

# **Mechanisms of social cohesion**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The dissertation's general topic and its relevance

Many organizations rely on team building with the presumption that this will lead to positive effects only, such as an increase in work productivity (Agarwal and Adjirackor 2016) and job satisfaction (Hashemi and Sadeqi 2016). Scandals in economic and welfare organizations as well as involving public authorities indicate otherwise – to mention just a few: “Dieselgate”, “Caritas” and the “Petrobras scandal”. These are cases of corporately committed deviance. They show that social cohesion and particularistic loyalty norms can contribute towards preventing confidants within the organization and the (work) group from externally reporting the wrongdoing. When this is prevalent in a group (or even an entire organization), it leads to a prevailing “code of silence” (cf. Hagedorn et al. 2013; Ivković and Sauerman 2013), pertaining unethical actions of fellow group members or the overall group. As illustrated by the recent scandals, it is clearly important to further explore the “dark side of groups” (Stein and Pinto 2011) – in regard to the causes, processes and outcomes.

This cumulative dissertation sheds light on group factors and processes that lead to deviant outcomes. Much of previous research on groups has focused on the positive outcomes of group factors. A prominent example for this focus of attention is research on different forms of social group cohesion: Most literature on social cohesion in groups focusses on its positive effects (e.g. Boxx, Odom, and Dunn 1991; Grant 2007; Johnson and Johnson 1991) and only a limited number of theoretical approaches and empirical studies have examined possible negative consequences (but see e.g. Boyt, Lusch, and Mejza 2005; Martins et al. 2017; Urien, Osca, and García-Salmones 2017). This dissertation follows the latter approach, assuming that group factors (e.g. norms, social cohesion and loyalty) can also lead to negative outcomes i.e. actions that are deviant from general rules and norms. The current perspective builds on research showing that group factors (such as esprit de corps and group norms) are particularistic in that they relate to the group and its members only (ingroup) (Blau, Ruan, and Ardel 1991; Parsons 1951). A strong emphasis on group norms and goals, for instance through a high esprit de corps, can cause conflicts with general norms and rules (cf. Pfarrer et al. 2008; Portes and Vickstrom 2011). For example, situations may arise in which an individual commits an act deviating from the law (crime) but acts conformal in regard to group norms (cf. Dungan, Waytz, and Young 2015; Waytz, Dungan, and Young 2013). Furthermore, for the individual, situations

of ambivalence may arise when general social factors stand in opposition to the group factors (e.g. Dungan, Waytz, and Young 2014; Weisburd et al. 2000). This ambivalence is especially relevant pertaining the particularistic group norms and universalistic rules and norms (e.g. laws) (Graeff 2012). Such propositions are relevant in regard to assessing the causes and processes leading towards deviance as various circumstances involve groups.

Embedding the topic into the field of research more generally requires briefly presenting some closely related topics. Similar to esprit de corps, some literature addresses concepts such as “in- and out-group”, commitment, group loyalty and (group-)identity (Hogg, Abrams, and Brewer 2017; Misch, Over, and Carpenter 2016) in which group norms are also of relevance (e.g. Anderson 1999; Falomir-Pichastor, Gabarrot, and Mugny 2009; Mackie 1986; Masson, Jugert, and Fritsche 2016; Sansfaçon and Amiot 2014; Tittle and Paternoster 2000). These closely related concepts refer to a group level as well as a person level. In early sociological research, social cohesion in groups (e.g. a team spirit) is already viewed in connection with social categorization as well as its protective function – for the group members (Faris 1932; Merton 1940). Furthermore, its integrative function is explicitly connected with the particularistic character of team spirit (Blau, Ruan, and Ardel 1991; Parsons 1951) because it focuses exclusively on the group’s members. Related to the aforementioned, in the field of psychological research the terms “team norms” (e.g. Staffieri 2016; Taggar and Ellis 2007) and, even more prevalently, “group norms” are applied, for example in regard to “in- and out-group” norms (e.g. Jetten, Spears, and Manstead 1996; Marques et al. 1998; McGuire, Manstead, and Rutland 2017; Wilder and Shapiro 1984), the opposing effects of particularistic group norms to general norms (McGuire, Rutland, and Nesdale 2015) and the positive effect of threatening situations on the conformity to group norms (Barth et al. 2018; Stollberg, Fritsche, and Jonas 2017).

One focus in this dissertation is placed on social cohesion in groups, such as “esprit de corps” (which is often used interchangeably with “team spirit” [e.g. by Agarwal and Adjirackor 2016; Lee et al. 2018; Manzoor et al. 2011; Ratzmann et al. 2018]). Previous literature on social cohesion in groups has applied differing concepts and each concept has also been utilized from varying perspectives (both theoretically and empirically) (see e.g. Boyt, Lusch, and Mejza 2005). To date, they are rather unclear in their conceptualization. Based on this substantial deficit, the first paper of this dissertation aims at improving the theoretical basis of esprit de corps as well as its influences on action (in regard to deviance). The second paper provides a

theoretical foundation for examining group influences (e.g. moral norms and deterrence) in the causation of crime. Both of these papers provide a foundation for future empirical studies. The third paper delivers empirical results by means of a vignette-based factorial survey experiment pertaining situations of conflict between group standards (e.g. loyalty) and general legal standards (e.g. laws). The main section of this dissertation consists of these three papers, offering insights into both theory and empirics as well as their interconnection.

In a metatheoretical sense, this dissertation utilizes the theoretical aims to put forward middle range theories (see Hedström 2008; Hedström and Ylikoski 2014). The main focus lies on causal processes of entities in generating social effects (e.g. Graeff 2016). The processes must have a regular structure (Maurer 2010). The explanation of social effects is commonly a hierarchical procedure – a combination of micro-level processes with features of macro-level conditions (Graeff 2016; Hedström and Bearman 2009). While processes are measured in the context of specific situations, they are general within the meaning of middle range theories (Hedström 2008).

The remainder of this introduction begins with a brief overview of the three papers. For each, a brief summary of the content is given, followed by information on the contribution of each co-author (when applicable). Subsequently, it is addressed in more detail how the papers are related in regard to their content. In a final step, the relevant research gaps that the papers aim to contribute towards closing are described and discussed, demonstrating the added value that this dissertation contributes to the research fields.

