The dynamics of multiple motivations

Eelco van Wijk
Frédérique Six
VU University Amsterdam

Paper presented at the ECPR Standing group on Regulatory Governance conference, June 2014, Barcelona

WORK IN PROGRESS: PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE OR CITE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT FROM THE AUTHORS

Contact: Eelco van Wijk, e.g.van.wijk@vu.nl; tel +31 20 5989145 Department of public administration and political science, Faculty of Social Sciences, VU University Amsterdam.

Abstract

Regulatee motivations are central to rule compliance. Extant regulation theories acknowledge that regulatees harbour multiple motivations, but lack explanations how these different motivations relate to one another and how they frame decision-making. This study empirically explored what contribution Lindenberg’s Goal Framing Theory (GFT; e.g. 2000) may make to solving this puzzle. GFT distinguished three master motivations (hedonic, gain and normative) and proposed that the strongest motivation present framed the way regulatees make decisions, while other motivations, in the background, (de)stabilized the dominant motivation. It also proposed explanations for the impact of contextual influences – regulator, professional and personal networks - on different motivational constellations.

Using a qualitative case study design, a saturation sample of Dutch food entrepreneurs was interviewed to reconstruct their motivational constellations and the impact of contextual influences on their constellations over time.

Our findings showed that Lindenberg’s typology applied to regulatory situations and that GFT helped to explain the observed dynamics of motivations and their constellations. It also helped to explain the impact of contextual influences. We suggest an agenda for further research.

Key words: compliance, Goal Framing Theory, multiple motivations, regulation

Acknowledgements

This paper is based on research funded by the CCV, the results have been published in a Dutch book ‘De diversiteit van het willen’ (The Hague: Boom/Lemma, 2014).
The dynamics of multiple motivations

The quest for the most effective enforcement strategies is increasingly aimed at which strategies best suit the motivations and capabilities of regulatees. Insight and understanding into what motivates citizens and businesses to comply to certain rules seems crucial, as well as which factors influence change in these motivations.

Regulatory behaviour is generally seen as a consequence of motivations and capabilities (Winter and May 2001). Our research focusses on the motivations of regulatees. In regulation research three main motivations have been recognized: economic, social and normative (Winter and May, 2001; Nielsen and Parker, 2012). While many scholars recognize that these motivations are simultaneously present, they do not indicate how the different motivations relate to each other (e.g., V.Braithwaite, 2003). In recent years, more attention is paid to this, usually by exploring how Lindenberg’s Goal Framing Theory is applicable or not (Etienne, 2011; Nielsen and Parker, 2012).

Lindenberg (1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, Lindenberg and Steg, 2007) developed the Goal Framing Theory. He claims that three overarching goals that people strive for, explain human behaviour. He distinguishes hedonic, normative and gain goals. These three goals, which are present simultaneously, determine in what way individuals 'frame' situations. The end result (a constellation of goals) is called a goal frame. Different goal frames, each with their own constellations of goals, are susceptible to various external influences. This could help explain why some regulatees are sensitive to (the threat of) fines and other sanctions, while others seem immune. Or that some regulatees are sensitive to moral appeal and others are not.

In recent years, several authors have explored how Lindenberg ’s theory could apply to regulatory environments, where individuals or organizations must comply with government regulations. Lindenberg and Steg (2007) took a first step by exploring how goal frames influence people’s environmental behaviour. Etienne (2011) proposed an elegant but equally complex conceptual model in which he translated Lindenberg’s theory to regulation, to establish a new compliance theory. So far no empirical test of this model exists. Nielsen and Parker (2012) tested Lindenberg’s proposition concerning constellations of motivations, but did not use his three main goals, but instead the three motivations that are usually distinguished in regulation research, thus excluding hedonic motivations. Furthermore they did not make use of what we think is one of the most important aspects of GFT; its ability to deal with motivations in a dynamic, rather than in a static way. Keizer et al (2014, in press) have conducted experimental research into factors influencing compliance by individuals on the basis of goal frame theory.

What is lacking is a direct empirical exploration of the applicability of Lindenberg’s goal frame theory to the situation in which entrepreneurs must decide whether to comply to government regulations or not. The research question is therefore:

In what ways is Lindenberg’s goal framing theory applicable to regulation theory?

Because regulation literature uses motivations instead of goals, we use motivations and decision frames instead of goals and goal frames. The research question is divided into two sub-questions:
- What motivations exist in decision frames of entrepreneurs with respect to regulatory compliance?
- What factors influence the (in)stability of these decision frames?

The empirical study took place at enterprises that are regulated by the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA). We focused on small organizations, on the assumption that in those organizations, the decision frame of the person with overall daily responsibility is equal to the frame of the organization as the coordination mechanism will be direct control (cf. Mintzberg, 1989).

In the first section of this paper we examine how regulation theories about motivations relate to Lindenberg’s goal frame theory. We explore how these theories relate to each other. Then we present and discuss our empirical study. We conclude with suggestions for further research into goal framing theory and regulation.

