Agency and structure

The role of individual social values and material interests in changing contribution rules to, and benefits from, a collective good

van Breemen, J.A.

Link to publication

Creative Commons License (see https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/cc-licenses):
Other

Citation for published version (APA):
van Breemen, J. A. (2018). Agency and structure: The role of individual social values and material interests in changing contribution rules to, and benefits from, a collective good.
Agency and Structure: The Role of Individual Social Values and Material Interests in Changing Contribution Rules to, and Benefits from, a Collective Good

Societies heavily depend upon high levels of cooperation towards a collective. Both formal rules, i.e., explicit regulations formally enforced by a third party, and informal rules, i.e., social norms, structure those cooperative interactions of individuals within groups by guiding individual and collective action. Unfortunately, rules can allow for a breakdown of cooperation, leaving the collective worse off. Or they prescribe an unequal division of the benefits of cooperation, leaving some members of the collective with less benefits from cooperation. This dissertation investigated whether individuals attempt to change those rules, with a focus on change attempts which would ensure cooperation and an equal allocation of benefits within teams of individuals.

While earlier research typically focused on individual attempts to change the informal rules, this dissertation examined individual attempts to change the formal rules. We incorporated the influence of the informal rules on team interactions in our analyses of formal rule change attempts. We also included the heterogeneity of the individuals making up the teams in which cooperative interactions take place with respect to their social values and their interest in providing the team collective.

Our analyses thus focused on the micro level of individual interactions and institutional change. We took a bottom-up perspective by applying an experimental method. This enabled us to investigate the causal mechanisms in a laboratory-controlled setting, and to consider a formal rule both as the dependent variable to be explained and as the structure which constrains or allows for change.
Agency and Structure:
The Role of Individual Social Values and Material Interests in Changing Contribution Rules to, and Benefits from, a Collective Good

Jacqueline van Breemen
The research reported in this thesis was partially funded by a Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research grant (NWO ASPASIA-VIDI grant no. 015.007.048) awarded to Klarita Gërxhani, which is gratefully acknowledged.

Design & Layout by Grefo Prepress, Eindhoven
Printed by Drukhetnu.nl, Enschede

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by print, photo print, microfilm or any other means without prior permission of the author.
Agency and Structure: 
The Role of Individual Social Values and Material Interests 
in Changing Contribution Rules to, and Benefits from, 
a Collective Good 

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT 

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor 
an de Universiteit van Amsterdam 
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus 
prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex 
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie. 
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel 
op dinsdag 22 mei 2018, te 12.00 uur 
door Jacqueline Antoinette van Breemen 
geboren te Eindhoven
PROMOTIECOMMISSIE:

Promotores: Prof. dr. B.G.M. Volker
            *Universiteit van Amsterdam*

            Prof. dr. K. Gërxhani
            *European University Institute*

Overige leden: Prof. dr. M. Kremer
              *Universiteit van Amsterdam*

              Prof. dr. J.H. Sonnemans
              *Universiteit van Amsterdam*

              Prof. dr. G.A. van Kleef
              *Universiteit van Amsterdam*

              Prof. dr. ir. V.W. Buskens
              *Universiteit Utrecht*

              Dr. S. Vogt
              *University of Oxford*

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragswetenschappen
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................. viii

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION .......................................................... 1
1.1. Studying individual attempts to change the rules ............... 1
1.2. Formal rules structuring contributions to, and benefits from, the team collective 3
1.3. Securing cooperation and an equal allocation of benefits ...... 4
1.4. Individual motivations: self-interest and social values ......... 5
1.5. The interaction between formal rules and contribution norms ... 8
1.6. Bringing it all together: rules, norms, and individual motives ... 9
1.7. From a rule change attempt to an actual rule change .......... 10
1.8. Empirical approach .............................................. 11
1.9. Overview of the remaining chapters ................................ 17

CHAPTER 2
SECURING COOPERATION: INDIVIDUAL ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE CONTRIBUTION RULES .......................... 21
Abstract ................................................................. 21
2.1. Introduction ...................................................... 22
2.2. Social values and social norms in relation to contribution rules 24
2.2.1. A conflict between individual social values and the rules ..... 24
2.2.2. A rule change attempt is preceded by a norm change attempt ...... 26
2.2.3. Communication facilitates an actual rule change ............ 28
2.3. Method .......................................................... 29
2.4. Results .......................................................... 37
2.5. Concluding discussion .......................................... 43

CHAPTER 3
UNEQUAL BENEFITS AND COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENTS: DO PROSOCIALS MIND THE GAP? ......................... 47
Abstract ................................................................. 47
3.1. Introduction ...................................................... 48
3.2. Unequal benefits and rule change attempts .................... 50
3.2.1. Individual heterogeneity of interests in providing the team collective . 50
3.2.2. The moderating effect of individual social values ............ 51
3.3. Method .......................................................... 53
3.4. Results .......................................................... 59
3.5. Concluding discussion .......................................... 63
CHAPTER 4
WHO PAYS FOR EQUALITY? EXAMINING INDIVIDUAL
ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE UNEQUAL ALLOCATION OF BENEFITS 67
Abstract
4.1. Introduction 68
4.2. Attempts to change an unequal allocation of benefits 70
  4.2.1. The rules and norms constrain proportional contributions 70
  4.2.2. The role of individual (non)material motives 72
4.3. The influence of the decision-making structure on an actual change 74
4.4. Method 75
4.5. Results 82
4.6. Concluding discussion 91

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION 95
5.1. Individual attempts to change the rules 95
5.2. Main findings 96
  5.2.1. Individual attempts to change a contribution rule 96
  5.2.2. Individual attempts to change an unequal allocation of benefits 98
  5.2.3. An actual change of the rule 99
5.3. Limitations and directions for future research 101
5.4. The place of this research in the (institutional) literature 104

SUMMARY 109

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING 121
Relative interest of co-authors and PhD candidate
per empirical chapter 133

APPENDICES 135
  Appendix A. Translated Instructions Experiment 1 135
  Appendix B. Translated Instructions Experiment 2 149
  Appendix C. Translated Instructions Experiment 3 161

BIBLIOGRAPHY 177