## **1.2 Introduction of the papers**

### **1.2.1 First paper: “Esprit de corps as a source of deviant behavior in organizations. Applying an old concept with a new livery”**

The first paper of my dissertation focusses on theory pertaining esprit de corps of groups in organizations, with the aim of explaining deviant actions in connection with social processes affected by esprit de corps. It puts forward that strong social cohesion (e.g. esprit de corps) between members of a group may heighten group norms. The approach towards this topic is from the perspective that single individuals (or groups of individuals) commit acts of deviance, therefore, exploring the validity of a standpoint scrutinizing dynamics of individuals that could

deviate. This angle focusses on the components and social processes (that come about regularly) which may influence the likelihood of deviant actions. The paper presents an overview of the previous theoretical and empirical literature on (and related to) esprit de corps, as a form of group cohesiveness. While previous literature has predominantly examined the positive effects of social cohesion (e.g. esprit de corps) in groups (e.g. Boxx, Odom, and Dunn 1991; Grant 2007), this contribution aims at a more balanced approach by considering both possible positive and negative consequences. It especially takes possible negative effects of esprit de corps into account, such as individuals remaining silent on wrongdoings of fellow group members i.e. a “code of silence” (cf. Ivković, Haberfeld, and Peacock 2016). Therefore, it considers esprit de corps as a possible antecedent of deviant behavior (such as corruption) in organizations. Additionally, the ambivalence that may arise for individuals when they would prefer to adhere to both (particularistic) group norms and (universalistic) general norms (Lüscher 2013; Merton and Barber 1963) is addressed in the framework of esprit de corps. This paper also draws some preliminary (theoretical) conclusions pertaining the implications that such aspects might have for deviance in organizations. Importantly, based on such a theoretical framework, we propose empirical studying of the causes and (social) mechanisms related to group factors (such as esprit de corps, external threats and group norms) on individuals’ likelihood of committing acts of crime, for example by means of factorial surveys (see e.g. Auspurg and Hinz [2015] for the method and Dickel and Graeff [2016] for a specific application).

This first paper is currently being published as a contribution in the book “Bribery, Fraud, Manipulation: How to Explain and to Avoid Organizational Wrongdoing?” (edited by Pohlmann, Dannecker, Dölling, and Hermann 2019). This paper was a joint contribution together with Professor Dr. Peter Graeff. We devised the topic and structure together. In the first draft, each co-author contributed two chapters: Professor Dr. Graeff wrote the introduction and conclusion, whereas I contributed the second and third chapters. The redrafts of the overall paper were conducted in consultation by both co-authors. Therefore, each of us contributed equally towards the final version. This paper is a theoretical follow-up of the presentation “Esprit de corps as a mechanism of social integration” at the symposium “Bribery, Fraud, Cheating: How to Explain and to Avoid Organizational Wrongdoing” (5.-7. October 2017, Schloss Herrenhausen, Hannover).

### **1.2.2 Second paper: “Situational Action Theory and the particular case of settings including a group”**

The second (theory) paper applies Situational Action Theory (SAT) to situations in which a group is of relevance. The question that guides the application is if Situational Action Theory is suitable for explaining group factors in the causation of crime. Wikström’s Situational Action Theory is a general theory that aims to explain all acts of deviance (for an overview see e.g. Wikström 2004, 2006, 2014, 2019). This approach is also actor-based i.e. it assumes that individuals commit acts of deviance. It is embedded into the aforementioned metatheoretical context because it places a strong focus on the processes leading from the former to the latter (see for example Wikström 2006; Wikström et al. 2010; Wikström, Mann, and Hardie 2018; Wikström and Treiber 2007). SAT postulates that all acts of crime are situational – meaning that they would be the result of an interaction between features of the person and of the setting (Wikström and Treiber 2016, 2017). Moreover, a strong emphasis is placed on the moral elements of the person (personal morality) and of the setting (moral norms) (Wikström 2004, 2006, 2014). This paper presents an overview of SAT and then, as a first step towards the application to a group setting, presents a summary of the research field on social cohesion in groups (e.g. esprit de corps/team spirit). Subsequently, SAT is (theoretically) applied to the particular case of settings including a group (of which the individual is a member). The approach assumes that under such circumstances, the group might influence the features of the setting, such as its moral norms. An assumption that would rely on the individual perceiving the group (for more details on “perception” in SAT see e.g. Wikström [2014]), which presumably should be more salient when the social cohesion (such as an esprit de corps) of the group is high. From the SAT perspective it seems reasonable to assume that, in such specific situations, the moral norms of the setting would be influenced by both the moral norms of the group and the general moral norms of the setting (e.g. laws). From this perspective, a group’s moral norms could either increase or reduce the criminogenic features of the setting, making an act of crime more or less likely. As the aforementioned imply, this paper suggests that SAT is suitable for examining group factors in the causation of crime. Furthermore, that these theoretical suppositions should be tested empirically. It also indicates that such applications of SAT would allow for including both particularistic and universalistic factors (e.g. moral norms) in the explanation of why individuals commit acts of deviance.



I authored this paper on my own. The theoretical propositions were explicated as part of the presentation “Corruption in organizations: Deviant or not?” (complementarily to an “Ethical Decision-Making” approach; see Schwartz [2016] for more details on this topic) at the interdisciplinary conference: “Corporate Crime and Illegal Party Financing in a Comparative Perspective” (19.-21. September 2019, Heidelberg).

### **1.2.3 Third paper: “Ethical decisions between the conflicting priorities of legality and group loyalty: Scrutinizing the ‘code of silence’ among volunteer firefighters with a vignette-based factorial survey”**

The third paper that is part of this dissertation centers on the empirical results of a vignette-based factorial survey on situational (group) factors that influence volunteer firefighters’ adherence to a “code of silence” pertaining a fellow team member’s wrongdoing. It appears probable that during their assignments, volunteers may sometimes encounter situations in which they have to decide between acting in accordance with legal standards or group standards, such as loyalty, for the protection of the group. In this study, we examine the code of silence, an issue that is usually considered in literature on deviant behavior in business and administrative institutions such as enterprises or the police (e.g. Donner, Maskaly, and Thompson 2018; Ivković and Sauermaun 2013). Opposite actions to complying with a “code of silence” are usually referred to as “whistleblowing” (e.g. in Dungan, Waytz, and Young 2015). We show that the “code of silence” can also be prevalent in volunteer groups.

The paper first presents previous theoretical and empirical research on the relevant topics, beginning with ethical decision-making (e.g. Westmarland 2005) and proceeding to issues such as the conflicting priorities of group loyalty and general legal standards (e.g. Dungan, Young, and Waytz 2019), groups in threatening situations (e.g. Lanzetta et al. 1954) as well as the (excessive) use of force (e.g. Harlow 1985), which constitute the basis for the four hypotheses that are proposed. Based on the previous literature we hypothesize that threats to the group increase group loyalty in general, resulting in negative outcomes such as a higher probability for deviant behavior in the form of maintaining silence on fellow group members’ deviant actions (code of silence). We further propose that the more forceful the team behavior, the higher the likelihood of adherence to general legal standards (not sticking to the code of silence). We then forward the assumption that the excessive use of force of a fellow team

member increases adherence to general legal standards (not complying with the code of silence). Furthermore, because group influences are often studied in conjunction with work effectiveness (e.g. in Johnson and Johnson 1991), we also include the hypothesis that higher work effectiveness, in the form of faster team planning, leads to a higher likelihood of acting in accordance with general legal standards (not abiding by a code of silence). This is followed by a description of the study's design and methodology. The study is a factorial survey experiment (Auspurg and Hinz 2015) – conducted with volunteer firefighters in Germany. As an instrument, this offers many benefits that are particularly relevant for the issues examined in the current study, such as the closeness to real life situations (see Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015) and a lower social desirability bias during the inquiry of deviant behavior and other sensitive issues (see Auspurg et al. 2015). The successful usage of factorial surveys in previous studies on deviant behavior further shows its suitability for scrutinizing such topics (for example by Dickel and Graeff 2018; Graeff et al. 2014).

