newcomers as a part of the adaptation to the new situation. When investigating these changes, the group's feedback as well as characteristics of the newcomers and their interactions should be taken into account. By including newcomer motivation, newcomers are regarded as active protagonists that design their self-concept development.

Chapter 5   Does rejection lead to disidentification? The role of internal motivation and avoidance strategies

Imagine joining a new team, eager to be integrated. After a while, you realize that other group members never ask for your opinion or let you carry out important tasks. After a while you feel rejected. Rejection of newcomers (i.e., any kind of negative feedback by the group members concerning newcomers' membership status) is a crucial factor determining whether newcomers integrate into a group or leave right away. Indeed, rejection often undermines social identification, group loyalty, and collective self-esteem (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002; Simon & Stürmer, 2003; Sleebos, Ellemers, & de Gilder, 2006a; Tyler & Blader, 2003). At the same time, there is evidence that some rejected group members demonstrate their worth to the group by group-serving behavior (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002; Jetten et al., 2002; 2003). These seemingly contradictory findings are most likely an outcome of different levels of initial social identification. Jetten and colleagues (2002, 2003) demonstrated that the lower the group members' identification, the weaker their engagement in favor of the group after rejection (for similar findings see also Sleebos et al., 2006b).

It is self-evident that among newcomers the group cannot be central to the self-concept yet. In these specific group members, rather than (the not yet formed) social identification, the motivation to become a group member should be considered in the context of rejection. Therefore, the current studies seek to demonstrate that two aspects of newcomers' motivation are relevant for the attachment to the group: their internal motivation to become a group member, and their regulatory strategies.

From social identification to internal motivation

To identify the factors that affect newcomer responses towards rejection, it might be helpful to know why social identification has an impact on members' responses to rejection. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) argues that unfavorable ingroup-related states (e.g., low status) lead to individualist strategies in low identified group members and collective strategies in high identified group members. This is due to the importance of the group to the self-concept (reflected by social identification), which determines whether it is harder to give up the group membership or to engage in effort to change the unfavorable state.

Similarly, self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982) argues that the reaction to negative events depends on the identity-relevance of the event. If a negative event

is at odds with an individual's internally motivated striving, the individual will experience a feeling of incompleteness and frustration, which elicits even stronger striving for the goal in order to compensate. No such compensation occurs in the pursuit of goals that are not identity-relevant (Fehr & Sassenberg, in press; Brunstein & Gollwitzer, 1996; Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998). Applying self-completion theory to newcomers' responses to rejection, one would conclude that high internally motivated newcomers rather stand rejection to stay in the group and thus most likely do not drop out, whereas low internally motivated are likely to leave the group after rejection.

Regulatory strategies

Besides the strength of internal motivation, regulatory strategies affect the response towards negative events. According to Carver (2001), approach modes lead to more active responses to positive events, whereas avoidance modes lead to more active responses to negative events. In the social domain, individuals pursue social goals with approach and avoidance strategies (Gable, 2006), and there is evidence that individuals with approach and avoidance strategies respond differently towards positive and negative events. Avoidance strategies lead to a stronger reactivity towards negative social events (Elliot et al., 2006; Gable, 2006), facilitate memory of negative information, and a negative interpretation of ambiguous social information (Strachman & Gable, 2006). Moreover, regulatory strategies influence which type of outcome criteria is affected. Approach strategies foremost affect positive outcome criteria, whereas avoidance strategies have stronger effects on negative outcome criteria (Elliot et al., 2006; Gable, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008, see also the evidence from chapter 4).

Applying this to the context of new group memberships, approach strategies are a focus on behavior that increases the likelihood of integration in the group (e.g., dressing like the other members or using similar language). Newcomers with avoidance strategies focus on the avoidance of behavior that risks integration in the group (e.g., dressing improperly or making unpopular remarks). Newcomers with approach strategies should be especially prone to acceptance (as demonstrated in chapter 4), whereas newcomers with avoidance strategies should respond stronger to rejection. As avoidance effects are foremost found on negative outcome criteria, disidentification, defined as an active separation of a group, thus a *negative* self-defining relation to a relevant group, was chosen as criterion. Note that disidentification is not the opposite of social identification, which would be *non*identification (Elsbach &

Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Zou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). Hence, avoidance strategies should lead to stronger disidentification after rejection (but not after acceptance).

Taking the prediction derived from self-completion theory into account, I expect that the relation between avoidance strategies and disidentification is moderated by internal motivation. For newcomers low in internal motivation, I expect to find that stronger avoidance strategies lead to more disidentification upon rejection. For newcomers high in internal motivation, however, I expect that avoidance strategies do not affect disidentification even in face of rejection.

Overview

Two studies tested this prediction. Study 5.1 manipulated the group's feedback in a scenario, Study 5.2 measured feedback in the field. Both studies assessed internal motivation, approach and avoidance strategies as predictors, and disidentification as criterion. Like social identification (Tajfel, 1978; Ellemers et al., 1999) disidentification is measured with a behavioral component (i.e., intentions to leave the group), a cognitive component (i.e., self-recategorization), and an affective component (i.e., a negative affective association with the group).

Study 5.1

Method

Design and Participants

An experiment with the two level factor Feedback (rejection vs. acceptance) and three continuous independent variables (internal motivation, approach and avoidance strategies) was conducted. The data of 100 undergraduate students (64 female, 36 male, age $M = 22$, range 18-40 years), who had not participated in a similar study, were collected. Participants received a chocolate bar for compensation.

Procedure

Participants were asked to choose one of four student groups that were briefly introduced (38 chose the volleyball team, 15 the choir, 21 the theater club, and 26 the debating club). The opportunity to choose should add personal relevance of the group. Groups

were distributed equally across conditions, χ^2 (3) = 2.51, p = .473. All following items were adapted to the chosen group. Participants filled in measures of their motivation to enter the group, and were asked to imagine that they had recently become newcomers in the group before their approach and avoidance strategies were measured. Then, the group's feedback was manipulated as in Study 4.1.: participants read an imaginary situation that implied either rejection or acceptance by the group. In the rejection condition, participants imagined to be ignored in group decisions and not given group tasks. In the acceptance condition, participants imagined being asked for their opinion and being given important group tasks to fulfill, for instance. After having imagined the respective situation, participants filled in the dependent measures of disidentification. Finally, they were thanked and debriefed.

Measures

The *internal motivation* (α = .78) was measured with four items (e.g., "I want to belong to that group because it is fun").

Approach strategies (e.g., "I am trying to grow into the group with my behavior", α = .82) and *avoidance* strategies (e.g., "I avoid deviating from the image of a typical group member", α = .81) were measured with 6 items each (see chapter 4 for scale development and Appendix I for items). Both strategies were positively correlated, (r = .38, p < .001), as reported earlier (Elliot et al., 2006). Internal motivation was correlated with approach strategies (r = .42, p < .001), but not substantially with avoidance strategies (r = .19, p = .061).

Disidentification: Three items measured *exit* (α = .94). *Recategorization* was measured with three items (α =.82) adapted from the goal reengagement scale by Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, and Carver (2003). In order to measure *bad feeling*, a six-item scale was constructed (α =.81; for the items see Appendix III).

The *manipulation check* consisted of two items: "I felt rejected by the group" and "I felt accepted by the group".

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *I don't agree at all*, 7 = *I fully agree*).

Results

Manipulation check

Participants in the rejection conditions felt more rejected ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.66$) than participants in the acceptance condition ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(98) = 6.12$, $p < .001$. Participants in the acceptance condition felt more accepted ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.35$) than participants in the rejection condition ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.12$), $t(98) = 7.46$, $p < .001$.

Disidentification

When newcomers are rejected but not when newcomers are accepted, I expected higher levels of avoidance strategies to lead to stronger disidentification. This relation should hold for individuals low in internal motivation, but not for those high in internal motivation. In addition, approach strategies were not expected to affect disidentification depending on feedback.

In order to test these predictions, a mixed GLM with the between subject factors Feedback (-1 rejection vs. 1 acceptance), the continuous factors Internal motivation, Approach and Avoidance, and the within subject factor Component of disidentification (exit vs. recategorization vs. bad feeling) was conducted.