**Integrating GFT and regulation research**

Regulatory compliance is possible if regulatees both want and are able to comply (e.g., Winter and May, 2001). There are many theories, under various names, which may help explain under what conditions regulatees follow rules. Psychology and behavioural economics formulate motivation theories (e.g., Frey, 1997, Deci and Ryan, 2000, Ryan and Deci, 2000) and moral decision-making theories (e.g., Tenbrunsel and Smith-Crowe, 2008; Trevino, 1986). In regulation literature Valerie Braithwaite developed a theory about motivational postures (e.g., V. Braithwaite, 2009) based on the degree to which regulatees experience distance between the regulatory authority and themselves (social distancing theory). In addition, different motivations in regulation literature are distinguished (Winter and May, 2001, Nielsen and Parker, 2012). The sociologist Lindenberg is not so much interested in motivations, but in peoples pursuit of goals (e.g., Lindenberg, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, Lindenberg and Steg, 2007). Most scholars in regulation literature, recognize that several motivations are simultaneously present in regulatees. But how these motivations come into existence, relate to each other, how that leads to decisions and how this process can be influenced are still unanswered questions. In recent years, two regulation studies focused on Lindenberg’s goal framing theory, because this theory might provide tools for answering these questions.

We first present Lindenberg’s goal framing theory, and the motivations (goals) he distinguished and integrate these within the framework mostly used in regulation research. Next, we discuss the contextual factors that may affect the decision frames.

2.1 Lindenberg’s Goal Framing Theory

Central to Lindenberg’s theory is that people’s actions are not based on a single objective, but that a multitude of goals simultaneously battles for dominance (Lindenberg 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, Lindenberg and Steg, 2007). According to Lindenberg, with every decision a multitude of goals fight to the become the dominant goal, but there is always one goal that becomes dominant, which frames the situation and the possibilities of action that the actor has got. The result of this ‘battle’ is the goal frame, a particular constellation of goals of which has become dominant. The goal frame
than shapes the way people evaluate a situation and the options available, which in turn is the basis for action.

The central idea is that goals govern or "frame" what people attend to, what knowledge and attitudes become cognitively most accessible, how people evaluate various aspects of the situation, and what alternatives are being considered. (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007, p. 118)

The other goals are placed in the background and influence the stability of the frame. If the background goals are complementary to the dominant goal, they strengthen the constellation and the frame will be relatively stable. If, however, the background goals conflict with the dominant goal, they weaken the frame, and the frame will be relatively unstable.

The number of goals is theoretically endless, each context is different, and in theory any goal can be dominant and is able to dominate the goal frame. Lindenberg however postulated that three overarching categories of goals can be distinguished: ‘certain goals are so inclusive that they govern whole areas or sub goals, knowledge, and attitudes’ (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007, p. 118).

Lindenberg distinguished three overarching frames:

1. The hedonic goal is aimed at ‘to feel good or to feel better right now’ (Lindenberg, 2001), and focuses on the here and now; it tries to avoid negative thoughts and events without having to go through too much trouble (Lindenberg and Steg, 2007). This motivation is characterized by an exclusive focus on the present.
2. Central to the gain goal is ‘to improve resources’. These resources can be both financial and material in nature. This goal is focused on the (near) future rather than on the present, because an economic calculation requires an analysis between short- and long-term costs and benefits.
3. Central to the normative goal is ‘to act appropriately’, or act according to social norms and expectations. This involves obtaining approval for one’s own behaviour and choices from one’s social environment.

2.2 Goals versus motivations

The regulation literature usually used the term motivations for compliance (or non-compliance) instead of goals. Motivation as a concept includes the strength of the motivation and orientation of motivation (Lindenberg, 2001). The orientation of the motivation is about the goals pursued. Goals are seen as the most important influence on cognitive activity and therefore guide the actions of people (Gollwitzer and Moskowitz, 1996). The goals that guide individuals’ choices determine the information they consider and which preferences are taken into account in decisions. The goal largely determines what alternative action is chosen (e.g., preference formation, Etienne, 2010). In the context of regulation, the goal of the regulatee determines to a great extent their intention to comply with the rules or not.

In regulation literature, goals are a relative absent phenomenon and the focus lies more on motivations. Although there is in theory a difference between goals and motivations, there is no need for this study to make this sharp distinction. Lindenberg and Steg (2007) also do not do that in their study, they use the term 'multiple goal frames (sometimes also called "multiple motives")' (p. 117). Because the concept of motivation is common in regulation, we choose to use motivations
instead of goals in this study. Then, to avoid misunderstandings, we do not use the term goal frames, but decision frames or the general term master frames.

2.2.1 Types of motivations

Lindenberg’s frames harbour, as said, in theory an endless amount motivations. The three master frames are very generic categories. To use GFT in empirical research in the regulatory domain, these categories may be too generic. Behind these broad categories, ‘smaller’ motivations may be hidden that may be conflicting or supporting and thus play a vital role in the stability of the decision fame. Below we give a brief overview of the motivations generally used in regulation literature and how these can be put into the generic categories of Lindenberg.

Hedonic motivations have not been considered in regulation research to date. Although for example in Valerie Braithwaite (1995, 2007) they implicitly seem to play a role. She emphasizes that “being subject to regulation intrudes on personal freedom” (Braithwaite et al, 2007, p 13). This intrusion could generate hedonic motivations, because it affects the personal freedom. That makes it likely that regulatees harbour hedonic motivations. On top of that, Lindenberg argued that precisely this hedonic motivation is the strongest and most dominant, therefore it is important to investigate the extent to which hedonism plays a role in compliance behaviour.