In order to test the hypotheses, we designed a situation in which volunteers had to choose an action in accordance with legal or group standards i.e. they were asked to report how likely they would be to externally report the deviant action of a fellow group member (dependent variable). We constructed a realistic situation in which the overall team is threatened to an experimentally varied extent (independent variable). We also include the following varied independent variables: Forceful team behavior, (excessive) use of force of a fellow team member and how much faster the team planning is.

Subsequently in the paper, the results of the empirical analysis are presented and discussed. The results (significantly) support the first three hypotheses whereas they do not confirm the fourth hypothesis (the effect is in the proposed direction but not significant). Therefore, our study offers support for the proposition that the higher the threat to the group, the higher the likelihood of deviant behavior for the protection of the group (such as adhering to a code of silence). Moreover, the higher the forcefulness of the team or the more excessive the use of force of a fellow team member, the more probable it becomes that the individual will act in accordance with general legal standards (such as whistleblowing when other members behave deviantly to general rules and norms). However, our results do not support an influence of team effectiveness on the likelihood of individual's deviant behavior.

This paper is the first to address such issues in regard to volunteers. A major surplus is that it shows how situations of threat to the (volunteer) group may increase a code of silence. In

relation to connected topics, such as ethical decision-making and group loyalty, this offers important insights into the drivers of deviant behavior (e.g. not reporting wrongdoings) in groups that may be exposed to threats during the completion of their (work) assignments.

This is a co-authored paper together with Professor Dr. Peter Graeff. We constructed the vignettes used in the survey together and I conducted the survey in its implementation and the entry of the data. In the first version of the paper, I wrote the introduction as well as the second chapter. The third and fourth chapters were written jointly and the conclusion was written by Professor Dr. Peter Graeff. Both of us contributed towards the redrafts that led to the final version. This paper is submitted to the *European Sociological Review*.

### **1.3 Relationship of the papers**

After the introduction to the overall topic of this dissertation and the three papers in the preceding chapters, this section will delineate how they are related. There are two types of connection: The first relates to common topics whereas the second pertains to the metatheoretical suppositions. In regard to the former, three research themes are central to the overall dissertation: (1) group factors in processes affecting acts of deviance, (2) situations of conflict between group and general norms and (3) groups' social cohesion and its consequences. Pertaining the latter (the metatheoretical premises), three commonalities of the papers exist in that all of them are (4) interested in causes and processes, (5) actor-based perspectives and (6) middle range theories. Collectively, these commonalities clearly show the shared general thread in this dissertation which also reflects the research aim (see chapter *1.1 The dissertation's general topic and its relevance*).

### **1.4 How the dissertation fills previous gaps in research**

As regards the overall dissertation, research gaps are addressed with the goal of contributing towards filling these. They are closely related to the common topics spanning the papers (stated above in chapter *1.3 Relationship of the papers*). More specifically, in regard to social cohesion, the dissertation contributes towards alleviating the lack of consistent concepts (as explicated in section *1.1 The dissertation's general topic and its relevance*). Furthermore, it goes beyond the focus of most previous theoretical conceptualizations and empirical studies on the positive consequences of social group cohesion (e.g. esprit de corps), focusing primarily

on its negative effects and as a factor leading towards situations of ambivalence (for more details on this issue see chapter 1.1 *The dissertation's general topic and its relevance*). Such an approach contributes towards a more balanced field of research pertaining groups' social cohesion by including such possibilities of impacts on processes leading to acts of deviance. Moreover, there is generally a very limited amount of research on the group factors leading towards crime. However, there are some exceptions, such as a study by Sansfaçon and Amiot (2014) showing that illegal behavior is more likely to be condoned when it is considered as normative within the group. Also, empirical results by Haarr (1997) substantiate that, for the case of police departments, officers with high commitment show more deviance for the benefit of the organization through reinterpreting or breaking rules. The second example is not directly focused on the (work) group but rather oriented more towards the organization (e.g. Pinto, Leana, and Pil [2008] show that deviance can be carried out to benefit the organization). Nevertheless, it illustrates two important issues: Firstly, that there appear to be social factors which influence actors' likelihood of deviant behavior (in organizations). Secondly, that there is not a sufficient, precise focus on the (work) group factors that may be relevant components of such processes. The three papers in this dissertation aim to be a contribution towards filling this gap and taking first steps towards extensively examining possible group influences on wrongdoing. Such factors include threats (e.g. at the work place), social cohesion (as addressed above) and group norms. This research also adds to related fields, for instance research on the "code of silence". In line with the statement by Dungan, Waytz, and Young (2014: 99) that "corrupt behaviour is not necessarily solely selfish; it can be other-serving towards the members of one's own group" this dissertation contributes towards explanations of individuals' wrongdoings for the benefit of the overall group.

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## **Second paper:**

### **Situational Action Theory and the particular case of settings including a group**

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#### **Abstract**

Situational Action Theory (SAT) postulates that the personal crime propensity and the setting's criminogenic features are direct causes of crime. This perspective also places a central focus on the moral factors involved. The moral norms of settings have not yet been exhaustively examined in regard to the facets that may influence them. This theoretical article applies SAT to the particular case of settings including a group. Building upon previous literature on social cohesion in groups (such as team spirit/esprit de corps), the group present in the setting presumably is more likely to be perceived by the individual if such group cohesiveness is high. When perceived, the moral norms of the group and the deterrence should have an influence through becoming part of the setting in the causation of crime, according to SAT. This application suggests that SAT is a fruitful approach for explaining the impacts of groups on crime.

#### **Keywords:**

Situational Action Theory, deviance, groups, esprit de corps, particularism

## 1 Introduction

The Situational Action Theory (SAT) is an actor-based theory of crime. As a general theory it is applicable to all kinds of crime. Since its notion refers to individual actions, the question arises: How can Situational Action Theory (SAT) explain the corporately committed crimes of group members? The importance of this question can be illustrated by Kammigan et al. (2019), whose application of SAT shows that being a member of a group which condones drugs can increase the likelihood of overreporting drug use (in a survey). Such results in regard to the reporting of deviance (e.g. drug use), indicate that behavior which is deviant according to general norms may be stated, even exaggerated, by members of groups when it corresponds with the group's norms. In Situational Action Theory (SAT) "The moral norms of a setting will vary in the degree to which they correspond with the rules of conduct stated in law [...]" (Wikström et al., 2012: 16). This draws attention to the issue that in some settings, the moral norms may be more than exclusively general norms. On the basis of this supposition, for settings including a group, it might be presumed that group norms play a role. Such group norms could support the general rules and norms (e.g. laws) or be crime conducive.