The analysis revealed a main effect of Feedback, indicating that rejection ($M = 4.02$, $SE = .15$) led to stronger disidentification than acceptance ($M = 2.93$, $SE = .15$), $F(1, 88) = 23.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .210$. This effect was qualified by the expected Feedback x Internal motivation x Avoidance interaction, $F(1, 88) = 7.70$, $p = .007$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .080$ (see Figure 5.1). Since there was no four-way interaction with Component, $F < .2$, follow-up analyses were conducted across the components of disidentification. An Avoidance x Internal motivation interaction was not found in the *acceptance* condition, $B = .33$, $SE = .25$, $p = .194$, but in the *rejection* condition, $B = -.51$, $SE = .17$, $p = .003$. For those *low* in internal motivation (1 SD below the mean), Avoidance was positively related to disidentification, $B = .73$, $SE = .25$, $p = .005$, whereas this effect did not occur for those *high* in internal motivation (1 SD above the mean), $B = -.29$, $SE = .22$, $p = .201$. Taken together in line with the hypothesis, newcomers' avoidance strategies facilitated disidentification after rejection only when internal motivation was low.
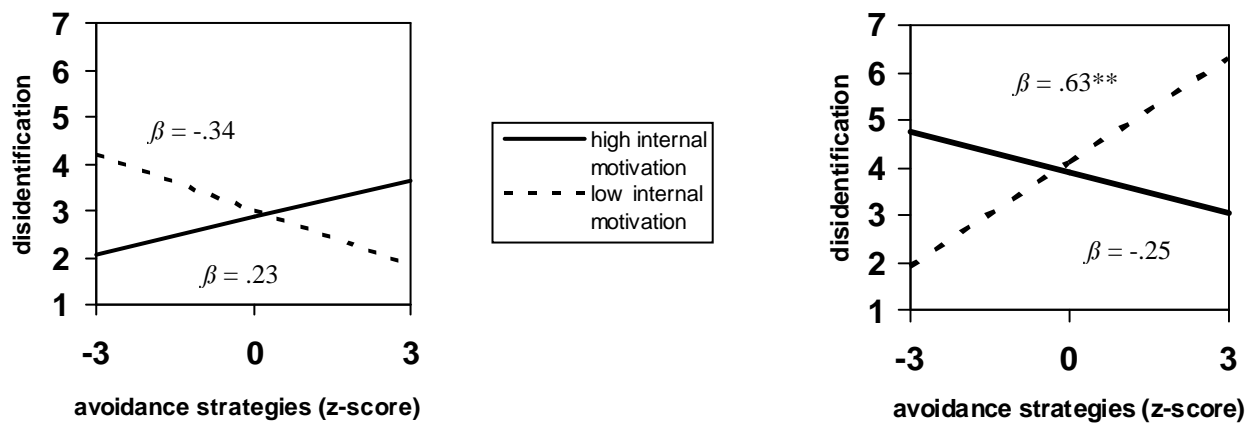
Figure 5.1: *Disidentification as a function of avoidance strategies and feedback for acceptance feedback (left) and rejection feedback (right) in Study 5.1 (N = 100).*

Additionally, there was a main effect of Component, $F(1.79, 157.77) = 17.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .169$, qualified by an Avoidance x Component interaction, $F(1.79, 157.77) = 4.45$, $p = .016$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .048$. Stronger Avoidance tended to lead to less recategorization ($B = -.49$, $SE = .27$, $p = .075$), but did not affect exit ($B = .07$, $SE = .27$, $p = .806$), or bad feeling ($B = .23$, $SE = .20$, $p = .263$). There was a tendency of a Feedback x Component interaction, $F(1.79, 157.77) = 2.56$, $p = .087$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .028$, indicating that Feedback affected the components of disidentification to different degrees (exit: $B = 1.46$, $SE = .31$, $p < .001$, recategorization: $B = .78$, $SE = .31$, $p = .013$, bad feeling: $B = 1.03$, $SE = .23$, $p < .001$).

In line with the predictions no main or interaction effect of Approach occurred, all Fs < 1.63, all ps $> .20$. No other main or interaction effects were found, all Fs < 1.3.

Discussion Study 5.1

Study 5.1 found that when newcomers are rejected, stronger avoidance strategies (but not approach strategies) facilitate disidentification (i.e., intentions to leave the group, recategorization and bad feelings towards the group), but only for newcomers low in internal motivation, not for those high in internal motivation. The impact of avoidance on the sub-components of disidentification differed slightly. This effect was weak in nature, therefore an explanation seems only to be required in case of a replication in Study 5.2. Approach strategies did not affect disidentification whatsoever. This result is in line with earlier

research, finding effects of approach strategies foremost on positive outcome criteria, but not on negative ones such as disidentification.

Overall, Study 5.1 provides clear evidence for my hypotheses, but it used imaginary feedback. Thus, Study 5.2 investigates the effects of group rejection on disidentification in dependence of internal motivation and regulatory strategies using real groups and experienced group feedback in the field. More precisely, Study 5.2 looked at the relation towards the host-country among exchange students – a new group that is usually integrated in the self-concept (as demonstrated in chapter 2).

Study 5.2

Method

Design and participants

A field study with four continuous independent variables (feedback, internal motivation, approach, and avoidance strategies) was conducted. Three hundred sixty eight international exchange students (284 females, 80 males, 4 did not indicate gender, age $M = 17$, range 15-19 years) filled in the questionnaire. Students came from 23 European countries and had spent an exchange year in another European country.

Procedure

The questionnaire was filled in on arrival at a seminar at the end of the exchange year before returning home. Questionnaires were either in English (N = 128) or German (N = 240)[6] and were introduced as a study about experiences during exchange years. Participants received the same measures as in Study 5.1, apart from a measurement instead of manipulation of feedback. Participants were debriefed via e-mail.

Measures

The *internal motivation* (α =.67) was measured with four items (e.g., "I went on an exchange to my host country because I felt like it") adapted from Ryan and Connell (1989).

Approach (α = .81) and *avoidance strategies* (α = .73) were measured with the same items as in Study 5.1.

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[6] Results were independent of the language. Therefore, analyses were conducted across English and German worded questionnaires.

Four items measured the group's *feedback* ($\alpha = .76$, e.g., "In general I felt rejected in my host country"). Higher scores indicated stronger rejection.

Disidentification: Exit ($\alpha = .57$) and *bad feeling* ($\alpha = .74$) were assessed as in the former study, the *recategorization* scale ($r = .43$, $p < .001$) was shortened to two items.

All items were assessed on a 7-point scale ($1 = I\ don´t\ agree\ at\ all$, $7 = I\ fully\ agree$). Table 5.1 displays correlations among the independent variables.

Table 5.1: *Pearson product moment correlations of predictor variables in Study 5.2 (N = 368).*

Measure	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Approach strategies		$.39^{***}$	$.28^{***}$	$-.31^{***}$
2. Avoidance strategies			$-.04$	$.06$
3. Internal motivation				$-.19^{***}$
4. Feedback				

Note. $^{*} = p < .05$, $^{**} = p < .01$, $^{***} = p < .001$

Results

It was hypothesized that the more newcomers felt rejected, the more avoidance strategies should lead to disidentification for those low in internal motivation but not for those high in internal motivation. Approach strategies were not expected to affect disidentification after rejection. These predictions were tested with a mixed GLM with the continuous predictors Feedback, Internal motivation, Approach and Avoidance strategies, and the within subject factor Component (exit vs. recategorization vs. bad feeling).

The analysis showed a main effect of Feedback, indicating that stronger rejection led to stronger disidentification, $F(1, 345) = 12.34$, $p = .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .035$. Moreover, there was a tendency to a main effect of Avoidance, $F(1, 345) = 3.62$, $p = .058$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .010$. These effects were qualified by the expected Feedback x Internal motivation x Avoidance interaction, $F(1, 345) = 5.00$, $p = .026$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .014$ (see Figure 5.2). Again, there was no four-way interaction with Component, $F < 1.2$, $p > .3$. Therefore, follow-up analyses were conducted across the components of disidentification. When newcomers perceived *low* rejection (1 *SD* below the scale mean), there was no significant Avoidance x Internal motivation interaction, $B = -.01$, $SE = .06$, $p = .870$, whereas upon *high* rejection (1 *SD* above the mean), the expected Avoidance x Internal motivation interaction was found, $B = -.13$, $SE = .05$, $p = .004$. For

rejected newcomers *low* in internal motivation (1 *SD* below the mean), Avoidance facilitated disidentification, $B = .16$, $SE = .08$, $p = .043$, whereas there was no such relation for those *high* in internal motivation (1 *SD* above the mean), $B = -.11$, $SE = .10$, $p = .263$. Thus, in line with the prediction, avoidance strategies only facilitated disidentification upon rejection when newcomers were low in internal motivation.
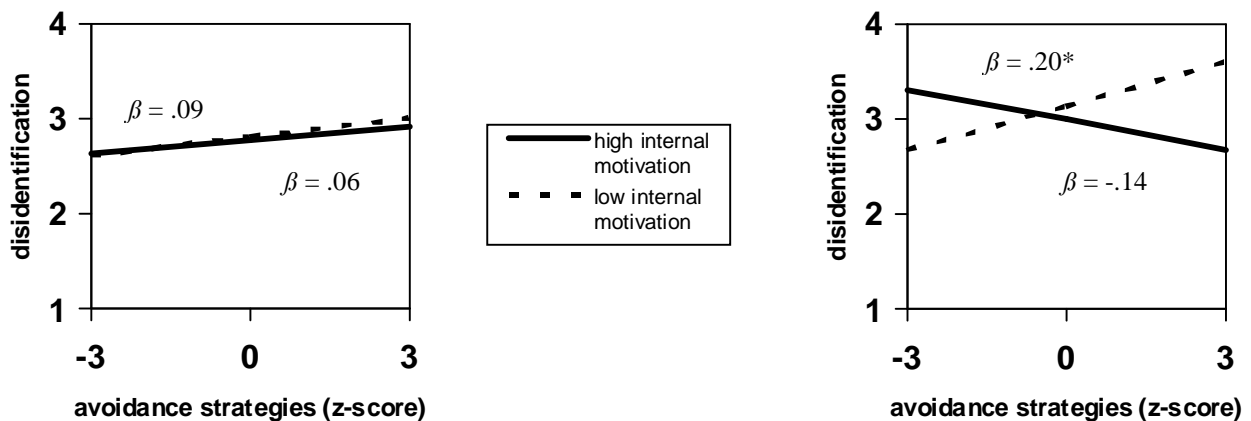

Figure 5.2: *Disidentification as a function of avoidance strategies and feedback for low rejection (left) and high rejection feedback (right) in Study 5.2 (N = 368)[7].*

Additional findings were a main effect of Component, $F(1.59, 548.72) = 1282.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .79$, which was qualified by a Feedback x Component interaction, $F(1.59, 548.72) = 13.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .038$, indicating that rejection facilitated exit ($B = .27$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$), bad feeling ($B = .24$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$), but not recategorization ($B = -.11$, $SE = .07$, $p = .132$). Furthermore, there was an Internal motivation x Component interaction, $F(1.59, 548.72) = 18.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .050$, showing that internal motivation affected the components of disidentification to different degrees (exit: $B = -.22$, $SE = .06$, $p = .001$, recategorization: $B = .25$, $SE = .08$, $p = .001$, bad feeling: $B = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$). There was a marginal Avoidance x Component interaction, $F(1.59, 548.72) = 3.25$, $p = .051$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .009$, as Avoidance affected exit ($B = .18$, $SE = .07$,

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[7] *Note.* Disidentification was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = I don't agree at all; 7 = I fully agree). For the purpose of illustration of the interaction effects, values until four are displayed.