The economic motivation (gain goal in Lindenberg), however, is commonplace in regulation theory. The idea that regulatees calculate the costs and benefits of compliance has for a long time been considered the main motivation (Kagan and Scholz, 1984; Pearce and Tombs, 1998) and served as the basis for enforcement strategies with deterrence at its core. Although this motivation is no longer regarded as the most important, it is part of virtually all theories and studies motivations of regulatory compliance (cf. Thornton et al 2008; Parker and Nielsen, 2011; Etienne, 2011; Simpson and Rorie, 2011). The content of this motivation is not different from the way it is used by Lindenberg.

However, this does not apply to the normative motivation. This comes down firstly to a different use of the terms normative and social. First we link Lindenberg’s model linguistically (and conceptually) to the regulation literature. In regulation literature it is common to split, what Lindenberg calls the normative motivation, into a normative motivation - the degree to which a person complies with the rules prescribed by the regulatory agency, because they match his own normative beliefs - and social motivation - the extent to which regulatees act to obtain approval from the social environment (e.g., Winter and May, 2001; May, 2005; Nielsen and Parker, 2012). This division however ignores the idea that norms are born out of social interaction. Both the creation, dissemination and internalization of norms evolves through social processes. Normatively motivated behaviour (as defined by Lindenberg) includes both. Giving one of the two motivations the term 'social' (as in the regulation literature) implies that the other is not. This means that motivations in regulation literature which are normally interpreted as a social motivation (fear of reputational damage (e.g., Van Erp, 2001, Maor et al, 2012) in GFT fall under the normative motivation. That also applies to motivations stemming from interactions with peers or immediate colleagues (Mascini and Bacharias, 2012) and motivations that are explained as normative, stemming from moral agreement with laws and regulations (e.g., Winter and May, 2001), acting on the basis of the idea that a government is a legitimate authority and therefore, its rules must be followed (e.g., Tyler, 2006). All reasoning that
lies behind these motivations is in Lindenberg’s classification normative, it is based on 'to act appropriately'.

2.2.2 Types of normative motivations: personal, professional and informal

Having recognized that both social and normative motivations are what Lindenberg called normative, then the question is what types of normative motivations can be distinguished? The question is then 'to act appropriately accordion thing to whom?' The first distinction is made between (personal) internalized norms - standards that a person deems worth pursuing - and external standards - standards that are imposed from outside (e.g., Goslinga and Denkers, 2009; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Frey 1997). This includes both the substantive compliance with a particular law or rule, and the degree to which a person endorses the legitimacy of the regulatory authority (e.g., Tyler, 2006 and Nielsen and Parker, 2012).

The counterpart of personal standards are external standards. Previous research showed that different external standards can be sources of motivation: professional and informal. Winter and May (2001, p. 678) recognized, among others, norms coming from 'other regulated firms, trade associations, advocacy groups external, the media and family and friends.' The first four are categorized as professional norms stemming from the professional network, which are also described by Kagan et al (2003 ) and Gunningham et al (2004 ) as 'social licenses'. The role of peers (e.g., Mascini and Bacharias , 2012) also falls within this professional network. By contrast, family and friends can be seen as the informal side of normative motivations. This distinction between personal, professional and informal normative motivations is a sufficiently broad basis for this study.

2.2.3 Interactions between motivations over time

Several authors have paid attention to the existence of multiple, plural or mixed motivations (Nielsen and Parker, 2012; Braithwaite V., 1995, 2003 ), but only a few questioned how they relate to each other (Nielsen and Parker, 2012). Some studies focussed on the development over time and the change of the constellation of motivations (Frey, 1997; Etienne, 2012; Feldman and Perez, 2012). Like Etienne (2012) we take Lindenberg's insights on how motivations interact, shift and eventually form decision frames. A decision frame is a constellation of motivations. Though there is always one motivation dominant, the stability of the frame depends on the background motivations. If the background motivations point in the same direction as the dominant motivation, the frame is stable. In other words, if an entrepreneur is dominantly economically motivated to clean the kitchen, this motivation is stabilized if other motivations are also focused on good cleaning. For example, if the entrepreneur believes that cleaning is important (personal motivation) or is influenced by the stimulation of a trade-association to clean (professional motivation). However, if the background motivations differ in direction from the dominant motivation (not targeted at cleaning), then the frame is less stable. Changes in constellations of motivations and possible change of decision frames can be caused by external influences.

2.3 Contextual influences

We distinguish three different contextual influences, which largely correspond to those identified by Thornton et al (2003). The first is the formal authority. It (re)formulates rules, may impose sanctions and sets the tone in the interaction between regulatees and regulator. Proponents of punitive and
deterrence based enforcement regimes claim that sanctions are the only way to force companies to comply (e.g., Pearce and Tombs, 1990). Advocates of a more responsive approach point precisely to the negative effects of sanctions (Hawkins, 1990; Potoski and Prakash, 2004). The way in which a regulatee is approached by the formal authority affects compliance behaviour. (Ayres and Braithwaite, 1992; Makkai and Braithwaite, 1994a, May and Wood, 2003). In short, the formal authority plays an important role both in the formulation of rules and the strategies it uses to inspect.