In SAT, the setting is the individual's immediate environment, including other persons. According to Wikström (e.g. 2004) settings can vary in their criminogeneity i.e. in how conducive they are to a specific crime. It is postulated that the moral norms are a central aspect of the criminogenic features of the setting (e.g. Wikström and Treiber, 2007). Most empirical studies utilizing SAT assume settings with moral rules that are in accordance with the general rules and norms (e.g. laws) of a society (Schulz, 2018) and, therefore, crime prohibitive. There are some exceptions such as those mentioned in Wikström et al. (2012) as well as Cochran (2016). Furthermore, a number of researchers have addressed this aspect and made a call for research on possible crime-conducive moral norms of the setting (see e.g.

Jordanoska, 2018; Pauwels, 2018). Despite this, the field of research is not yet exhaustive, especially in regard to theoretical discussions on particular applications. Such a specific application could be, for instance, considering settings with specific social features within the framework of SAT. Hardie's (2017, 2019) research, for instance, shows that the (perceived) physical and psychological presence of parents can reduce the likelihood of adolescent misconduct. The social bonds between adolescents and parents can increase the salience of the latter's (typically law-conform) moral norms in a setting and, therefore, their impact on the adolescents' behavior (Hardie, 2017, 2019). When there is high social cohesion (e.g. in the form of an esprit de corps) in a group, strong social bonds also exist between its members. Therefore, I similarly assume that the perception of one's group in a setting can influence the (perceived) moral norms and deterrence.

In this context, the question arises, how the moral norms of the setting might be constituted (how criminogenic they are) in settings in which several moral rules are present and perceived by the individual. It appears likely, that there are both (perceived) general norms as well as particularistic ones in at least some situations. How would the moral rules of the setting be in such an instance? It seems likely that they would be constituted of both universalistic as well as particularistic norms. In order to elucidate this, it is expedient to apply SAT to a particular setting in which both forms of norms are present and likely to be perceived by the individual. As a first step towards this, a theoretical application will be presented and discussed, using the example of a group directly present in the setting (and of which the individual is a member). In accordance with SAT, the necessary condition for this theoretical approach to be applicable is that the individual must perceive the group in the setting. A theoretical assumption which shall be forwarded is that the perception of the group in the setting, as well as the strength of the norms' influence, should be higher for

groups with strong social (group) cohesion – such as a team spirit/esprit de corps. The current application utilizes previous literature on social cohesion in groups, focusing on esprit de corps (e.g. Boyt et al., 2005), as an application in which individuals necessarily perceive themselves as group members and feel the influence of the group setting's conditions. From the perspective of this theoretical approach, esprit de corps is expedient – for settings in which groups are present – for looking at the moral rules of the setting. This application of SAT to settings with a group also follows the call for research by Pauwels (2018: 143): “Future studies should pay attention to other setting characteristics that have relevance, [...] future studies might also want to look at [...] aspects such as the presence of deviant peer groups”.

The ensuing sections proceed as follows: First, an overview of Situational Action Theory will be given. Second, the literature on social cohesion in groups (with a special focus on esprit de corps) as well as empirical results on its positive and negative effects are presented. Third, the SAT is applied to the specific case of settings including a group (of which the individual is a member). Finally, the implications and theoretical utility of such an application of SAT are reflected on in the conclusion section.

## **2 Situational Action Theory**

SAT is considered to be a general theory of crime because it intends to explain all acts of crime (Wikström, 2006). According to SAT, “Crime may be defined as an act of breaking a moral rule defined in criminal law” (Wikström, 2006: 63). A focus lies on acts that break laws (Wikström, 2006). However, SAT assumes that laws are merely one specific type of moral rule. The explanatory process for both *why* people break laws and *why* they break (other) moral rules is the same. It follows that SAT is also a theory of moral action (Wikström, 2010;



Wikström et al., 2012). The specific moral rules that are relevant for a specific action may differ. It is not the type of action but that the action breaks the law which makes it a crime (Wikström, 2010). According to SAT “[...] all crimes, in all places, and at all times have in common, the breach of a moral rule (defined in law)” (Wikström, 2010: 216).

This section explicates SAT’s central concepts and processes. The theory places a strong emphasis on *moral rules*, stating that these explicitly prescribe the “right” and the “wrong” course of action in a given situation (Wikström et al., 2012). It assumes that moral rules differ from each other in how generally applicable they are across settings (Wikström, 2006). In addition to its focus on the role of moral in the explanation of how crimes happen, *controls* are relevant in SAT. The suggestion is that when an individual perceives crime as a possible action, he/she can habitually commit a crime or deliberate on whether or not to commit a crime. The latter occurs when the guiding moral rules in a specific situation are in conflict with one another (Wikström et al., 2012; Wikström and Treiber, 2017).

According to Wikström (e.g. 2006), the *setting* is a subsection of the environment and always refers to what a person is immediately exposed to, as his/her senses have access to it; “*setting* is the part of the environment to which the individual is directly exposed and reacts to (e.g., other persons, objects, and events)” (Wikström, 2004: 18). When individuals take part in settings, they necessarily perceive specific alternatives for acting whilst exposed to a particular motivator (temptation or provocation). From this viewpoint, the choice that an individual then makes is based on these perceived alternatives (Wikström et al., 2018). It follows that a *situation* is seen as consisting of the perception of action alternatives as well as the choice-process. In accordance with this assumption, a situation is generally defined as the result of an interaction between features of the setting and of the person. This interac-

tion between the setting and the person is what presumably leads to the individual perceiving (and choosing) particular action alternatives (e.g. Wikström, 2004). Therefore, it is of interest to the theory, what combinations of which features of the person and the setting cause particular actions (such as acts of crime) (Wikström et al., 2012; Wikström and Treiber, 2016).

As previously addressed, SAT incorporates the elements “person” and “setting” into its conception of situations. These categories lead to two constructs: *crime propensity* (of the person) and *criminogeneity* (of the setting). Both of these vary (Wikström, 2014), depending on the exact composition (e.g. the perceived motivation, interactions between personal and environmental features) that leads to the situational action.

In SAT, the personal element *crime propensity* is the predisposition to perceive and then choose to commit an act of crime (as opposed to non-criminal action alternatives) (e.g. Wikström, 2004; Wikström et al., 2012; Wikström and Svensson, 2010). A tendency which appears to be dependent upon how strongly a person’s *morality* and his/her abilities in respect to *self-control* facilitate breaking the law (Wikström et al., 2012). Personal morals are defined as “value—based rules of conduct about what it is right or wrong to do in a particular circumstance” (Wikström and Treiber, 2017: 78). According to Wikström et al. (2012) the *morality* of a person is dependent on their personal rules of how to act appropriately, furthermore, on their emotional intensity of how important following the corresponding moral rule is. The theory posits that while personal morality already plays a main part in the perception-process, self-control becomes relevant in the choice-process and *only* when there is a conflict between the person’s morality and the moral norms of the setting (Wikström, 2014; Wikström and Treiber, 2007). Moreover, self-control is defined as the person’s (when affected by temptations or provocations) ability to make the choice to act according to

his/her personal morality (Wikström, 2004). There are two facets of a person's self-control: (1) their general ability (executive capability) to exercise self-control and (2) the exercising of self-control in a specific situation (Wikström and Treiber, 2007). The former implies more stability whereas the latter could vary due to situational differences.