$p = .009$) and bad feeling ($B = .11$, $SE = .05$, $p = .023$), but not recategorization ($B = .00$, $SE = .08$, $p = .577$).

More importantly, as in Study 5.1, there was no Feedback x Internal motivation x Approach interaction, $F(1, 345) = 1.27$, but an Internal motivation x Approach interaction, $F(1, 345) = 5.14$, $p = .024$, $\eta_{part}^2 = .015$, showing that approach strategies tended to reduce disidentification for those *high* in internal motivation, $B = -.11$, $SE = .07$, $p = .100$, but not for those *low* in internal motivation, $B = .04$, $SE = .06$, $p = .578$. There were no other main or interaction effects of Approach, all Fs < 2.35, all ps $> .10$, or any other main or interaction effects, all Fs < 1.

Discussion Study 5.2

Study 5.2 replicated the findings of Study 5.1 in the field. When newcomers felt rejected, avoidance strength facilitated disidentification from the group, but only for newcomers low, not for those high in internal motivation. As in Study 5.1, the data pattern for the subcomponent recategorization differed from the one for the other two components: there was no main effect of feedback on recategorization. This might be due to the fact that recategorization does not only require an explicitly negative relation to the current group but also a positive one to an alternative group. But as all three components of disidentification were homogeneously affected by the Feedback x Avoidance x Internal motivation interaction, this is not particularly relevant to the current research question.

I neither expected nor found effects of avoidance strategies on disidentification upon acceptance. This underlines the specific sensitivity towards negative events that is induced by avoidance strategies. Neither did I expect or find effects of approach strategies on disidentification, since approach strategies rather affect positive outcome criteria (see also chapter 4). There was a weak interaction of internal motivation and approach strategies. As approach strategies did not interact with feedback, this finding does not relate to my predictions.

Discussion Studies 5.1 – 5.2

The current studies demonstrated the importance of internal motivation and avoidance strategies for newcomers facing rejection. I expected and found that when newcomers are rejected by their group (but not when they are accepted) and at the same time are low internally motivated to become a member of this group (but not when they are high internally

motivated), avoidance strategies facilitated disidentification. These results demonstrate that the impact of group rejection is affected by newcomers' initial motivation and strategies. The fact that avoidance strategies (under the described conditions) facilitate a negative relation to the group is consistent with findings from the interpersonal domain (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006). It broadens the evidence that approach and avoidance strategies lead to specific sensitivity towards positive (i.e., acceptance) and negative (i.e., rejection) events (Carver, 2001). Moreover, as there were no effects of approach strategies on disidentification neither in the current studies, nor effects of avoidance strategies on social identification in earlier studies (see chapter 4), the results support the notion that the effects of approach and avoidance strategies can only be found on the corresponding outcome criteria (Gable & Strachman, 2008). In other words: Quality of events, regulatory strategy, and outcome criteria have to be in concordance in order to capture self-concept changes induced by group feedback.

At the same time, internal motivation buffers newcomers' disidentification after rejection just as social identification does among long-standing group members (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Jetten et al., 2002, 2003). Until now, compensation effects have been investigated in form of a maintenance or increase of a positive relation to the group. The current findings demonstrate that compensation can take yet another form: the refraining from a negative relation to the group, under circumstances (i.e., rejection and strong avoidance strategies) that would suggest a negative reaction. Future research should include these different ways of compensation in the investigation of reactions towards negative feedback.

Although social identification inspired a large body of research, disidentification has, so far, rarely been addressed in psychological research (for exceptions, see Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Zou et al., 2008). The current findings demonstrate that disidentification is the negative outcome criterion with a self-relevant group, useful for capturing specific effects, just as it might be in many other contexts where a negative relation to a group is studied (e.g., ostracism, Williams, 2007). My conceptualization of disidentification added a behavioral component (i.e., exit) to earlier ones (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) to make the instrument more comparable to social identification. The cognitive component chosen in the present studies, self-recategorization, is more ambivalent than in earlier conceptualizations: It captures the *dis*categorization from one group and *re*categorization in another group at the same time. The current findings suggest that it might be useful to consider both aspects separately.

The current studies produce the same effects in both imagined and remembered actual experiences. The effects hold across groups of different types and characters. Thus, it is unlikely that mere intuition or memory biases drive the effects. Moreover, research in the interpersonal domain demonstrated the causal direction of the relations. However, future studies should use longitudinal designs in order to rule out alternative explanations and verify the causal nature of the relations.

Practically, a better understanding of the consequences of strategy adoption and internal motivation has implications for the selection and training of new members that are likely to face obstacles in group integration (e.g., expatriates, new team members, or first-year students). Avoidance strategies help newcomers disengage from the group when the situation implies it. Continuation in a group if one is rejected repeatedly is hardly functional. Hence, when rejection from a group is harmful, avoidance strategies are adaptive, as they facilitate disidentification (when internal motivation is low). If group integration is crucial, however, avoidance strategies would harm the relation to the group upon rejection if internal motivation is not given.

To conclude, the current studies demonstrated that newcomers are not exposed to the group's rejection, but carry characteristics that either shield their relation to the group against the negative consequences of rejection or that help them disengage from the harmful situation of being rejected repeatedly. Thus, social rejection has consequences on newcomers, but what the nature of these consequences is can be regulated by the newcomers themselves by the adoption of motivational strength and regulatory strategies.

Chapter 6   General Discussion

The current dissertation investigated the integration of new group memberships into the self-concept under a self-regulation perspective.

The first empirical part (chapter 2) demonstrated that new groups, being former outgroups that newcomers are interested in and have intense contact with, are included into the self-concept. Two studies in the context of exchange years investigated the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept using affective, behavioral, and cognitive measures and compared subsamples with different exchange experience. It was found that social identification with the hostgroup and commitment was stronger in former exchange students than in future exchange students, whereas there was no difference in strength of self-hostgroup association between these groups. Nevertheless, both former and future exchange students showed a stronger inclusion of the group into the self-concept on all three measures in comparison to a control group that did neither take part in nor apply for an exchange program. Moreover, only for former exchange students the hostgroup-inclusion differed in all three measures from the inclusion of a control outgroup. In sum, the results provide evidence for the impact of interest in and actual intensive intergroup contact on newcomers' self-concept. Unlike earlier research that investigated the inclusion of individuals and ingroups into the self-concept, these studies provided the first direct evidence for the inclusion of an outgroup into the self-concept.

The second empirical part (chapter 3) took the active role of newcomers in the self-concept adaptation to new groups into account by demonstrating the impact of self-regulatory strategies on the inclusion of the group into the self-concept and long-term psychological functioning. A longitudinal study related approach and avoidance strategies to acculturation strategies, the inclusion of the group into the self-concept and well-being as well as achievement effort and integrated these into a larger model. It was found that approach strategies lead to higher levels of long-term well-being. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that this effect is accounted for by stronger acculturation contact strategies and social identification with the new group. Avoidance strategies, on the other hand, led to lower well-being. Moreover, stronger acculturation contact strategies predicted weaker disidentification. Stronger disidentification was related to stronger achievement effort. This implies that in the investigated context, negative experiences in the social domain, which would otherwise be harmful for well-being, are compensated for by the striving for success in the achievement domain. The study demonstrates that membership approach and avoidance strategies affect

the inclusion of the group into the self-concept. Moreover, it shows that the inclusion of the group into the self-concept impact newcomers' long-term well-being and their functioning in alternative domains. This finding underlines the importance that a successful self-concept adaptation to the new group has for long-term functioning of newcomers in their new groups. Therefore, a better understanding of the underlying processes in the self-concept changes is needed to support a successful adaptation to the group.

The last empirical parts (chapter 4 and chapter 5) disentangled the separate influential factors in order to achieve such a better understanding of the underlying processes. It extended the results from the first chapters by including the quality of contact to the new group and internal motivation in the investigation. It was demonstrated that approach and avoidance strategies lead to a sensitivity to specific events and affect specific outcome criteria. In the third empirical part (chapter 4), it was found that when accepted, newcomers' approach strategies (but not avoidance strategies) lead to stronger social identification with the new group. For high internally motivated newcomers who were rejected, approach strategies were related to social identification in spite of the rejection. The fourth empirical part (chapter 5) demonstrated that avoidance strategies (but not approach strategies) lead to stronger disidentification upon rejection. However, the disidentification effect of avoidance strategies is buffered by the internal motivation to become a group member: for high internally motivated newcomers, even upon rejection, avoidance strategies were unrelated to disidentification.