The second contextual factor is social embedding. This relates both to business networks (colleagues, competitors, industry associations and customers) as well as the personal network, consisting of family and friends (Campbell, 2007). For example, the influence of peers and competitors in the same sector (in individual or institutional form) has been shown to be important.

The third and final influence is formed by the economic conditions and is reflected in the financial situation of the entrepreneur (Yapp and Fairman, 2006). Thornton et al (2008) show that, particularly in smaller companies in competitive markets (in their case, freight carriers) the financial capacity to meet regulations is a decisive factor in explaining compliance behaviour.

We are aware that there is an overlap between the various factors. In the event that an inspector is physically present on site for an inspection, he can also become part of the professional network, in the interpretation of an entrepreneur. However, this seems conceptually unproblematic.

The conceptual model in Figure 1 shows how a constellation of motivations (decision-frame) at a given time (t = 1) is affected by contextual influences and then leads to a (possibly different) constellation of motivations (t = 2). Contextual influences can strengthen or weaken the existing constellation, without changing the dominant motivation. Conceptual clarity concerning the distinction between motivations and external influences emphasizes that contextual influences always consist of actions or events, and that all contextual sources can influence all types of motivations. Thus, the sanctioning role of an inspector can influence the economic motivation (doing something for economic reasons), but it can also influence the normative professional motivation (fear of reputational damage). The way in which actions and events from the context are appreciated by the regulatee depends on the constellation of motivations, i.e. the decision frame. A regulatee with a dominant economic motivation, will frame the disciplinary role of the regulator in a different way than someone with a normative decision frame. Finally, it should be emphasized that the orientation of motivations (towards compliance or non-compliance) is not given for each motivation. An economic motivation may stimulate both compliance behaviour or rule-breaking behaviour. This also applies to the other motivations.
This study aims to provide insight into how motivations may change over time or may be stable under varying contextual circumstances.

**Method**

When research is conducted into a question for which no testable hypotheses may be formulated, a qualitative research design is appropriate (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). We conducted the research in the context of small business in the Dutch food sector: Restaurants, fast-food cafés, supermarkets, and the like. This choice was motivated by the expectation that in this sector, the whole variation and dynamics of compliance and decision frames could be found. The sector is furthermore not only subject to supervision of the Dutch Food and Product Safety Authority (food safety, non-smoking), but also local government (operating licenses), central government (tax authority) and various other regulatory institutions, so different regulations could be investigated with the same entrepreneur.

Lindenberg’s theory is a theory of individuals, their goals and motivations. We wanted to investigate its applicability to organizations. We selected small businesses because we expected that the person who has operational responsibility directly supervises and steers the employees. And therefore, the decision frame of that person, the respondent, could be interpreted as the decision frame for the company as a whole (cf Mintzberg, 1989). In larger companies, no such direct control exists as there is a larger chain of command and procedures and systems influence how employees act.

To increase the chance of finding frame changes we used a stratified sample strategy. We selected businesses on the basis of their sanctioning history, using changes in regulatory performance as a possible indication of a frame change. We also selected a number of cases where compliance was relatively stable. The NVWA supplied these data. In order to prevent measuring business specific
patterns, we made sure all types of businesses were included. Within each enterprise we interviewed the person with overall operational responsibility. Possible respondents were phoned or visited in person to ask for cooperation. In total 33 interviews were conducted before saturation was achieved. Many people declined cooperation because of being too busy, which in many cases was probably true. It was possible that some declined because of a more general attitude of not cooperating with authorities (the research was funded by a consortium of inspectorates), which may indicate a normative frame that does not support regulation. Some respondents were dropped because they were in a special program of the inspectorate or they did not speak Dutch or English.

We conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews to get insights into the dynamics of motivations and their constellations. The only way to explore the developments over time was to ask retrospectively what happened in the last few years. We were aware of the fact that asking respondents to reflect, in retrospect, on their own motivations and emotions has got its methodological issues. To reduce this hindsight bias, we used the sanctioning history from each business over the last seven years from the NVWA as a guideline. This served as a useful tool to make respondents remember certain events and the emotions and motivations behind the decisions they made at that time. All interviews were fully recorded, transcribed and coded.

**Results**

The results showed that Lindenberg’s Goal Framing Theory provides new insights to regulation theory. We highlight three points. First, all three master motivations – hedonic, economic and normative – were observed, both in a dominant and in a background position within decision frames. Acknowledgement of the existence of hedonic motivations in regulation theory is therefore warranted. Second, the idea of a constellation of motivations, with the dominant motivation determining the decision frame and the background motivations stabilizing or destabilizing the frame, was supported. Contextual factors helped explain the dynamics of frames. And third and final, the results showed a particular decision frame, typical for regulatory situations, where inspector’s actions were perceived as procedurally unjust and triggered a frame change away from a normative frame.

A summary of the analysis of all 33 cases is provided in the appendix. Below we give more ‘thick descriptions’ of selected cases in support of our findings.

