Social psychology has created a science of the human experience in the “here-and-now”

Classic studies (Asch, Milgram, Zimbardo) illustrate the power of the immediate situation and how individuals get entrapped in it
Regulatory Scope

• **Contractive Scope**: Predictions, plans, and actions focused on me-here-and-now

• **Expansive Scope**: Predictions, plans, and actions that extend across temporal, spatial, social, and hypotheticality distances
Regulatory Scope-Construal Level Co-Evolution

• Human phylogeny, ontogeny, and history have evolved mental and social supports for **expanding** and **contracting** regulatory scope

• **Contractive regulatory scope** is supported by low-level, concrete, individuating mental construals

• They specialize in the individuating details that afford malleable regulation in the “**here-and-now**”
Functional Construal Level Theory (fCLT)

- **Expansive regulatory scope** is supported by high-level, abstract, big-picture mental construals
- High level construals extract invariant core features that transcend the present
Mental Variants of Construal Level

- **Category - Exemplars** (Bar-Anan et al., 2007; Fujita et al., 2006)

- **Whole - Parts** (Henderson et al., 2006; Wakslak et al., 2006)

- **End - Means** (Gilead et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2008; Todorov et al., 2007)

- **Cause - Effects** (Rim et al., 2014)

- **Words - Pictures** (Amit et al., 2008)

- **Amodal, Disembodied - Modal, Embodied** (Maglio et al., 2014)
Social Variants of Construal Level

• Leader Roles vs. Follower Roles (Smith & Trope, 2006)

• Ethics vs. Pragmatics (Eyal et al., 2009)

• Global Institutions vs. Local Institutions

• Monetary vs. Barter Exchange Systems (Hansen et al., 2013)

• Art and Science vs. Entertainment and Technology
Illustrative Research

• Language for expansive communication

• Goal focus for expansive imitation

• “Why” focus for expansive social learning

• Universal rules for expansive justice decisions

• Leadership for expansive exploration
Expanding Words, Contracting Pictures

• Pictorial images are icons that physically resemble the referent object
• Words are symbols that carry the essence of the object
• Visual images support contractive communication
• Words support expansive communication

The private-ness of visualization and shared-ness of verbalization parallel their roles in self regulation

Amit, Wakslak, & Trope (PSPB, 2012)
Expansive and Contractive Communication

- Concrete language supports communication within close, small, and homogeneous groups
- Abstract language supports communication across distant, large, and heterogeneous groups (Joshi et al., *SPPS*, 2016)
- Informal (concrete) language supports contractive communication
- Polite (abstract) language supports expansive communication (Stephan et al., *JPSP*, 2008)
- Low-level for tuning-in; high-level for tuning-out (Zajonc, 1960)
Low-Level vs. High-Level Imitation

• Humans and animals learn by imitation (Bandura, 1977)

• What do we imitate, the low level or high level?

• Is imitation of distal models less literal?

• Towel-Dog experiment: Imitating a model folding a dog out of towels in 1990/2012, in NYC or LA.

Hansen, Alves, & Trope (*JEP:G*, 2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movements</th>
<th>Near (2012)</th>
<th>Distant (1990)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting with the right leg, then the left</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-degree counter-clockwise turn of the body part</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing the front legs on the right-hand side</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180-degree counter-clockwise turn of the body part</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattening the towel before starting with the head</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding the long side of the towel back and forth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattening the towel after folding the long side</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossover grip at the start of the face folding</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flapping the corner back and forth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting with the right ear, then the left</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding the first ear back and forth</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattening the towel after ear folding</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling the head from the left side first, then from the right side</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing the head in the left hand for finalizing the head</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flapping both ears forward</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning the finished dog 90 degrees counter-clockwise</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>58.94</strong></td>
<td><strong>52.88</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements</td>
<td>Near (NY)</td>
<td>Distant (LA)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting with the right leg, then the left</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-degree counter-clockwise turn of the body part</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding the long side of the towel back and forth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>52.75</td>
<td>45.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imitation of Folding a Towel Dog

Hansen et al. (2016)
Goal Errors and Movement Errors in Imitation

Ps asked to imitate a model pressing one of two keys using either the right or the left hand as fast as possible.

Model’s action were presented in an arrow pointing to either a spatially near or a spatially distant location in a picture with depth cues.

DV: Imitation errors of hand use and key press.
If NO response within 500 ms:
Error Rate in Speeded Imitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial Distance</th>
<th>Error Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximal</td>
<td>Hand: 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key: 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant</td>
<td>Hand: 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key: 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion
Expansive and Contractive Imitation

• Low-level construals subserve proximal imitation

• High-level construals subserve distal imitation
Social Learning of Goal-Pursuit

High Level “Why”
- Expansive Scope
- Both Near and Far Models

Low Level “How”
- Contractive Scope
- Near Models
Who You Learn From

Antioxidants
Who You Learn About Health From

Learning about Antioxidants:

Why antioxidants are important (High Level)

vs.