Taken together, in this dissertation it was shown that new groups are included into the self-concept. Moreover, newcomer approach and avoidance strategies and internal motivation affect the way newcomers respond with the inclusion of the group into their self-concepts to different experiences with the group. The induced self-concept changes affect long-term functioning of newcomers in their new groups.

Strengths and limitations

The present studies complement each other's shortcomings regarding content and methods. In chapter 2 the *change* of the self-concept is directly addressed by using a quasi-experimental design with the factor time (before exchange, after exchange, and control). Ideally, one would investigate newcomers (e.g., exchange students) before and after group entrance longitudinally and compare their self-concept changes to a control group that is comparable to the target group but for their interest and membership in the group. Under the

given circumstances, however, the present design comes as close as possible to a longitudinal design and thus demonstrates that the self-concept changes are indeed induced by the new group membership. In chapter 3, self-concept changes are measured after contact has taken place and the impact of regulatory strategies is demonstrated longitudinally. This underlines that indeed strategies affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept, and not vice versa. Thus, the causal direction found in the interpersonal domain (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006) was also indicated in the domain of new group memberships. Chapter 4 and 5 are more experimental in nature, partly reducing the contact to the new group to a controlled minimum. Thereby, the studies can investigate motivational characteristics in their interaction with contact experiences. It could thus be demonstrated that contact experiences and regulatory strategies influence each other. These findings were, again, replicated in a retrospective field study in the intercultural context. However, even though the present studies confirm the proposed model displayed in Figure 1.4, the relations were not all investigated in one study. Thus, further research should seek to demonstrate the full model in a single longitudinal study.

A shortcoming in the present studies is the relatively small amount of manipulated constructs. The group's feedback was manipulated, but neither approach and avoidance strategies, nor internal motivation were. Internal motivation is, as a concept, difficult to manipulate (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Approach and avoidance strategies have, though frequently manipulated in the achievement domain (e.g., van Yperen, 2003), so far only been manipulated in the social domain in one study by Strachman and Gable (2006, Study 2). Future research should aim at filling this gap in the social domain both for the effects of interpersonal as well as membership strategies.

There are several procedural factors that might moderate the proposed relations and thus stimulate future investigations. The investigation of the effects of the legitimacy of the group's rejection, of coping cognitions in newcomers, or interaction effects of group norms regarding approach and avoidance strategies on self-concept changes, for instance, would shed more light onto processes underlying the effects of group feedback, membership strategies, and internal motivation.

The present studies investigated a variety of groups. Four studies used foreign cultures, where newcomers most unlikely ever become real ingroup-members, the other studies used hobby-groups or simulated groups where full membership status is possible. The contact with these groups was either real (retrospectively or prospectively), imagined, or

manipulated. Furthermore, some of the groups were self-chosen, others were "forced" upon participants who had to chose a group out of a prior selection of groups. It is a sign of the stability of the hypothesized effects that across these variations in group size, prior history, possibilities in membership status, time of measurement, self-selection, or interest, the studies produce similar result patterns. This underlines that self-concept changes take place for memberships in all sorts of groups, and that approach and avoidance strategies as well as internal motivation affect the changes independently of these group differences.

However, in the present studies, all groups were tied together by common goals, thus they were defined by more than interpersonal attachment between members. Groups can be distinguished by the type of attachment that ties members together: common identity groups are groups where individuals are identified with the group's goals and purposes. Common bond groups are individuals that are attached to each other (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994). Membership strategies in the present research were clearly focused on the social category, unlike interpersonal strategies that focus on interpersonal attachment. Accordingly, the inclusion of the group into the self-concept was affected by membership strategies instead of interpersonal strategies: In chapter 3 it was demonstrated that friendship and membership strategies are empirically distinct and have specific predictive value. It is likely that the membership strategy effects apply to social identification with common identity groups rather than common bond groups. Future research is needed in order to specify the effects of interpersonal and membership strategies in these different group types.

There are striking similarities in the effects of avoidance strategies and rejection sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity is defined as a cognitive-affective processing that readily expects, perceives and intensely reacts to rejection (Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002). Rejection sensitivity leads, as avoidance strategies, to a biased interpretation of ambiguous social stimuli (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Strachman & Gable, 2006). Moreover, both rejection sensitivity and avoidance strategies undermine relationship outcomes (Ayduk, Downey, & Kim, 2001; Elliot et al., 2006; Gable, 2006). However, despite these similar consequences for social relations, rejection sensitivity and strategies are conceptualized differently. Rejection sensitivity is a global, stable characteristic that develops throughout repeated rejection experiences. Avoidance strategies are goal-related and thus highly context-dependent and flexible. The adoption of approach and avoidance strategies is, apart from approach and avoidance motives (Gable, 2006), dependent on the perception of goal-relevant resources (Schnelle, Brandstätter, & Knöpfel, 2009). It would be an in

interesting research question to investigate whether rejection sensitivity additionally influences the adoption of avoidance strategies.

Similarly, the inclusion of others in the self-concept is not to be confused with the personality characteristic of construing the self interdependently. With an interdependent (other than independent) self-construal, others are the most critical part of the context that is reference for behavior, cognition and emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, the self is seen in relation to others, which clearly differentiates self and others. The inclusion of others into the self-concept, on the other hand, is a *merger* of self and others. Moreover, while interdependent self-construal is a general tendency to relate oneself to others, the inclusion of others in the self-concept is selective in respect to the target (only *close* others become part of the self-concept). The inclusion of others into the self-concept was foremost demonstrated in cultures that are independent in self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). If the inclusion is at all related to self-construal, it is likely that it is facilitated in cultures where self-construal is interdependent. The investigation of the inclusion effect in interdependent cultures would shed light into potential interactions.

Newcomers in groups are to some extent distinct from standing group members or peripheral group members. Firstly, to newcomers the new group used to be an outgroup that reaches ingroup status through the membership. Therefore, secondly, social identification only just develops. Compared to research on standing members (Jetten et al., 2002, 2003), social identification is not the independent, but the dependent variable. On the one hand, these differences raise doubt about the applicability of the findings to standing group members. On the other hand, research on interpersonal strategies found the same result patterns for both new and existing interpersonal relationships (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006). Moreover, research on acculturation strategies demonstrated the effects of acculturation strategies years, if not generations after the actual migration (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Phinney et al., 1992). Therefore, I assume that membership approach and avoidance strategies have effects on standing group members as well. Whether membership strategies affect social (dis)identification, well-being or achievement effort to the same extents, or whether other criteria are affected, should be the content of future research.

Despite the limitations, the current studies contribute to former research in several ways. Newcomer research was extended by the demonstration that new group memberships induce self-concept changes. Research on dynamic self-concept changes has been broadened by investigating the effect of regulatory strategies for the first time. Moreover, the present

findings contribute to self-regulation research by investigating individual regulatory strategies on the development of social identities, and extend the evidence for the relevance of approach and avoidance strategies in a new domain. In what follows, the contributions to these three fields will be specified in more detail, and practical suggestions for the successful integration of newcomers are derived.

Contributions to newcomer research

Research on newcomers has focused on group changes induced by newcomers on the one hand, and on behavioral changes in newcomers on the other, as these are the most obvious indicators of change. Even though the newcomer's changes in the perception of the group have been target of investigations (Linville et al., 1989; Oakes et al., 1995), the changes of the perception of him- or herself have received less attention. The current research fills this gap by focusing on self-concept changes that new group memberships induce in newcomers. By doing so, a closer look is taken at the underlying processes that might bring about behavioral changes in newcomers.

The present studies are the first to investigate newcomer long-term transitions in the self-concept, induced by memberships in real groups that existed prior to the group entrance. Research on changes in social identification in newcomers has either focused on novel groups (Eisenbeiss, 2004), or minimal groups (e.g., Tajfel et al., 1971). The present findings demonstrate that new memberships in real, established social groups induce long-term self-concept changes in newcomers. If the new group is relevant to the self, newcomers integrate the relation to the group into their self-concept. More specifically, the present findings consider the possible positive *and* negative outcomes of the inclusion of the group into the self-concepts. When a positive relation is included in form of social identification, newcomers perceive themselves increasingly as a part of the group, feel, and act on behalf of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Whereas when a negative relation is included in form of disidentification, newcomers perceive themselves contrary to the group, feel, and act against it (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001).

By these definitions, the self-concept changes already include behavioral tendencies. Therefore, I propose that the behavioral changes following a new group membership that prior research has demonstrated are a *consequence* of the inclusion of the new group into the self-concept. Future research should specify the mediating role of self-concept changes on the relation between new group memberships and behavioral changes.

Specifically in respect to negative outcomes, the current findings add disidentification as an under-investigated component to newcomer research that might help clarifying the occurrence of behavior *against* the group's interests. In standing group members, disidentification has been demonstrated to facilitate behavior against the group's interest (public criticism and counter-group actions; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). But in newcomer research that investigated negative behavioral outcomes (e.g., turnover in organizations), disidentification has not been considered (e.g., Allen, 2006; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Future research should thus measure both positive *and* negative representations of the relation to the new group in newcomers' self-concepts and relate these to behavior that is both in line *and* contrary to the group.

Besides these mediating effects of newcomer self-concept changes, newcomers' self-concept changes most probably affect the mutual perception of a common group membership. The inclusion of the group into the newcomer's self-concept leads to behavior on behalf of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is certainly noticed by the group. It is thus likely that when the newcomer perceives a common group membership, this perception affects the respective perception in the group. Since the perception of the newcomer as being part of the group influences the group's performance and creativity (Kane et al., 2005; van Knippenberg et al., 2004), it is important to increase the perception of a common group membership on *both* newcomer and group side. In other words, even if the reaction of the group to the newcomer is suggested to be the crucial contributor to the newcomer-induced changes in performance (Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009), both group and newcomer are likely to contribute to the perception of the newcomer status in the group that, in turn, affects the group's performance.