The *criminogeneity/criminogenic features* (of a setting) refers to the degree to which the setting supports acts of crime through facilitating the breaking of law. Settings are termed criminogenic if they have a tendency to encourage acts of crime and some settings presumably have a higher criminogeneity than others (Wikström, 2004; Wikström et al., 2012). This is constituted by the setting's *moral norms* and their enforcement, the second of which affects *deterrence* (Wikström et al., 2012). Furthermore, in the presence of specific motivations the moral norms of a setting guide how people should conduct themselves (Wikström and Treiber, 2017). Moral contexts differ between settings i.e. the moral norms of the setting and their enforcement as well as sanctioning would differ (e.g. Wikström, 2004, 2006, 2014; Wikström and Treiber, 2007). Furthermore, settings vary in regard to the extent that their moral norms correspond with the law (Wikström et al., 2012). Deterrence is defined as "[...] the avoidance of breaking a moral rule (committing an act of crime) because of the fear of consequences" (Wikström, 2008: 347). This is based on the *perceived* likelihood of interventions (and concomitant possible penalties such as formal punishments and social sanctions) for acts that break the law or the specific moral norms of the setting (Wikström, 2004, 2008, 2014), such as perceived surveillance (through e.g. the police, private security personnel or security cameras) and possible punishments. Deterrence only plays an active role in an act of crime when the individual perceives the act as possible and deliberates, whether or not to act in such a way (Wikström, 2006). Deterrence may prevent something that would otherwise have taken place (Wikström, 2008).

The situational model, with its interactions, is fundamental to SAT. A person's crime propensity and the setting's degree of criminogeneity are central. It follows that personal morality and self-control interact with the moral norms and deterrence of the setting, leading to an act (of crime); "When dealing with action the outcome always depends on their *interaction*" (Wikström, 2004: 9). In SAT, the "Perception of action alternatives and the process of choice are the suggested key *situational mechanisms* that link an individual and his environment (settings) to his actions (inactions)" (Wikström, 2006: 92). This situational *perception-choice process* shows mechanisms which may lead to an action (crime/no crime) of specific types of individuals in specific types of settings. The situational model hypothesizes that "[...] for any particular motivation (temptation or provocation), the resulting action (A) is an outcome of a perception–choice process (→) that results from the interaction (×) between relevant personal propensities (P) and exposure to relevant setting inducements (E)" (Wikström and Treiber, 2016: 430). The perception-choice model presents a structure of how (1) motivation starts the action-process, (2) the moral filter presents alternatives for actions and (3) controls have an effect on the choice-process (if there is a conflict between the personal morality and the moral norms of the setting) (Wikström, 2014; Wikström and Treiber, 2016).

SAT also addresses the role of systematic (social) features and people's life stories. It asserts that these factors are not direct causes of crime but may be the causes behind those named in the theory. In this sense, they "[...] may be regarded as the 'causes of the causes'" (Wikström, 2006: 62).

SAT is embedded in the empirical context of the (PADS+) Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (see e.g. Wikström et al., 2012). SAT has been tested in numerous empirical studies on specific elements of its models (e.g. Hirtenlehner and Hardie,

2016) and some on the overall perception-choice model (e.g. Sattler et al., 2018) – for an overview of the studies published between 2006 and 2015, see Pauwels et al. (2018). It has also recently been applied to “white-collar crime” (see Craig, 2019; Jordanoska, 2018). A majority of applications have focused on school or university students and, concomitantly, on settings in which these tend to spend time. In such an application of SAT, Cochran (2016) studies elements of academic settings that may be conducive to cheating and the results indicate that individuals who feel pressured towards deviance by their friends as well as those who are members of more than the average number of student groups/organizations are more likely to be involved in academic dishonesty. Similarly, I am suggesting an application of SAT to settings including a group of which the individual is a member, assuming that the group may have an influence on the setting’s criminogeneity. This requires first explicating the background of previous research regarding groups that is of relevance for viewing such group influences through the lens of the setting (in SAT). In this context, it seems reasonable to primarily consider social cohesion (such as a team spirit/esprit de corps) and its influence on individual group members (e.g. pertaining the group’s moral norms).

### **3 Esprit de corps**

The previous literature on *esprit de corps* has two evident opportunities for refinement: Some inconsistency pertaining its definition as well as (in some instances) the absence of a demarcation between esprit de corps and closely related concepts, such as social cohesion and team spirit (as addressed by Graeff and Kleinewiese [2020]). This section provides an overview of the relevant previous literature, showing that in spite of the aforementioned limitations, social cohesion in groups (e.g. esprit de corps) appears to be a very expedient concept for approaching group processes and effects. One reason for this assumption is that

such concepts have been theoretically discussed and empirically examined from diverse viewpoints (by different research fields). Nevertheless, throughout the literature on social cohesion, cohesiveness is considered to be based on the members' attraction and identification towards the group (Boyt et al., 2005). Esprit de corps has been described as a subtype of cohesion (containing a high degree of team spirit) (Koys and DeCotiis, 1991). This perspective exemplifies possible limits within current literature pertaining the differentiation between esprit de corps and team spirit. A substantial amount of research applies both concepts interchangeably: Some cases present them as directly equivalent (e.g. Pahi et al., 2016; Ratzmann et al., 2018) whereas others alternate between them while referring to the same concept (e.g. Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Shoham et al., 2005). As previously indicated in this section, this "interchangeability" can be seen as a lack in regard to the clear delineation (and, therefore, differentiation) of esprit de corps and team spirit. However, it is also possible to take a more positive stance and evaluate this as an indication that the concepts may be very similar to each other, as forms of social cohesion in groups.

The term esprit de corps is historically traceable back to military roots. Rogg (2004) maintains that in the eighteenth century it was ascribed to nobles (especially those engaged in military work) as representation of an exclusive upper class. In late nineteenth century German military, it apparently meant having a special nobleness of heart (Elbe, 2004). The Brockhaus (1911) states that it is a "corps spirit, in corporations, especially the military, the most active participation of each individual towards the common good of all, [...] under the setting aside/disregard of all egoistic-personal considerations". From the perspective of more recent military literature, social cohesion is commonly divided into subtypes, such as horizontal bonding (direct colleagues) and vertical bonding (superior to subordinates) (Stewart, 1988), or amongst leaders and amongst members of a squad (Mael, 1989).

Fayol (1949) uses esprit de corps to refer to employees' coherence and accord. Esprit de corps has been the focus of both organizational and military literature (see overview by Boyt et al. [2005]). It is assumed that esprit de corps is oriented towards group goals. Jones and James (1979) describe workgroup esprit de corps as a group level form of social cohesion. Furthermore, it looks probable that the esprit de corps of a group increases when group members face hostile surroundings (Boyt et al., 2005). Esprit de corps is generally ascribed a particularistic character: It is exclusively oriented towards the group's members (Blau et al., 1991; Parsons, 1951).