How to get antioxidants (Low Level)
Who You Learn About Health From

Learning about Antioxidants:

How interested are you in learning about (how/why) from the article published (earlier today/two months ago)?
Who You Learn About Health From

Hypothesis:

Learning about How – More interest in learning from near sources

Learning about Why – Broader scope, equal interest in learning from near and far sources
Results

Interest in Learning

Extremely Interested

Not at All Interested

How

Why

Earlier Today

Two Months Ago

Interaction: $F(1, 159) = 4.90, p = .03$
Who Do We Learn Goal Pursuit Strategies From?

Hypothesis:

Learning about dealing with Temptation/Obstacles:
  - Selection of more proximal models

Learning about pursuing the Goal:
  - Selection of a broader range of models including more distant models
Please think of and list one goal that you have (e.g. dieting, do well in school, etc.):


Please think of and list some temptations or obstacles that you face when trying to pursue the goal listed above:


In pursuing our goals, we sometimes look to others as guides and learn from how they pursue similar goals or deal with similar temptations and obstacles.

In the space below please list the initials of someone that you look to in order to learn from them about pursuing the goal you listed above:


How close do you feel to this person?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Extremely Close

Extremely Distant
Please think of and list one goal that you have (e.g. dieting, do well in school, etc.):


Please think of and list some temptations or obstacles that you face when trying to pursue the goal listed above:


In pursuing our goals, we sometimes look to others as guides and learn from how they pursue similar goals or deal with similar temptations and obstacles.

In the space below please list the initials of someone that you look to in order to learn from about dealing with temptations and obstacles to the goal you listed above:


How close do you feel to this person?

Extremely Close
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Extremely Distant
Who Do We Learn Different Self-control Strategies From?

Dealing w/ Tempt

Closeness to Model

Extremely Distant

Extremely Close

Type of Strategy

*
Expansive and Contractive Social Learning

• Low-level imitation affords learning from proximal models
• High-level imitation affords learning from distant models (Hansen et al., *JEP:G*, 2016)

• Learning the low level from oneself
• Learning the high level from increasingly distant people, times, and places (Kalkstein et al., *JPSP*, 2016)
The Scope of Justice: Expansive vs. Contractive Justice

• Contractive Justice is supported by concrete construals, promoting target-sensitive application of justice

• Expansive justice is supported by abstract construals, affording consistent application of justice principles

• Mentovich, Yudkin, Tyler, & Trope (PSPB, in press)
Trolley Problem

• Man on footbridge; kill to save five
• Described as either “man” or “prisoner”
• Construal mindset manipulation: categories/exemplars

“Will you push?”
Figure 5: Probability of the decision to ‘push’ the target from the footbridge in each of

- Low-Level Mindset
- High-Level Mindset

- Person
- Prisoner
Homogeneity

• Lineup of criminals

• “How much should each person be punished?”
Summary: Justice Without Borders

• Low-level construals promotes moral exclusion and selective application of justice

• High-level construal promotes moral inclusion and universal application of justice
Social Supports of Regulatory Scope

- Social hierarchies have evolved as social supports for expanding and contracting mental scope
- Does high (low) hierarchical position expand (contract) mental scope?
Status and Abstraction

• High hierarchical position is associated with the use of abstract language (Magee & Smith, 2013; Reyt & Wiesenfeld, 2014)

• Abstract language signals power (Wakslak, Smith, & Han, 2016)

• Abstract language may expand power holders’ mental scope

• People may demand high status holders to think abstractly
Power and Local vs. Global Maxima

• Does power facilitate leaving a local maximum in search of a remote global maximum?

• Two-dimensional search task presenting one local and one global maximum (“Two-Hill Task).

• Performed as “team leader” or “team member.”
Trials to reach global maximum

* $t(59) = 2.02, p < .05$
Total Points Earned

* \( t(59) = 2.06, p < .05 \)
Summary

• Social hierarchies have evolved to facilitate contractive and expansive regulation

• Subordinate roles focus on the “here-and-now”

• Superordinate roles prioritize goals that expand people’s mental scope
Conclusion

• Humans have evolved mental and social supports for contractive and expansive regulation

• Low-level (high-level) construals support contractive (expansive) regulation

• Concrete (abstract) construals afford malleable immersion in the present (consistent responding)
Extensions:
Contractive and Expansive Control Readiness

• Cognitive control in a neutral task (e.g., Stroop) proactively facilitates self-control in a self-relevant task (e.g., gun-tool task, overcoming food temptations) (Kleiman, Hassin, & Trope, 2014; Kleiman, Trope, & Amodio, in press)

• High-level construal may expand the scope of control readiness
• Low-level construal may contract the scope of control readiness
Thank you
Collaborators in $f$CLT

• Nira Liberman
• Alex Todorov
• Eva Walter
• Shiri Nussbaum
• Mike Sagristano
• Ken Fujita
• Marlone Henderson
• Pam Smith
• Ido Liviatan
• Alison Ledgerwood
• Cheryl Wakslak

• Yoav Bar-Anan
• Elena Stephan
• Tal Eyal
• SoYon Rim
• Elinor Amit
• Jochim Hansen
• Tali Kleiman
• Sam Maglio
• Michael Gilead
• David Kalkstein
• Daniel Yudkin