The present research is the first to apply a self-regulation perspective to the field of newcomer research and thereby concentrates on the *process* of newcomer changes. The findings provide evidence that regulatory strategies affect the newcomer adaptation to the new group. Newcomer adaptation is, for instance, more successful if the newcomer adopts approach strategies (chapter 3 and 4). It is thus likely that other changes, besides the newcomer's self-concept, are also affected by regulatory strategies. Future research should pay attention to such potential effects in the process of newcomer and group changes by including regulatory strategies into the investigation. More so, as self-regulation strategies can also be part of the identity of social groups (Faddegon, Scheepers, & Ellemers, 2008), they

might directly or in interaction with the newcomer's strategy affect the integration of the newcomer into the group. The acceptance of the newcomer could depend on the fit between newcomer strategy and the group's norm for strategy adoption, for instance. Moreover, the realization of the potential benefits that newcomers bring to the group might depend on the fit of newcomer and group self-regulation. Taken together, newcomer research should include self-regulatory strategies in both newcomers and groups in the investigation of mutually induced changes.

Contributions to dynamic self-concept research

For a long time, social identities have been treated like static characteristics in members. Research that has dealt with changes in social identities has focused on *situational* changes in the salience of different social identities in the self-concept (e.g., Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). In other words, social identities have been investigated as static features of the self-concept that are activated depending on accessibility and situational fit (Turner et al., 1987). Unlike this situational approach, the present findings indicate that the long-term social identities themselves are flexible: the results provide evidence that the *basis* that is available for situational activation undergoes changes. It was thus demonstrated that the self-concept itself adapts to new group memberships by showing that former outgroups become part of the self-concept (the first aim of this dissertation).

The findings contribute to the evidence that the social self-concept is dynamic in its adaptation to the environment by forming social identities. Moreover, certain established factors were supported to facilitate or detain these long-term changes in social identities. It was demonstrated (chapter 2) that already before group entrance, a certain degree of mental overlap exists between self and group (Amiot et al., 2007; Eisenbeiss, 2004; Kashima et al., 2000; Spears, 2001). The increased contact to the new group (that led to simultaneous salience) strengthened the inclusion of the group into the self-concept affectively and behaviorally. Furthermore, it was shown (chapter 3) that acculturation contact strategies facilitate the inclusion of the group into the self-concept (as suggested by Berry, 1997). Moreover, the impact of the group's feedback on (dis)identification (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2002; Sleebos et al., 2006a, 2006b) was supported (chapter 4 and 5). However, these already established factors lie (apart from acculturation strategies) outside the reach of the newcomer, thus, the newcomer has been treated like a passive object in the new situation.

It is unlikely that individuals are passive and unmotivated in the development of such a personal thing as the self-concept (e.g., Gollwitzer & Kirchhof, 1998). Like in the context of social discrimination (Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007; Shelton, 2000), research has mostly overlooked that individuals' motivation influences the way they are affected by their environment. Therefore, the current studies take motivational characteristics of newcomers into account. Unlike earlier approaches that have considered motivation in the development of social identification, by the adoption of a self-regulatory perspective, the present focus is not on the *contents* of motivation that drive social identification, but on the *process* of identity development. The presented research is the first that regards the newcomer as a motivated protagonist that actively contributes to the process of his or her self-concept development. By considering the interaction effects of regulatory strategies and internal motivation with certain experiences on self-concept changes, the present findings can explain different kinds (social identification vs. disidentification) of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. The demonstrated effects of regulatory strategies underline the active role of newcomers in the flexible self-concept development: instead of stable or unchangeable factors that affect self-concept changes, the adoption of regulatory strategies, which are highly flexible and accessible to individuals, affect the self-concept development. The self-concept is thus not at the disposal of the potential acceptance or rejection of social groups or surrounding circumstances that individuals find themselves in. Individuals have the means to regulate their receptiveness to feedback regarding their social categorization by the adoption of regulatory strategies, and can thus affect their own self-concept development.

For further research, it is crucial to note that the impact of environmental factors (e.g., social exclusion) impact differently upon individuals' self-concepts depending on their regulatory strategies and internal motivation. Future research on self-concept development should therefore take motivational characteristics into account and further investigate the interactions of other motivational characteristics with environmental features.

The present findings contribute to research on the relation between social identification and well-being. Although theorized by a large body of literature (Brewer, 1991; Deaux et al., 1999; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Stangor & Thompson, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), empirical evidence that directly measured relations between social identification and well-being is dominated by minority identification (Branscombe et al., 1999; Jetten et al., 2001; Outten et al., 2009; Schmitt et al., 2003, for an exception see Cameron, 1999), or argues, but only indirectly measures, that minority and majority identification contribute to

well-being (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; LaFromboise et al, 1993; Phinney et al., 1992; Phinney et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). In chapter 3 it was demonstrated that social identification with the majority increases well-being. Even if social identification with the minority (i.e., German students in the Netherlands) was not measured, this implies that an additional identification contributes to well-being.

Research has produced mixed results whether multiple identities affect well-being positively or negatively. On the one hand, it is suggested that multiple identities increase the accessible resources and therefore improve well-being. On the other hand, multiple identities induce role conflict and role overload and therefore decrease well-being (for reviews, see Koch & Shepperd, 2004; Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002). Brook, Garcia, and Fleming (2008) demonstrated that the effects of multiple identities on well-being depend on the importance and harmony of the identities. When social identities were in harmony, or unimportant, multiple identities predicted higher levels of well-being. Only important identities that were in conflict with each other led to lower levels of well-being. In a similar vein, it has been argued that not the number, but the organization of multiple identities in the self-concept affects well-being. Social identity complexity, that is a higher-order integration of several identities into a superordinate identity, is suggested to reduce intraindividual conflict, contribute to a coherent feeling of the self (Amiot et al., 2007), and serve as a buffer against ingroup threat (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). In my longitudinal study (chapter 3), students were in a situation that combined facilitating (e.g., high complexity of social experiences, equal status, and openness to change) and impeding (e.g., similarity between the Dutch and German culture, cognitive overload, and stress) factors of social identity complexity development. The data imply that the development of identity complexity was successful, as the additional social identification was positively related to well-being. Nevertheless, this assumption is based on correlational data obtained in the field, which means that a variety of factors might have caused the relation. More systematical experimental and field research is needed in order to identify moderating factors on the relation between multiple social identities and well-being.

Apart from the effects of social identification on well-being, in chapter 3 the long-term effects of disidentification were investigated for the first time. It was demonstrated that disidentification with the majority does *not* necessarily affect well-being, as it can be compensated by identification with alternative domains. This finding is similar to the notion that minorities compensate discrimination with strengthened minority identification (Branscombe et al., 1999). Similarly, when ingroups are negatively distinct on one dimension,

they can define themselves by other dimensions (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, extending former research, the current findings demonstrate that alternatives do not necessarily have to be social groups, but can be "unsocial", personal domains as well (i.e., achievement, as suggested by Schwarz et al., 2008). On the other hand, Twenge and colleagues (2007) argue that social rejection can be compensated by social activities only. They demonstrated that writing about other persons, but not watching a positive-mood inducing video, buffered social rejection. Alternatively, I propose that domains that are able to compensate social rejection have to be *self-relevant*, but do not necessarily have to be social. Future research should investigate the circumstances under which disidentification affects well-being, and for the choice and effects of specific alternative dimensions.

Contributions to self-regulation research

The current research investigates individual self-regulation in the pursuit of the expansion of the social self. Unlike earlier studies that looked at the interaction between individual and social self in self-regulatory processes, or the regulation of the social self, the current studies focus on the *development* of the social self. Apart from Sassenberg et al.'s (2007) demonstration that regulatory fit affects social identification with a group, changes in the self-concept itself have not been investigated as criterion in self-regulatory approaches.

Research applying self-regulatory approaches to the social self has often been based on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997). I extend the evidence that regulatory strategies are relevant in the social domain by demonstrating that approach and avoidance strategies, being influential on the *relational* identity (Elliot et al., 2006; Gable, 2006; Gable & Strachman, 2008), impact the *social* identity likewise. Besides the development of a new measurement instrument, several effects of approach and avoidance strategies were demonstrated. Like in the interpersonal domain, approach and avoidance strategies affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept and long-term well-being (the second aim of this dissertation). Moreover, the sensitivity towards positive and negative events that is induced by approach and avoidance strategies was found in the domain of new group memberships, too (the third aim of this dissertation). Furthermore, it can be inferred that approach strategies affect foremost positive outcome criteria (e.g., social identification), whereas avoidance strategies affect foremost negative outcome criteria (e.g., disidentification). Extending the evidence from the interpersonal domain, the present research added the dimension of the

inclusion of relations into the self-concept. Thus, it was demonstrated that not the events per se, but their inclusion into the self-concept affect psychological adaptation.