**Hedonic motivations relevant for regulation theory**

All three master motivations – hedonic, economic and normative – were observed, both in a dominant and in a background position within decision frames. As the hedonic motivation is the only ‘new’ motivation in our theoretical construct, we focus on the existence and importance of that particular motivation, as the importance of both the economic and normative motivation have been shown to be relevant before. In regulation literature, until now, the hedonic motivation was largely ignored. This study however found many examples of the hedonic motivation. Mostly as background motivation, but sometimes as dominant. A clear example is a bakery which was fined numerous times for insufficient cleaning (case 2). The respondent blamed her dislike of cleaning for it:

"I just hate cleaning ... last week I was sort of busted when I had to ask my partner [at home] how to switch on the vacuum cleaner. It's just not my thing."
The stability of this hedonic decision frame was strong. Even a large number of high fines could not destabilize the dominance of the hedonic motivation.

"It went well a few months after that [a penalty], but it always fell back again."

A second example concerned an entrepreneur (case 23) who smoked in his restaurant whenever it was cold outside, because he did not want to stand in the cold. This avoidance of negative feelings in the 'now' is a clear example of a hedonic motivation, which was dominant in this area (smoking policy).

Hedonic motivations were also often found as background motivation. This occurred particularly with regard to the administrative obligations of regulation. Entrepreneurs who work with food, have to keep records of the temperature for delivery and sale of food products, register the dates when products were made, and keep track of temperature fluctuations in cooling equipment. This regulatory demand was referred to as 'hassle' (case 5, restaurant) and 'whining' (case 18, butcher).

Although the hedonic motivation was dominant on only one occasion, it is possible that in a larger, representative sample of the population dominant hedonic frames are more common.

**Motivational constellations in a dynamic perspective**

An important contribution of GFT is that it sheds light on how different simultaneously present motivations relate to each other. We found clear evidence of how background motivations can stabilize or destabilize the dominant motivation. For example, in case 17, an entrepreneur was motivated to comply to all different regulations concerning the treatment of his food, because he believed in producing safe food. His decision frame was dominated by this personal normative motivation. Furthermore, the other reasons he gave for his compliance behaviour indicated that his background motivations strengthened the orientation of his dominant motivation. Both professional and informal motivations (regular customers within a specific ethnic community where he had a good reputation) and economic motivations (strongly dependent on this particular clientele for sales) stabilized his normative frame. Substantially less stable was the personal normative frame of case 29. This entrepreneur endorsed the rules and controls of NVWA completely, but also indicated that his staff did not (professional motivations destabilizing) and that compliance cost him a lot of time and money (economic motivations destabilizing). His decision frame weakened after certain contextual influences, while the entrepreneur in case 17 seemed relatively insensitive to contextual changes.

The 'architecture' and stability of a decision frame in short, seems relevant to the extent to which external factors can cause changes in the constellation. One of most interesting features of GFT is its ability to explore changes in constellations of motivations. We focus first on frames that remained stable - with regard to their dominant motivation- under changing contextual influences, then we discuss cases where external influences caused a change in frame.

**Stable frames**

In cases where frames over time have remained the same, contextual influences may have strengthened or weakened the stability. An example of a stable economic frame case is a 'snackbar' annex pub located in a rural area (case 30). The owner was fined for allowing smoking in the

---

1 A snackbar is a typically Dutch phenomenon where mostly deep-fried products like potato chips, croquettes and other snacks are being sold as a type of fast-food.
establishment The reason she allowed smoking was primarily economically motivated, hence she operated in an economic frame. She was afraid her customers would stay away if she banned smoking indoors.

"Yeah, in the evening this is mainly a pub and most people stay away if they cannot smoke. Over the history of this pub, they have always been allowed to smoke."

This economic motivation was stabilized by the professional motivation (customers want to smoke). In addition, she said that she knew she could be fined, and to a certain extent was afraid that that would happen. This is also an economic argument. However, this did not stop her from allowing smoking. Economic reasoning dominated her decision making. One economic argument (do not want to scare away customers) is contrary to the other (fear of sanctions). The cost-benefit analysis she makes then, falls in favour of non-compliance. In short, some of the motivations had a destabilizing effect on the dominant economic motivation, but in the background. The relative stability of her economic frame was partly invoked by the other background motivations that had the same orientation. When she was finally fined for smoking, this strengthened the economic frame. That is, she decided that smoking was allowed after ten o'clock in the evening. Thus she developed a rational economic strategy to reduce the chance of being fined, without the risk of losing customers.

"Well, after ten o'clock at night, they (inspectors) really don’t visit us, here in the countryside. I’m not just a snack bar, but also a pub. People can smoke just after ten o’clock you know."

The sanctions thus didn’t change her motivational constellation, but instead further stabilized her economic frame.

A second case in which there was a constant dominant economic motivation was a restaurant (case 5) where the owner complained on several occasions during the interview about the NVWA, its rules and its inspectors, and showed a negative attitude towards the government in general. He did share the importance of hygienic working practices and safe food. The motivation to run a restaurant, however, arose primarily from economic motivations.

"Look, I’m an entrepreneur. I could also sell other products, but this is what I like."

The fines he received were, first for failing to comply with the rules of the HACCP (administrative duties) and unhygienic working in the kitchen. The way he dealt with these fines, illustrate well how his economic arguments work.

"The first one I paid. I had to ensure that the right records were kept by the chefs and I didn’t. We simply did not have those lists. That’s my fault, so I pay."

However, after he was fined for the second time for the same offense, he transferred the fines onto his employees.

"They have to do it eventually. If they don’t, then the costs of a fine are for them."