Research on concepts of group cohesion has predominantly placed an emphasis on its positive consequences. Cohesion within groups is commonly associated with positive (work) environments, such as organizational excellence and high adherence to group norms (e.g. Boxx et al., 1991; Grant, 2007; Johnson and Johnson, 1991). Identification with the particular group (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and how attractive a member finds the group (e.g. Back, 1951) are believed to be of relevance. Esprit de corps is also prevalently examined in light of its positive effects (in organizational studies e.g. Halpin and Croft, 1962; Jones and James, 1979; Koys and DeCotiis, 1991). Specifically, it is suggested that (a strong) esprit de corps may increase work performance (e.g. Flood and Klausner, 2018; Turner, 1933).

While, overall, most literature on esprit de corps is concerned primarily with its positive outcomes, currently, the focus on possible negative effects of esprit de corps is gaining more attention. As supported by findings of Urien et al. (2017), the related concept group cohesion appears to have a positive effect on job satisfaction, however, the results also indicate that group cohesion seems to increase the negative impact that role ambiguity has on job satisfaction. Furthermore, a strong esprit de corps may reduce people's disposition to question or criticize other ingroup members' standpoints (Ratzmann et al., 2018). Moreover,

there is some support for the possibility that high social cohesion may be connected to dissociation from people who are not members of the group (Waytz and Epley, 2012) and, in consequence, the likelihood of conflicts between groups might be heightened (Meier and Hinsz, 2004). These studies indicate that strong social cohesion – for instance a high esprit de corps within a workgroup – in groups could have negative effects. In front of the backdrop of these findings, it seems that social cohesion in groups can deliver a contribution in a theoretical approach towards the effects of groups in regard to crime.

Literature has also examined esprit de corps' relationship to norms and rules. Take for instance an assumption derived by Dungan et al. (2014) which proposes that a person's morality distinguishes between moral norms at the level of the group and generally applicable moral norms. In regard to the current research interest of applying SAT to settings including a group, an example which indicates such a relationship can be that a group's particularistic norms and rules may come into conflict with universalistic norms and rules; the conflicting norms/rules may simultaneously have an effect on the individual (cf. Graeff, 2012; Pfarrer et al., 2008). In such cases, he/she would presumably have the inclination to adhere to both of the opposing norms (Lüscher, 2013; Merton and Barber, 1963). These competing effects may lead to a trade-off between salient norms (Graeff and Kleinewiese, 2020). A strengthening of esprit de corps could have negative effects because it may intensify the conflicts between group and general norms (cf. Waytz et al., 2013). Similar to such findings regarding the connection of esprit de corps and group norms, it is feasible that esprit de corps influences the individual's perception of a group (and its moral norms) of which he/she is a member. Therefore, a stronger esprit de corps could be accompanied by an increase in the influence of the group's particularistic moral norms. Considering these propositions, SAT seems expedient for being applied to the specific case of settings including groups.



#### **4 Groups as part of the setting in SAT**

According to Warr (1996), research in the twentieth century has led to the group nature of deviant behavior being well established because offenders tend to commit criminal acts in groups. Furthermore: “[...] when a situation primes a sense of in-group cohesion or out-group antipathy, this also may lower thresholds for the collective crime under consideration” (McGloin and Rowan, 2015: 491). From the SAT perspective, groups that are part of the setting could be considered in their influence on the likelihood of an act of crime being committed in such specific situations.

In SAT, the individual is connected with the environment by what he/she actually perceives of it (Wikström, 2004, 2006; Wikström et al., 2018). Therefore, within this theoretical framework, it appears reasonable that the esprit de corps of a group which is present in the setting (and of which the individual is a member) would increase the perception of the group and its moral norms (as well as deterrence). From this perspective, the current section proposes that – in SAT for the case of settings including groups – the moral norms of the group may contribute to the moral norms of the setting. Following this line of argumentation, the setting including a group would have moral norms that could be influenced by both the group norms and the general norms and rules (e.g. laws). Additionally, deterrence of the setting might be constituted of both the group deterrence and the general deterrence. Therefore, I suggest that in this specific type of setting, the group (norms and deterrence) could influence the moral context (of the setting).

It seems feasible that strong group morality may influence individual members pertaining acts of crime, as similarly indicated by Dungan et al. (2014: 109) for the case of cor-

ruption: “[...] group-based morals may also encourage individuals to condone corrupt behaviour”. Moreover, Pinto et al. (2008) reason that the relationship between the individual (level) and the group (level) appears to be important for explaining corruption. In close relation to these suggestions, I propose that examining possible impacts of groups in a setting where they are present is relevant for explaining particular acts of deviance in specific situations. The previous overviews of the SAT and the concept esprit de corps have laid a foundation for this step. This theoretical perspective aims at an application of SAT to the specific case of crime in group settings, with a focus on the possible connection of esprit de corps and group norms with the moral norms of the setting. As groups may be conceived of as a part of the immediate environment (the setting), the assumption is forwarded that groups can have an influence in the causation of crime, from the perspective of SAT.

Coleman (1990) posits that norms do not occur when the socially determined right to act in a given manner lies with the person, instead, he asserts that norms require this right to be held by other people. It seems reasonable to suggest that norms enforce the external accountability (by others) of an individual regarding the adherence to their principles (cf. Brennan et al., 2013). Presumably, norms can be highly relevant for explaining acts of crime because, considering crime to be a subtype of acts of deviance, general norms must exist for the individual to deviate from them. For instances of corruption, Graeff (2005) states that corrupt acts can be controlled by norms of corruption, which explicitly define how the individual should proceed. SAT describes moral norms as mutually held rules regarding action (Wikström and Treiber, 2017). For particular settings, they specify what the right or wrong course of action is, furthermore, “They are prescriptions held by others for what are acceptable reactions and responses to specific motivators” (Wikström, 2019: 270). Therefore, from this perspective the “moral” components of the person and the setting are defined by

SAT's emphasis on rules regarding what right and wrong action is. While social norms can (depending on the viewpoint) be attitudes that some literature links to behavior (see Bicchieri et al., 2018), the moral elements of SAT clearly focus on the action.

For the specific case of settings including a group, it seems reasonable to consider the central propositions of SAT, as presented in chapter 2 *Situational Action Theory*. These posit the setting (its criminogeneity) and the person (his/her crime propensity) as the direct causes of crime, assuming that the criminogeneity of a setting would consist of *moral norms* and *deterrence*, while the crime propensity of a person would consist of *personal morality* and *self-control* (see e.g. Wikström, 2014). In the suggested perception-choice process<sup>1</sup>, a (perceived) motivation – temptation or provocation – initiates the process. The moral aspects then interact in the “moral filter” and the control aspects might interact in the “controls” (Wikström, 2014; Wikström et al., 2012; Wikström and Treiber, 2017). To illustrate these propositions for the case of settings including a group, of which the individual is a member, the following hypothetical scenario is described and explicated: A moral norm of a group of adolescents with a strong esprit de corps could be that stealing is a good way of getting money. Whenever the group is present in the setting and perceived by the individual (a member of the group), this moral group norm as well as the general rules and norms would constitute the moral norms of the setting. Under such circumstances, when the individual is confronted with a motivation these moral norms of the setting would interact with the personal morality of the individual in the moral filter and influence, whether or not the individual would perceive an act of crime as an option. If not, this would lead to a “no crime” action. If they do perceive crime as an option, this would either habitually lead to an act of

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<sup>1</sup> For details on the perception-choice process in SAT see e.g. Wikström (2014).

crime or to a deliberation in which the controls (self-control and deterrence, the latter constituted of the general deterrence and the group deterrence) would come into play and either lead to a “crime” or “no crime” action, such as stealing from a stranger in a public space. The influence of the group norms would be in opposition to the general norms (in the form of laws) and could be in accordance or in conflict with and individual’s personal morality.