The findings have implications for the discussion, whether avoidance strategies can be adaptive at all. So far, research has mostly underlined the adaptive effects of approach, and the maladaptive effects of avoidance motivation (e.g., Coats, Janoff-Bulman, & Alpert, 1996; Elliot, 2006; Elliot, Sheldon, & Church, 1997). As an exception it was found that the orientation towards losses negatively affects well-being in young adults only. The adoption of maintenance goals in older adults is adaptive, because it helps them manage the change of gains and losses (Ebner, Freund & Baltes, 2006). Nikitin and Freund (2008) argue that it is the strength and combination of social approach and avoidance motivation that affect well-being. In line with earlier research, they argue that approach motivation increases, and avoidance motivation decreases well-being. However, they propose that co-occurring moderate approach and avoidance motivation is beneficial, too, as both positive and negative social situations are perceived, thus the behavioral adaptation can simultaneously maximize positive and minimize negative outcomes of the social situation. Only if both motivations are strong, individuals are stuck between behavioral tendencies, which impedes well-being.

Elliot and colleagues (2006), suggest that the adaptivity of approach and avoidance motivation depends on the given situation. The current evidence supports this notion. In chapter 3, avoidance strategies were negatively related to well-being. In chapter 5, well-being was not measured, but it was demonstrated that avoidance effects only occurred as a response to negative experiences. It is likely that the negative effects of avoidance strategies on well-being would be moderated by negative experiences likewise. Repeated rejection might not only be harmful, but also indicate that the goal to become a full member of the group is unattainable. When goals are unattainable, it is adaptive to disengage from the goal and reengage in another goal (Wrosch et al., 2003). In other words: if the group does not want the newcomer, it is only adaptive to stop trying and disidentify from the group. The present findings demonstrate that avoidance strategies help newcomers to disidentify from a group when the situation implies it. Future research should seek to include the quality of experiences in the investigation of avoidance strategy effects on well-being. Moreover, it should study contexts, where avoidance strategies are more likely to be adaptive (e.g., where rejection is specifically harmful).

In chapter 4 and 5 it is demonstrated that the scope of approach and avoidance strategies can be restricted by internal motivation. Thus, the effects of different motivational characteristics in individuals might facilitate, constrain or impede each other. So far, self-regulatory research in the social domain has considered interactions with chronic (i.e., trait) and situationally induced (i.e., state) regulatory focuses (Faddegon et al., 2008; Keller & Bless, 2006). However, it has investigated only one regulatory strategy at a time. The present findings underline that the consideration of interacting effects of different motivational characteristics contributes to a better understanding of the regulation of the social self.

Practical implications

Rapid changes in Western societies have rendered the smooth integration of newcomers in groups an issue in public attention, calling for means and methods to facilitate successful integration processes. A closer look onto the underlying processes that bring about behavioral changes is necessary to support a successful integration of newcomers into their groups. As demonstrated in the present studies, the self-concept contains the newcomers' representation of their integration into the group. This has tremendous effects on well-being, personal and group-based behavior, emotions, and perceptions (e.g., Deaux, 1996; Smith et al., 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Alone well-being leads to success in several domains of life, such as social relations, health, performance, sociability, or prosocial behavior (for a review, see Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

The current research gives information about facilitating and impeding factors of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept and has thus practical implications for the selection, training, and coaching of newcomers and the respective groups.

It was demonstrated that interest in the group (chapter 2), and approach strategies, (chapter 3 and 4) facilitate social identification with a group and well-being. Avoidance strategies facilitated disidentification with the group as a response to group rejection (chapter 5). Internal motivation buffered the harming effect that rejection would normally have on the relation to the group (chapter 4 and 5). Taken together, one would conclude that newcomers should be selected, trained and coached to adopt approach strategies. Moreover, their selection upon internal motivation would help them to shield the developing inclusion of the group against negative experiences, which are likely to occur in the early phases of membership. However, as argued above, there might be circumstances that render avoidance strategies adaptive, too. When rejection from a group is harmful, the group not important, and

alternatives available (e.g., a new hobby), avoidance strategies are adaptive, as they facilitate disidentification (when internal motivation is low). On the other hand, if there are no group alternatives, group integration crucial and leaving the group is no option (e.g. migrants, expatriates), avoidance strategies would harm the relation to the group upon the first cues of rejection. In the latter case, a strong encouragement of internal motivation would protect newcomers from the harmful effects of rejection, and approach strategies foster social identification. Taken together, depending on the circumstances, internal motivation, approach as well as avoidance strategies should be encouraged in newcomers.

Applying this to international exchange programs, where high personal and monetary costs are invested in order to induce identification with the host society, students should be selected on the basis of their internal motivation to spend an exchange year in the specific society. Moreover, in preparations students should be trained to adopt approach strategies instead of avoidance strategies. Note that these strategies only refer to the contact and participation to the secondary culture, in acculturation terms, and that the findings do not advocate that exchange students should give up their primary culture. In reference to contact and participation with the secondary culture, however, the focus in preparations should be on the fun in identifying, understanding and adopting prototypical behavior of the receiving society instead of a focus on avoiding mistakes or behaving against the cultural norms. During the exchange, students should be encouraged to focus on positive outcomes in their relationship to the hostgroup. Instead of talking to other exchange students about negative circumstances in the receiving society, they could, for instance, ask others what they like about their host country.

On the side of the new group, the group provides possibilities to adopt certain strategies, especially when it comes to behavioral contact strategies in acculturation (Bourhis et al., 1997). Thus, groups and societies that frequently accommodate newcomers should provide opportunities for interaction. Moreover, the group's acceptance and rejection as a group member has, as demonstrated in the present studies (chapter 4 and 5), strong effects on newcomers' self-concept development. During newcomer socializing, the group obviously has to give some kind of feedback regarding newcomer behavior. However, if the group is interested in the long-term integration of the newcomer, it should avoid membership-status feedback, since this kind of rejection impedes social identification in early phases of memberships. Instead, groups should monitor newcomers' behavior by providing task-related and concrete feedback. Applied to international exchange programs, receiving groups (e.g.,

host families, schools, or university classes) should be ready to provide the possibility for exchange students to participate in the local culture and get in touch with local people (e.g., houses where only international students are accommodated are not advisable). Moreover, they should be prepared to avoid global feedback, such as telling the students that they would not fit or were a failure as exchange students. Instead, groups should be encouraged to react to culturally inappropriate behavior with specific and concrete feedback.

In any case, the present data demonstrate that early attention to newcomer motivation is required, as they affect the relation to the group upon, if not before the actual contact takes place. This foundation of the relationship most likely affects the history that newcomer and group are about to begin.

Conclusion

To conclude, new group memberships induce self-concept changes in newcomers that affect their psychological functioning in the long run. Hence, the self-concept is flexible in its adaptation to new situations. In this adaptation, the experiences with the environment play a crucial role. However, newcomers' internal motivation, approach and avoidance strategies affect to what extent they are inflicted by these experiences. The newcomer's self-concept is thus not a helpless candle in the wind, exposed to the world, but newcomers have the means to actively contribute to a successful self-concept adaptation by adopting certain strategies. By the application of a self-regulatory perspective on the development of the social self, the current studies contribute to a better understanding of the process of dynamic self-concept changes and the active role individuals play in it.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Membership strategy scales in their English and German Translation

Appendix II: Social identification scale with its subscales affective identification, cognitive identification, and commitment in their English and German Translation

Appendix III: Disidentification with its subscales exit, self-recategorization, and bad feeling in their English and German Translation

Appendix IV: Manipulation of the group's response in its English and German translation

Appendix I

Membership strategy scale

Approach strategies

"I am trying to mentally grow into the group", "I am striving to be accepted as a full member of the group", "I am striving to be seen as a real group member by the other people in the group", "I am striving to see myself as a real group member", "I am trying to grow into the group with my behavior", "I am striving to see myself as a compatible group member"

Avoidance strategies

"I avoid deviating from the image of a typical group member", "I am trying to distinguish my behavior from people that are not in the group", "I want my behavior to deviate as little as possible from the other group members", "I avoid being too similar to people that are not part of the group", "It is important to me not to differ too much from the others in the group", "I avoid being similar to people that are not members of the group"

German Translation

Approach strategies

"Ich versuche, gedanklich in die Gruppe hineinzuwachsen", "Ich strebe an, als volles Mitglied der Gruppe anerkannt zu sein", "Ich strebe an, von den anderen in der Gruppe als richtiges Mitglied angesehen zu werden", "Ich strebe an, mich selbst als richtiges Gruppenmitglied zu sehen", "Ich versuche, mit meinem Verhalten in die Gruppe hineinzuwachsen", "Ich strebe an, mich selbst als passendes Mitglied der Gruppe zu sehen"

Avoidance strategies

"Ich vermeide, dem Bild von einem typischen Gruppenmitglied zu widersprechen", "Ich versuche, mich mit meinem Verhalten von Menschen abzugrenzen, die nicht in der Gruppe sind", "Ich möchte möglichst wenig in meinem Verhalten von den anderen Gruppenmitgliedern abweichen", "Ich vermeide es anderen Menschen allzu ähnlich zu sein, die nicht Teil der Gruppe sind", "Es ist mir wichtig mich nicht zu sehr von den anderen in der Gruppe zu unterscheiden", "Ich vermeide es, ähnlich wie Leute zu wirken, die nicht Mitglieder der Gruppe sind"

Appendix II

Social identification scale

Affective identification

"I like to be a group member", "I appreciate being a group member", "Often I regret being a group member" (reversed), "I feel strong ties to the group", "The group has a great deal of personal meaning for me", "I am happy to belong to this group"

Cognitive identification

"I feel as a group member", "I perceive myself as a group member", "It is important to me to be a group member", "I identify as being a group member", "I am aware of being a group member"

Commitment

"I help other group members when they are overloaded", "I am thinking about how to improve things for the group", "I seek information about developments that concern the group", "I stand up for improvements for the group", "I voluntarily undertake tasks for the group."