He tried to meet the requirements of NVWA to avoid these fines. Not from a personal normative consideration, not because he endorsed the rules, but to avoid the costs of sanctions. When that failed, he again made an economic assessment to charge his staff. This showed that he was not so much interested in following the rules, but to relieve himself from the financial burden linked to the
violating of rules. Fines strengthened in that sense his economic frame and had no effect on his normative motivation. This economic frame was additionally stabilized by hedonic motivations:

"After a long day of work I really do not like filling in or checking all those lists."

And informal motivations:

"My parents run a restaurant for twenty years or so, and they complain more and more about the increased rules and registration demands."

His ideas about rules and government were in short an echo of his environment, which further stabilized his decision frame. His personal motivation to handle food hygienically also came into the background by experienced procedural injustice.

"At some point, you’re just screwed. Then they start picking on you. And if they want to find fault, they’ll always find it. I can easily name ten businesses that perform much worse than I do... but yeah, they don’t visit them."

Because of this perceived injustice, personal normative motivation (basically, I want to work safely and do not make people sick), which initially played a destabilizing role, was pushed further into the background. The changes in the context, in this case, the disciplining role of the regulator, reinforced his frame instead of destabilizing it into a more compliance-oriented frame.

It can be concluded from these cases that it is difficult to destabilize a stable dominant economic motivation using economic sanctions (fines). Sanctions are more likely to reinforce economic motivation, than weaken and offer more space for personal normative motivation. Tenbrunsel and Messick (1999) found a similar effect. They show that economic sanctions regulatees ‘force’ to interpret the sanction as an economic penalty, rather as an ethical or moral punishment. The result is that economic motivations are strengthened and normative considerations are pushed further into the background. The examples also show how background motivations stabilize a dominant motivation. In both cases, virtually all the motivations point in the same direction; only personal motivations destabilized from the background, but without effect.

**Frame changes**

A clear example of how a frame change can occur is found in the aforementioned hedonically-framed baker who hated cleaning (case 2). She switched to a professional normative frame after a prospective customer demanded that the bakery was cleaned better.

"They only wanted to do business with me when I met their requirements regarding hygiene ... two chefs of the organization came to inspect my kitchen."

The economic motivation to meet the needs of potential customers also played a destabilizing role concerning the dominant hedonic motivation, but the respondent herself stated that it was primarily a case of proving to them, that she could do it.

"I couldn’t get the idea of supplying them out of my head, it just had to happen."

It was more important for this entrepreneur to obtain the approval of the customer and convince them, than the potential revenue that came with the deal. The professional motivation to win the
customer was stronger than the economic motivation. While previous high fines didn’t have a long-lasting effect on her hedonic frame, the customer’s demands changed the hedonic frame to a professional normative frame.

The second example of a profound frame change is the young owner, whose dream it was to open his own snackbar (case 15). He took over a completely decayed enterprise, with a bad reputation among both customers and the NVWA.

"It was really unbelievable. I spent four weeks only cleaning and tidying. Everything was dirty and outdated. I even found meatballs that were out of date for more than eighteen months. The previous owners sold me a complete mess."

Without customers, his first year was financially very difficult. To ensure income he decided to sell alcohol, knowing he did not have the proper license for it. The economic motivation for this decision was dominant. This motivation was supported by social influences (clients) that used his business just to drink alcohol. His personal normative (knowing that is was illegal) destabilized the economic decision frame. He soon was fined by the NVWA but continued selling alcohol. Only after the second (higher) fine he quit selling alcohol. The fines were too expensive and in the meantime he had built up a clientele for his food, so his personal normative motivations to quit alcohol sales eventually became dominant. "Then I threw out all the alcoholics." With this final decision, he also got rid of the social influences that destabilized his personal normative frame. His new frame was personal normative with economic motivations stabilizing in the background.

**Special frame change: substituting active for reactive compliance**

The results showed a particular decision frame, typical for regulatory situations. In four cases striking similarities were found, which have strong similarities with the "crowding-out effect" as described by Frey and colleagues (1997, Frey and Jegen, 2001, Feldman and Perez, 2012). The first similarity was that all entrepreneurs started in a solid normative frame, the personal normative motivation kept pace with the laws and regulations and the government was also seen as legitimate authority. The second similarity was that the frame changes were caused by actions of the regulator, or government in general. The third similarity concerned the nature of the final motivational constellation, which is characterized by an unstable combination of economic and hedonic motivations. In short, in all these cases a frame shift occurred, where normative motivations were crowded out by hedonic and economic motivations, caused by inspector behaviour.

In three of the four cases, case 1 (restaurant), 6 (hotel and restaurant) and 8 (deli) frame changes occurred as a result of sanctions that were considered to be unjust. In the fourth case (case 7, supermarket), an entrepreneur lost his confidence in the government at large, inflicted by not directly work-related activities. In the past, all four entrepreneurs endorsed the usefulness and purpose of the rules and acted accordingly. A stable personal normative frame, orientated at compliance was the result. In two cases the entrepreneurs contributed to compliance behaviour within the sector: as a member of the regional council of the restaurant association where compliance and other issues were discussed (case 6); or as a teacher of student cooks, where working responsibly regarding food safety was a core curricular activity. The other respondents indicated that in the past they took a positive stand towards the regulatory authority and perceived the regulations as sensible and necessary, i.e. a normative frame supported by professional motivation with the same orientation.
The developments described are typical of all four cases. The hotel (case 6) was fined several times for not getting a mice-infestation under control. Although the entrepreneur, in his own words, did everything (hiring different pest-control companies, hiring staff to clean up, put in extra hours himself), the problem continued to exist, according to the entrepreneur beyond his own fault. In a period of one year, he had to pay fines worth several thousand euros. This respondent was still outraged about the fact that inspectors in no way took into account the money and the time he put in, to the overcome the problem.