This article places an emphasis on the moral elements of SAT because the theory proposes them to be of primary importance (see e.g. Wikström, 2006). Nevertheless, it assumes that the control elements may also play a role in the causation of crime: “**Controls** influence the *process of choice* when there is conflicting rule-guidance (regarding perceived action alternatives)” (Wikström et al., 2012: 23). In the currently proposed application of SAT, this premise would also apply for deterrence of settings that contain generally applicable norms as well as group norms. This might include presence and/or surveillance as well as possible sanctions both in regard to the general norms and rules (through e.g. policemen) and the group norms (through members of the group). Likewise, Wikström (2015) states that deterrence may also enforce criminogenic norms (in addition to non-criminogenic norms). Therefore, it might be suggested that the aforementioned would be conceivable both for settings in which the group norms conform to the general norms and for settings in which they differ. Consider, for instance, the following scenario which exemplifies the aforementioned propositions: A policeman sees that a fellow group member has excessively used violence (beyond what would be justifiable according to general rules). His personal morality prescribes that it is right to report colleagues’ misconduct during work assignments. His workgroup has a strong esprit de corps and moral norms which prescribe not reporting the excessive use of

violence of a fellow group member to a supervisor (conflicting rule-guidance). In deliberation, he may be affected by his self-control and the group deterrence (e.g. are other members present?) as well as the general deterrence (e.g. external special investigators that are present) as “deterrence of the setting”.

A theoretical surplus could be seen in the current approach’s connection to previous literature on the universalism-particularism differentiation (see e.g. Blau, 1962; Blau et al., 1991; De Blasio et al., 2019). It seems reasonable to suggest that this perspective is relevant for the presumed importance of moral norms in regard to actions as well as the (as shown in chapter 3 *Esprit de corps*) suggested influences of social group cohesion (e.g. in the form of an esprit de corps) on individual members. These can be considered in the framework of the differentiation between universalism and particularism in which the former is assumed to refer to common judgements shared by all individuals of a given society, independent of their personal conditions, and the latter is posited to indicate those judgements based on individuals’ personal circumstances (Blau, 1962). This perspective also foregrounds a presumed relevance of such judgements (both universalistic and particularistic) to actions. Blau (1962: 166) generally posits that “Universalistic standards produce social differentiation” whereas “Particularistic standards typically produce segregating boundaries in the social structure”. This position expresses the particularism of (in)group standards which can be explicated, for instance, by standards as prejudices: “A prejudice shared by all, even the minority in question, reflects a universal standard; only a bias confined to the ingroup reflects a particularistic one” (Blau, 1962: 165). Furthermore, one might even suggest that the differentiation between the ingroup and the outgroup is central to the definition of particularism: “[...] particularism refers to the fact that people's orientations toward the ingroup differ from those toward the outgroup [...]” (Blau, 1962: 164). It follows that from this theoretical

perspective, the universalism-particularism differentiation is that features (e.g. esprit de corps, norms) referring to the group and its members are considered as particularistic whereas features that refer to all individuals of the general society (e.g. general rules and norms) would be categorized as universalistic. In the current framework of applying SAT to the specific circumstance of settings including a group, this could imply that both universalistic moral norms and deterrence as well as the group's particularistic moral norms and deterrence may contribute towards the influences of the setting on action. It is proposed that the group norms may prescribe what "right" or "wrong" action is in a given situation, according to the group. This should not be taken to indicate that the group's norms are postulated to be contrary to general norms and rules (e.g. laws), however, they might be. Based on the literature pertaining particularism and universalism (Blau, 1962), it looks probable that the general norms and rules could not be particularistic because they are potentially aimed at all members of the entire society. The (general) moral rules are assumed to include formalized rules (e.g. laws) but also informal social norms (e.g. not smoking near children; not pushing or skipping ahead in a queue) (cf. Ehrlich and Ziegert, 2017). In the sense of these suggestions, it seems probable that when the general norms and rules are highly effective, the moral norms of the setting should closely correspond with them. It is probable that at least some influence on the setting's moral norms would be present in the form of laws. The moral norms of the setting (when groups are present and perceived) might be influenced by both the general norms and the group norms, showing that under such circumstances groups may play a role in the causation of crime. In regard to the presumed influence of groups on acts (of crime) conducted by individual members, SAT is a theory of crime causation that has been shown to be suitable for a (theoretical) explanation.

## 5 Conclusions and future research

As the theoretical application pertaining group crime shows, the actor-based approach of SAT can be utilized through including group influences in the framework of one of its two direct causes of crime: the setting. Furthermore, as part of the setting, groups could influence the perception-choice process which accounts for the possible steps that result in an action (either a crime or not a crime). The setting including a group presents a specific case of settings in which the moral rules may be affected by both universalistic and particularistic norms. Therefore, it is a very specific case that, nevertheless, may illustrate a more general reason why settings can vary in their criminogeneity. Consider, for example, such propositions in regard to corruption: For some situations which can lead to an act of corruption there may be a criminogenic setting, influenced by particularistic moral norms which would be highly salient and, hence, increase criminogenic features of the setting (even though the universalistic norms and rules [e.g. laws] would also be present). Such particularistic moral norms might be those of a group with strong social cohesion, even an esprit de corps. As put by an expert on corruption: “[...] It is a sense of community, a feeling of togetherness, a confirmed fellowship, the pursuit of a common goal, [...] so that there is a communal spirit, because these actions allow a better financial endowment for everyone” (Campbell and Göritz, 2014: 304).

To illustrate the expedience of the current endeavor, consider the following two scenario variations, focusing on the moral components: An individual happens upon a situation in which it would be possible to perceive robbing a purse that is not being closely watched by its owner (temptation). In the first variation of the scenario, the setting’s (perceived) moral norms would comply with the general laws, dictating that stealing is illegal (“wrong”). If the individual’s personal moral norms were to dictate that stealing is a “wrong” action,

then he/she would not be likely to act as a thief (no crime) in this situation by taking the purse. However, consider a second variation of this scenario in which the individual is the member of a gang (group) with moral norms which dictate that stealing is a “right” action. Keeping all other features of the scenario the same as before, if he/she were to perceive the gang (group) because of other gang members present in the setting, this should increase the (perceived) criminogeneity of the setting and so, the likelihood that the individual would choose to rob the purse (crime).