German Translation

Affektive identification

"Ich bin gern ein Mitglied der Gruppe", "Ich schätze es, ein Mitglied der Gruppe zu sein", "Ich bedaure oft, Mitglied der Gruppe zu sein" (umgepolt), "Ich fühle mich der Gruppe stark verbunden", "Die Gruppe bedeutet mir persönlich sehr viel", "Ich schätze es, ein Mitglied der Gruppe zu sein"

Cognitive identification

"Ich fühle mich als Gruppenmitglied", "Ich sehe mich selbst als Gruppenmitglied", "Es ist mir wichtig, Mitglied der Gruppe zu sein", "Ich identifiziere mich mit der Gruppe", "Ich lebe im Bewusstsein, ein Mitglied der Gruppe zu sein"

Commitment

"Ich helfe anderen Gruppenmitgliedern bei ihren Aufgaben, wenn sie überlastet sind", "Ich denke darüber nach, wie man die Dinge für die Gruppe verbessern könnte", "Ich informiere mich über neue Entwicklungen, die die Gruppe betreffen", "Ich setze mich für Verbesserungen für die Gruppe ein", "Ich übernehme freiwillig ehrenamtliche Arbeiten für die Gruppe"

Appendix III

Disidentification scale

Exit

"I doubt that I will stay in this group much longer", "I am thinking about leaving the group", "I am thinking about dropping out of the group"

Self re-categorization

"I tell myself I have a number of other groups in which I can play a part", "I rather invest time and effort in other groups", "I convince myself that I have other groups that are important to me"

Bad feeling

"When I meet the group I have to try hard dissembling my discomfort", "I feel bad when I meet the group", "I often don't want to meet the group", "I sometimes have a really bad feeling when I am in the group", "I often go with a queasy feeling to the group activities", "I reluctantly spend my time with the group"

German Translation

Exit

"Ich bezweifle, dass ich noch lange in dieser Gruppe bleiben werde", "Ich überlege, die Gruppe wieder zu verlassen", "Ich denke darüber nach, aus der Gruppe wieder auszusteigen"

Self re-categorization

"Ich sage mir selbst, dass ich eine Reihe anderer Gruppen habe, in denen ich mich einbringen kann", "Ich investiere meine Zeit und Kraft lieber in andere Gruppen", "Ich mache mir bewusst, dass ich andere Gruppen habe, die mir wichtig sind"

Bad feeling

"Wenn ich die Gruppe treffe, muss ich mich bemühen, mir mein Unbehagen nicht anmerken zu lassen", "Ich fühle mich schlecht, wenn ich mit der Gruppe zusammentreffe", "Oft will ich gar nicht mit der Gruppe zusammentreffen", "Ich habe manchmal richtig „Bauchschmerzen", wenn ich in der Gruppe bin", "Ich gehe oft mit mulmigem Gefühl zu den Gruppenaktivitäten", "Ich verbringe ungern meine Zeit mit der Gruppe"

Appendix IV

Manipulation of the group's feedback in German Translation

Acceptance

Sie sind seit ein paar Wochen Teil der Gruppe. Die gemeinsame Idee und die Aktivitäten interessieren Sie nach wie vor und sind Ihnen wichtig. Sie bemerken schnell, dass oft außerhalb der Gruppenaktivitäten wichtige Belange der Gruppe diskutiert werden. Sie werden dabei schon nach kurzer Zeit von den anderen Mitgliedern um Ihre Meinung gebeten. Bei der kürzlich erfolgten Verteilung von Aufgaben wurde Ihnen eine zentrale Aufgabe übertragen, für die Sie sich besonders eignen. Zufällig überhören Sie ein Gespräch, in dem ein Mitglied der Gruppe zu einem anderen sagt, Sie seien schon ein echtes Gruppenmitglied und „so richtig Teil" der Gruppe.

Rejection

Sie sind seit ein paar Wochen Teil der Gruppe. Die gemeinsame Idee und die Aktivitäten interessieren Sie nach wie vor und sind Ihnen wichtig. Sie bemerken schnell, dass oft außerhalb der Gruppenaktivitäten wichtige Belange der Gruppe diskutiert werden. Ihnen fällt aber auf, dass Sie dabei von den anderen Mitgliedern nicht um Ihre Meinung gebeten werden. Bei der kürzlich erfolgten Verteilung von Aufgaben wurde Ihnen keine Aufgabe übertragen, obwohl Sie sich für eine bestimmte Aufgabe besonders eignen. Zufällig überhören Sie ein Gespräch, in dem ein Mitglied der Gruppe zu einem anderen sagt, Sie seien kein echtes Gruppenmitglied und kein „so richtiger Teil" der Gruppe.

Summary

Being a newcomer is a recurring experience that demands adaptation to a new situation. Research on newcomer adaptation has focused on behavioral or perceptual changes (e.g., Moreland & Levine, 1982; Oakes et al., 1995). The current research is the first to investigate long-term self-concept changes induced by group memberships under a self-regulation perspective.

The self-concept has often been treated like a static characteristic in individuals. The present research investigates the flexible, adaptable parts of the self-concept. It has been demonstrated that close others as well as ingroups are part of the self-concept in the relational and social identity (for an overview see Aron et al., 2004, Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Smith & Henry, 1996). It has not directly been demonstrated that outgroups can become a part of the self-concept. The first aim of the present research was the demonstration that a new group, being an outgroup before the newcomer enters, becomes included into the self-concept.

The inclusion of a group into the self-concept establishes through the simultaneous activation of the mental representations of the self and the group (Smith, 2002). This activation is prepared by self-prototypicality (Eisenbeiss, 2004; Kashima et al., 2000), and develops through the simultaneous salience of group and self (Kramer, 1998). High quality contact (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002), behavioral contact strategies (Berry, 1997), contextual, and structural factors (e.g., Amiot et al., 2007; Eisenbeiss, 2004; Piontkowski et al., 2000) facilitate the consolidation of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept. However, these are stable or for the newcomer unchangeable factors affecting the flexible self-concept adaptation. Thus, the newcomer has rather been treated like an object of changing circumstances than an active, motivated protagonist in his or her self-concept adaptation. Research on social identification that has taken motivation into account focused on needs and motives (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, as these approaches cannot explain specific phenomena of social identification, a more process-oriented framework is applied. The present studies therefore adopt a self-regulatory perspective on self-concept changes induced by new group memberships. By doing so, newcomer *individual* regulatory strategies in the pursuit of the development of the *social* self were investigated.

Approach and avoidance strategies in the interpersonal domain have been demonstrated to affect interpersonal relationship outcomes and well-being (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006), thus impact the relational identity (Aron et al., 2004). The second aim of

the current research was to demonstrate that membership approach and avoidance strategies affect the social identity, thus the inclusion of the group into the self-concept likewise. Moreover, in the interpersonal domain it was found that approach and avoidance strategies lead to a sensitivity towards positive and negative events, respectively (Gable & Strachman, 2008; Strachman & Gable, 2006). The third aim of the current studies was to demonstrate that membership approach and avoidance strategies likewise affect the sensitivity towards positive and negative membership status feedback provided by the new group.

The first aim was addressed in two studies (chapter 2) in the context of international exchange years. It was predicted and found that intense contact with the hostgroup during an exchange year leads to the inclusion of the hostgroup into the self-concept: the contact with the group in an exchange year led to stronger social identification with the hostgroup and stronger commitment than the mere interest in an exchange year. However, interest already led to a self-hostgroup association comparable with the effect of exchange years. Nevertheless, both contact and interest led to a stronger inclusion of the group into the self-concept than when individuals have no specific relation to a group. Taken together, the results provide evidence for the impact of interest in and actual intensive intergroup contact on newcomers' self-concepts. It was for the first time demonstrated that (former) outgroups can be included into the self-concept in a way comparable to ingroups.

A longitudinal study in the intercultural context (chapter 3) addressed the second goal and integrated findings of social identity research, acculturation research, and approach-avoidance research into a larger model. It was expected and found that approach strategies facilitate social identification with the new group and therefore lead to higher levels of long-term well-being. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that this effect is accounted for by stronger acculturation strategies. Acculturation contact strategies predicted lower disidentification. Stronger disidentification was, in turn, found to foster achievement effort, being an alternative dimension to compensate the failure of social integration upon. Avoidance strategies, on the other hand, directly predicted lower levels of long-term well-being. The study demonstrated that membership approach and avoidance strategies affect the inclusion of the group into the self-concept, and underlined the importance of a successful self-concept adaptation to the new group.

The third aim was addressed in four studies (chapter 4 and chapter 5). As predicted, the results confirmed that membership approach and avoidance strategies affect the sensitivity towards specific events. It was demonstrated that when accepted, newcomers' approach

strategies (but not avoidance strategies) lead to stronger social identification with the new group. However, for newcomers who were high in internal motivation to become a group member and who were rejected, approach strategies were related to social identification in spite of the rejection. Avoidance strategies (but not approach strategies) led to stronger disidentification upon rejection. However, the disidentification effect of avoidance strategies was buffered by the internal motivation to become a group member. Thus, the present research demonstrated that membership strategies induce a sensitivity to specific membership-related events that affects, in turn, specific aspects of the inclusion of a group into the self-concept.