"It's not about not about the money, or the amount of the fines, but because I can prove that I was doing my utmost to get it under control and that was not taken into account." (case 6)

It was mainly the procedure, the way he was fined, the reluctance of inspectors to listen to his arguments and the neglect of the trouble he went through that outraged the entrepreneur. He even contemplated withdrawing his participation in the regional restaurant association. Now he considered inspections and inspectors as a necessary evil. He has turned away in the deepest sense of the regulatory body and its inspectors. In short, normative motivations disappeared in the background.

"In a sense I don't really care what they ask anymore. I always say yes, fine by me ... a conversation or discussion is useless ... And that attitude I think I'll keep, until I quit working altogether."

The case of one respondent (Case 1) expressed this as followed:

"I have made it [a small structural adjustment] just for them. When they come I just say yes and amen, and 'of course, sir'. Fighting them is useless anyway."

For these four entrepreneurs with an initially stable normative frame the sanctioning invoked a frame change. The new frame consisted of a constellation in which the economic and hedonic motivations alternate as the dominant motivation, reinforcing and stabilizing each other. This configuration therefore appears to be stable, in the sense that it does not change. However, it is theoretically unstable by the alternation of hedonic and economic motivations in the foreground. This crowding out of personal normative motivations by external incentives (in this case, fines) is similar to what Feldman and Perez (2012) observed in their study of recycling policies in Israel. They showed that where the policy was focused on fines, normative motivations to comply with the rules disappeared and were replaced by economic motivations.

The question is then under what conditions this 'crowding out' becomes possible. After all, not all entrepreneurs fined respond in a similar way. One possible explanation for the disappearance of the normative motivation to the background, is paradoxically in the power of the first existing normative frame. Makkai and Braithwaite (1994b) found a similar mechanism. They showed that a deterrence-based punitive approach is effective for companies who make decisions rationally, calculating (in an economic frame) but ineffective in companies that deploy an emotional-normative way to make decisions (normative frame). It seems that the more people have a strong personal normative frame, they more they are sensitive to procedural injustice. The core is in the perceived procedural injustice and not sanctions per se. This finding is not unique. Research by Murphy et al (2009) showed a reversed effect, which was similar to what has been found here. They showed that perceived procedural justice had a greater positive impact on those who doubted the legitimacy of the laws
and regulations, than people who recognized the legitimacy of laws and regulations. We see here, as it were, the other side of the same coin. Experienced procedural injustice has a greater negative impact on entrepreneurs in a stable normative frame (perceived legitimacy of laws and regulations) than on entrepreneurs with a less stable normative frame, or another frame. We are aware that due to the limited number of cases where this principle is found, this is only an indication, not conclusive evidence.

Furthermore, the findings underline the principle emphasized by Tyler (2011) that experienced procedural justice is a major, perhaps decisive, factor in compliance behaviour. Tyler (2011) emphasized, as we do, that the effect of perceived procedural justice is stronger than that of sanctions themselves. Sanctions may indeed be perceived to be just. A strong disciplinary role is not harmful as long as it is perceived as fair. It may not always lead to weakening or displacement of a normative frame, which is the case in case 9. This entrepreneur had been fined twice tens of thousands of dollars by the labour inspection and received several fines from the NVWA. The entrepreneur, however, regarded these sanctions as fair - "I knew I was wrong" - and her positive attitude towards government in general is not affected; she saw the usefulness and necessity of regulation and continued to operate from a normative frame.

Conclusions
This study’s aim was to investigate in what ways Lindenberg’s goal framing theory might contribute insights into the dynamics of multiple motivations of regulatees. The results showed that integration of Lindenberg’s theory with regulation theory is valuable and contributes to a better understanding of regulatees’ behaviour. We made three contributions to regulation theory.

First, our study showed the importance of hedonic motivations as the third master motivation, next to economic and normative motivations. A hedonic motivation implies regulatees are motivated to feel good right now.

Second, when multiple motivations were present, the strongest motivation framed the way regulatees made decisions, what information they considered and what decision rules apply. The other motivations were in the background and exerted their influence through stabilizing or destabilizing the dominant motivation.

Third, this study showed how different contextual influences can affect motivational constellations. Actions and events stemming from clients, colleagues, family and the financial situation of the regulatee proved to be influential in shaping and sometimes changing a decision frame. Of special interest is the influence of the regulatory agency. Its intended influence proved to be limited. A regulator can sanction or persuade and teach, but sanctions or persuasion had no influence on those in a hedonic frame, or only very briefly. Sanctions only had an influence on those in an economic frame if they were severe enough to tip the cost-benefit balance (cf. Tenbrunsel and Messick, 1999); persuasion had very little effect on those in an economic frame. Sanctions only stimulated rule compliance with those in a normative frame if the sanction was deemed procedurally just. Where regulators had a strong influence, it was largely unintended. The cases where personal normative motivations were crowded-out by hedonic en economic motivations are the best example of these negative unintended consequences of regulator behaviour. Especially entrepreneurs with a strong personal normative frame, proved to be very susceptible to perceived procedural injustice,
substituting pro-active for reactive compliance behaviour. These results showed, again, the almost overriding importance of procedural justice (Tyler, 2006, 2011). Whatever they do, inspectors must always do their utmost best to be seen to be acting in a procedurally just manner.