The importance of considering factors such as groups regarding the criminogeneity of settings becomes clear when reflecting upon the question of why individuals with a high personal morality in settings with high general moral norms might still commit acts of crime or, reversely, why individuals with a low personal morality in settings with low salience of the general moral norms sometimes do not commit an act of crime (when confronted with temptations or provocations). This is in line with the empirical findings of Wikström et al. (2012: 408): “[...] even if crime prone young people committed most of their offences in criminogenic settings [...], they did not offend during most of the time they spent in such settings. There are apparently also other important factors that affect settings’ criminogeneity and the extent to which they trigger acts of crime. For example, we have not yet measured social-psychological factors, such as those that relate to social relationships and group dynamics”.

My theoretical approach towards explaining the group factor in crime in such specific settings by applying Situational Action Theory also aims at stimulating the theoretical debate on the integration of different aspects of the setting for the constitution of its moral norms (and deterrence). This may go beyond the current focus on groups and could be examined in regard to other elements that are highly relevant in specific situations. It is also mutually



complementary to theoretical and empirical research on SAT such as Hardie's (2017) discussion of differing moral rules in settings as a result of present individuals (e.g. parents and peers) and possible influences on the likelihood of an act of crime.

This approach further aims at presenting the theoretical elements and interrelations in such a form that easily allows linking them with an empirical research design. The specificity of the presented perspective implies that it would be useful for application and testing in empirical endeavors. In such studies, it would be possible to test the typical relevant situations, but also explore the limits of the applicability, of an element such as group features as part of the setting. Similarly, Kroneberg and Schulz (2018) state that it would be expedient to extensively measure the moral norms and rules of settings and suggest, that varying them experimentally would be the best option. They argue that knowing the places where time is spent and even the number of peers present, of crime prone individuals, might not deliver a sufficient amount of information on the norms and rules of the settings. Furthermore, they posit that these moral rules strongly depend on the moral norms held by the present peers. They call for future research on this topic. Conducting a study that takes the moral norms of the present group into account as part of the setting could be the next expedient step. Testing the theoretical assumptions in this article for members of groups with a strong esprit de corps (such as the military or the police) would be a particularly interesting. This may possibly lead to results predominantly supporting the current theoretical propositions or may implicate that some changes are necessary (or perhaps even some of the postulated aspects irrelevant). This would not only broaden our understanding of how groups have an effect in the causation of criminal acts but also encourage the debate on other setting-elements and the situations in which they may be perceived. For instance, another step that might be

taken in examining the role of particularistic moral norms within settings in SAT could be investigating organizational cultures e.g. in regard to explaining police deviance or sexual harassment at the workplace (see Jordanoska [2018] for a specific call for research).

This application of SAT to groups is also theoretically fruitful in a more general sense: It shows how universalistic and particularistic features might be viewed as an important factor within the moral norms – in the framework of SAT – and, therefore, how they may simultaneously influence individuals' likelihood of committing an act of crime. This perspective draws on previous literature, assuming the postulated differentiation by Blau (1962) and Blau et al. (1991), foregrounding the issue that a particular action may be influenced through several features that are all universalistic or all particularistic. In the current approach this perspective is illustrated by the particularistic nature of both the esprit de corps and the group's norms. Furthermore, the application of SAT to group-settings also proposes theoretical reasons supporting that both universalism and particularism may affect an actor, for instance when both are present in a setting. This latter argument pertains to the issue that both (universalistic) general moral norms in the setting and (particularistic) moral group norms may influence the overall moral norms of such a specific setting. This furthers a point posited by Blau (1962: 163): "An orientation is typically influenced by a number of factors, some of which may act as universalistic and others as particularistic standards". Such combined effects on action could be conceivable when the universalistic and particularistic features differ as well as when they are in accordance with each other in regard to the action they indicate. In this sense, the current approach and the particularism-universalism differentiation indicate a specific theoretical application of the perception-choice process in which differing processes may lead to crime/no crime outcomes (see e.g. Wikström, 2014). Furthermore, the approach taken here adds a further angle to literature which suggests that

particularism and group solidarity are closely linked (e.g. Parsons et al., 1953) by showing how the related concept of esprit de corps may be closely connected with particularism. Through the perspective of an SAT-application, this indicates that a group's particularistic features, such as its moral norms and its esprit de corps, may be brought into connection in theory on deviance. Blau (1962: 166) posits that "Particularism is, indeed, both an expression and a condition of the solidarity of the subgroup [...] but for this very reason it creates some segregating barriers in the larger collectivity". Following this proposition, the current approach of applying SAT to settings including groups theoretically advances that their social cohesion (e.g. an esprit de corps) and other particularistic features may sometimes have negative effects in regard to the general society and its norms and rules.

This article shows that SAT is able to theoretically explain the (corporately) committed crimes of group members when it is applied to the particular case of settings including a group, even taking social cohesion into account. This is an approach that could be expedient for application in empirical research which is interested in group effects in the causation of crime.

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### **Third paper:**

#### **Ethical decisions between the conflicting priorities of legality and group loyalty: Scrutinizing the “code of silence” among volunteer firefighters with a vignette-based factorial survey**

##### **Proof of original publication:**

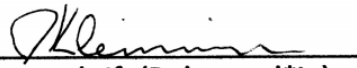
Kleinewiese, Julia, and Peter Graeff. 2020. “Ethical Decisions Between the Conflicting Priorities of Legality and Group Loyalty: Scrutinizing the “Code of Silence” Among Volunteer Firefighters with a Vignette-Based Factorial Survey.” *Deviant Behavior* 4(6):1–14. doi:10.1080/01639625.2020.1738640.

## Erklärung zu der Ko-Autorenschaft und den DFG-Richtlinien

Die folgenden beiden Fachartikel wurden in Ko-Autorenschaft mit Herrn Prof. Dr. Peter Graeff verfasst: „Esprit de corps as a source of deviant behavior in organizations – applying an old concept with a new livery“ und „Ethical decisions between the conflicting priorities of legality and group loyalty: Scrutinizing the ‚code of silence‘ among volunteer firefighters with a vignette-based factorial survey“. Hiermit erklären wir, dass wir beide maßgeblich an der Verfassung der beiden Fachartikel beteiligt waren. Des Weiteren bestätigen wir hiermit, dass die DFG-Richtlinien zur „Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis“ eingehalten wurden.

Kiel, 25.11.2019  
Ort, Datum

  
Unterschrift (Ko-Autor\*in)

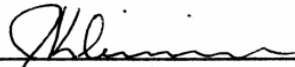
  
Unterschrift (Doktorand\*in)

## Eidesstattliche Erklärung

### Erklärung zum selbständigen Verfassen der Arbeit

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich meine Doktorarbeit „Mechanisms of social cohesion“ selbstständig und ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt habe und dass ich als Koautor maßgeblich zu den weiteren Fachartikeln beigetragen habe. Alle von anderen Autoren wörtlich übernommenen Stellen, wie auch die sich an die Gedanken anderer Autoren eng anlehenden Ausführungen der aufgeführten Beiträge wurden besonders gekennzeichnet und die Quellen nach den mir angegebenen Richtlinien zitiert.

Kiel, 25.11.2019  
Ort, Datum

  
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Unterschrift