To conclude, the present research extends former research on group-newcomer changes by demonstrating that new group memberships induce changes in newcomers' self-concepts. The self-concept is thus demonstrated to be dynamic in its adaptation to changes in the environment. Moreover, by applying a self-regulatory perspective, the newcomer is regarded as a motivated protagonist in the self-concept adaption. Extending former research that investigated structural and stable factors in the inclusion of groups into the self-concept, and self-regulatory approaches that provided evidence for the self-regulation of the social self, the present studies demonstrated that individual regulatory strategies shape the *development* of the social self. The results contribute to a better understanding of the process of dynamic self-concept changes and the active role that individuals play in it.

Zusammenfassung

Als Neuling in eine Gruppe zu kommen ist eine immer wiederkehrende Erfahrung, die Anpassungsleistungen an die neue Situation erfordert. Die bisherige Forschung zur Anpassung von Neulingen in Gruppen hat sich vor allem auf Veränderungen von Verhalten und Wahrnehmung konzentriert (z.B. Moreland & Levine, 1982; Oakes et al., 1995). Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht dahingegen erstmals die durch die neue Gruppenmitgliedschaft verursachten langfristigen Veränderungen des Selbstkonzepts unter einer selbstregulativen Perspektive.

Das Selbstkonzept wird oft als statische Eigenschaft in Personen betrachtet. Die vorliegende Dissertation untersucht die flexiblen, anpassungsfähigen Teile des Selbstkonzepts. Es wurde gezeigt, dass sowohl nahestehende Personen, als auch Eigengruppen Teil des Selbstkonzepts darstellen, genauer gesagt Teil der relationalen und sozialen Identität (für eine Übersicht siehe Aron et al., 2004, Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Smith & Henry, 1996). Bislang wurde aber noch nicht direkt gezeigt, dass Fremdgruppen Teil des Selbstkonzepts werden können. Das erste Ziel der Dissertation war es daher zu zeigen, dass eine neue Gruppe, die vor der Gruppenmitgliedschaft eine Fremdgruppe ist, ins Selbstkonzept integriert wird.

Die Inklusion einer Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept entsteht durch die gleichzeitige Aktivierung der mentalen Repräsentation des Selbst und der mentalen Repräsentation der Gruppe (Smith, 2002). Sie wird durch Selbst-prototypikalität vorbereitet (Eisenbeiss, 2004; Kashima et al., 2000), und entsteht durch die gleichzeitige Salienz der Gruppe und des Selbst (Kramer, 1998). Kontakt von hoher Qualität (z.B. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002), Akkulturationsstrategien (Berry, 1997), sowie Kontextfaktoren und strukturelle Faktoren (z.B. Amiot et al., 2007; Eisenbeiss, 2004; Piontkowski et al., 2000) fördern die Konsolidierung der Inklusion der Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept. Bei diesen bislang untersuchten Faktoren handelt es sich aber um stabile, für den Neuling unveränderliche Faktoren, die eine flexible Selbstkonzeptanpassung beeinflussen. Neulinge werden dadurch also eher als Objekte einer veränderlichen Umwelt behandelt, denn als aktive, motivierte Protagonisten ihrer Selbstkonzeptanpassung. Forschung zu sozialer Identifikation, die Motivation berücksichtigt, hat sich vor allem mit Bedürfnissen und Motiven beschäftigt (z.B. Brewer, 1991; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Da aber diese Betrachtungsweise spezifische Phänomene der Inklusion einer Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept nicht erklären kann, ist eine Prozess-orientierte Betrachtungsweise nötig. Die vorliegenden Studien

wenden daher eine selbstregulative Perspektive auf Selbstkonzeptveränderungen, die durch neue Gruppenmitgliedschaften verursacht werden, an. Mit anderen Worten, es werden *individuelle* regulative Strategien der Neulinge in der Entwicklung ihres *sozialen* Selbst untersucht.

Im interpersonalen Bereich wurde gezeigt, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien Beziehungserfolge und Wohlbefinden beeinflussen (Gable, 2006; Elliot et al., 2006), das heißt die relationale Identität wird beeinflusst (Aron et al., 2004). Das zweite Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit war es zu zeigen, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien bei Neulingen die soziale Identität, nämlich die Inklusion der Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept, gleichfalls beeinflussen. Darüber hinaus wurde im interpersonalen Bereich gefunden, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien zu einer verstärkten Sensibilität für positive bzw. negative Ereignisse führt (Gable & Strachman, 2008; Strachman & Gable, 2006). Das dritte Ziel der vorliegenden Dissertation war deshalb zu zeigen, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien bei Neulingen ebenfalls zu erhöhter Sensibilität gegenüber positiven bzw. negativen Mitgliedsstatus-bezogenem Feedback aus der Gruppe führen.

Das erste Ziel wurde in zwei Studien im Kontext von Austauschjahren (Kapitel 2) behandelt. Es wurde erwartet und gefunden, dass der intensive Kontakt zur Gastgruppe zur Inklusion der Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept führt: der Kontakt mit der Gruppe während des Auslandsjahres führte zu stärkerer sozialer Identifikation und stärkerem Engagement für die Gruppe als das bloße Interesse an einem Auslandsjahr. Allerdings wurde auch gefunden, dass bereits das Interesse am Auslandsjahr zu einer Assoziation des Selbst und der Gastgruppe führt, die vergleichbar ist mit den Effekten eines Auslandsjahres. Dahingegen führten sowohl Kontakt als auch Interesse zu einer stärkeren Inklusion der Gruppe im Vergleich zu Gruppen, zu denen man keine besondere Beziehung hat. Zusammenfassend liefern die Befunde Evidenz für die Auswirkungen von Interesse und tatsächlichem Kontakt mit einer neuen Gruppe auf das Selbstkonzept bei Neulingen. Erstmals wurde gezeigt, dass (vorherige) Fremdgruppen ähnlich wie Eigengruppen ins Selbstkonzept integriert werden können.

Eine Längsschnittstudie im interkulturellen Kontext (Kapitel 3) beschäftigt sich mit dem zweiten Ziel der Dissertation und integriert Befunde aus der Forschung zur sozialen Identität, der Akkulturationsforschung und der Forschung zu Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien in ein Gesamtmodell. Es wurde erwartet und gefunden, dass Annäherungsstrategien die soziale Identifikation mit der neuen Gruppe fördern und daher langfristig zu besserem Wohlbefinden führen. Die Befunde zeigen, dass dieser Effekt durch

stärkere Kontakt- Akkulturationsstrategien vermittelt wird. Kontakt- Akkulturationsstrategien führten zu geringerer Disidentifikation mit der Gruppe. Disidentifikation wiederum förderte Fleiß im Leistungsbereich, der eine alternative Dimension zur Kompensation von negativen Erfahrungen in der sozialen Integration darstellt. Vermeidensstrategien dahingegen führten zu schlechterem Wohlbefinden. Die Studie zeigt, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien die Inklusion einer Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept beeinflussen und unterstreicht die Wichtigkeit einer erfolgreichen Anpassung des Selbstkonzepts an die neue Gruppe.

Das dritte Ziel der Dissertation wurde in vier Studien behandelt (Kapitel 4 und 5). Wie erwartet wurde gezeigt, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien bei Neulingen die Sensibilität gegenüber spezifischen Ereignissen beeinflussen. Es wurde gezeigt, dass bei Neulingen, wenn sie von der Gruppe akzeptiert werden, Annäherungsstrategien (nicht aber Vermeidensstrategien) zu stärkerer sozialer Identifikation mit der neuen Gruppe führen. Dieser Effekt wurde für Neulinge, die hoch internal motiviert waren, sogar bei Zurückweisung gefunden: hier hingen Annäherungsstrategien trotz Zurückweisung aus der Gruppe mit stärkerer sozialer Identifikation zusammen. Bei Neulingen, die von der Gruppe zurückgewiesen wurden, führten Vermeidensstrategien (nicht aber Annäherungsstrategien) zu stärkerer Disidentifikation. Wiederum wurde dieser Effekt von hoher internaler Motivation gepuffert: Der Disidentifikationseffekt der Vermeidensstrategien trat trotz Zurückweisung nicht auf, wenn Neulinge hoch internal motiviert waren. Die vorliegenden Studien zeigen also, dass Annäherungs- und Vermeidensstrategien in Neulingen zu erhöhter Sensibilität gegenüber Feedback aus der Gruppe bezüglich des eigenen Mitgliedschaftsstatus in der Gruppe führen. Diese Sensibilität beeinflusst spezifische Aspekte der Integration einer Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept.

Zusammenfassend erweitert die vorliegende Arbeit die bisherige Forschung zu Veränderungen von Neulingen und Gruppen, indem sie zeigt, dass neue Gruppenmitgliedschaften Selbstkonzeptveränderungen in Neulingen verursachen. Es wurde also gezeigt, dass sich das Selbstkonzept dynamisch an Veränderungen der Umwelt anpasst. Durch die Anwendung einer Selbstregulationsperspektive wurden Neulinge als motivierte Protagonisten der Anpassung ihres Selbstkonzepts betrachtet. Bisherige Forschung, die sich mit strukturellen und stabilen Einflussfaktoren auf die Inklusion einer Gruppe ins Selbstkonzept beschäftigt hat, und Forschung zu Selbstregulationsansätzen, die Evidenz für die Selbstregulation des sozialen Selbst geliefert hat, wurde durch den Befund, dass individuelle Strategien die Entwicklung des sozialen Selbst beeinflussen, erweitert. Die

Ergebnisse tragen somit zu einem besseren Verständnis der Prozesse dynamischer Selbstkonzeptveränderungen und der aktiven Rolle, die Individuen darin einnehmen, bei.

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