**Further research**

This study showed qualitatively that there is merit in applying Lindenberg’s theory to regulation theory. Further research should firstly quantitatively test the validity of Lindenberg’s theory for understanding the dynamics of multiple motivations across different and larger populations of regulatees.

This study only studied the dynamics of multiple motivations in decision frames and the impact of contextual influences. We did not look at whether a decision frame led to compliance or not. As Nielsen and Parker (2012) observe this step is a difficult one. Lindenberg (2000) argued that only in a stable normative frame may an actor be trusted by another actor, as the normative frame is the only frame in which actors are interested in maintaining a mutually rewarding relationship with others and taking the other’s interests into account. This may suggest that regulatees need to be in a stable normative frame to be trustworthy rule compliers to regulators and the public. Only when it is more of a hassle to violate rules, will a hedonic frame lead to rule compliance. This may seem an unlikely situation, but the Dutch Tax Office is working towards this by pre-filling-out tax returns sent to tax payers, based on previous years and other data they have collected from elsewhere. An economic frame will only lead to rule compliance if the current cost-benefit calculation, given the current context, points to compliance; but any change in context may tip the balance in the calculation and change the compliance decision, which is therefore unstable. The normative motivation ‘to act appropriately’ only refers to the norms of the social group that the regulatee wants to belong to. And that is often not the regulator. So only if the norms of the relevant social group are congruent with those of the regulator, will a normative frame lead to rule compliance, ceteris paribus. And when it does, a stable normative frame is likely to lead to stable rule compliance. Further research should address how each decision frame may or may not lead to compliance.

The total constellation of motivations is important to assess the stability of the decision frame and therefore the regulator’s ability to influence regulatee behaviour. For example, contractors who remove asbestos from buildings are notoriously bad rule compliers (at least in the Netherlands). They do not see the need for the strict regulation (norms), complying with the rules is a big hassle and it is more costly. So none of the three motivations leads to compliance and the economic or hedonic frame is stabilized by the other motivations in the background. In contrast, hand hygiene in hospitals is also a big problem; often medical or nursing staff forget to wash their hands each time they move to another patient. They strongly support the norms and economic motivations are in the background. It is the hedonic motivation that leads to rule violation, with the normative motivation destabilizing it. A culture in which each staff member helps the other remember to wash their hands is a viable strategy to improve compliance (Erasmus, 2012). Such a strategy would be ineffective in the asbestos removal sector. Further research into effective strategies based on the constellation of motivations is needed.

Finally, further research is needed into how Lindenberg’s theory may be applied to larger organizations. Lindenberg’s theory is a theory about individuals. By limiting our research to small firms in which operational managers have direct control over all employees (cf Mintzberg, 1989), we
made the assumption that that person’s frame was the firm’s frame. That assumption seemed to hold (as long as the only one person at the time fulfilled that role). Further research is needed into larger firms to investigate whether organizational frames can be analysed, and if so, how they are formed.

**Literature**


Keizer, K.E. Lindenberg, S.M. en Veldstra, J.L. (in press)


Appendix: Summary of case analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Type of enterprise</th>
<th>Frame dynamics</th>
<th>External influences</th>
<th>Compliance development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Frame change normative personal → economic → normative-personal</td>
<td>Sanctions, financial situation</td>
<td>deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Snackbar/pub</td>
<td>Stable economic frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, social</td>
<td>deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, family influence, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement after deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>Frame change normative-personal → hedonic/economic</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement after deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Snackbar</td>
<td>Recent change direct responsible. Now normative-personal</td>
<td>Sanction threat</td>
<td>improvement after deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pub</td>
<td>Three partners with different frames → instable frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement after deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Department store with restaurant</td>
<td>Stable normative-personal frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, social</td>
<td>improvement after deterioration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Frame change normative-personal → hedonic/economic</td>
<td>Financial situation, sanctions, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td>Frame change hedonic → professional</td>
<td>Sanctions, customer demands</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>Frame change economic → informal</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment, social (family, tv-programme)</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hotel-restaurant</td>
<td>Frame change normative-personal → hedonic/economic</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Super-market</td>
<td>Frame change at company level through change of direct responsible</td>
<td>Change of management, reason unknown</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bakery/ lunchroom</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Snackbar</td>
<td>Frame change economic → normative-personal</td>
<td>financial situation</td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Type of enterprise</td>
<td>Frame dynamics</td>
<td>External influences</td>
<td>Compliance developemnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Snackbar</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanction</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Snackbar</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, social</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanction, inspector treatment</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Stable economic frame</td>
<td>Sanction</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>Sanctions, inspector treatment, social</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Snackbar/restaurant</td>
<td>Stable normative frame</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>