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The links between identity processing styles and personal goals regulation during the 1st year of high school

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Background and goal

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- Adolescent transition **from middle school to high school** requires increasing capacity to formulate and pursue personal goals.

- Personal **identity may serve as a resource for pursuing personal goals**:
    - Identity functions include directing attention, filtering and processing information, managing impression, and selecting relevant behaviors (Adams & Marshal, 1996).
    - It is conceptualized as a socio-cognitive structure, which is part of the self-regulation system of a person (Berzonsky, 1994, 2011);

- Thus, our goal was to **assess the links between adolescent identity formation and goal regulation strategies** over the first year of high school.
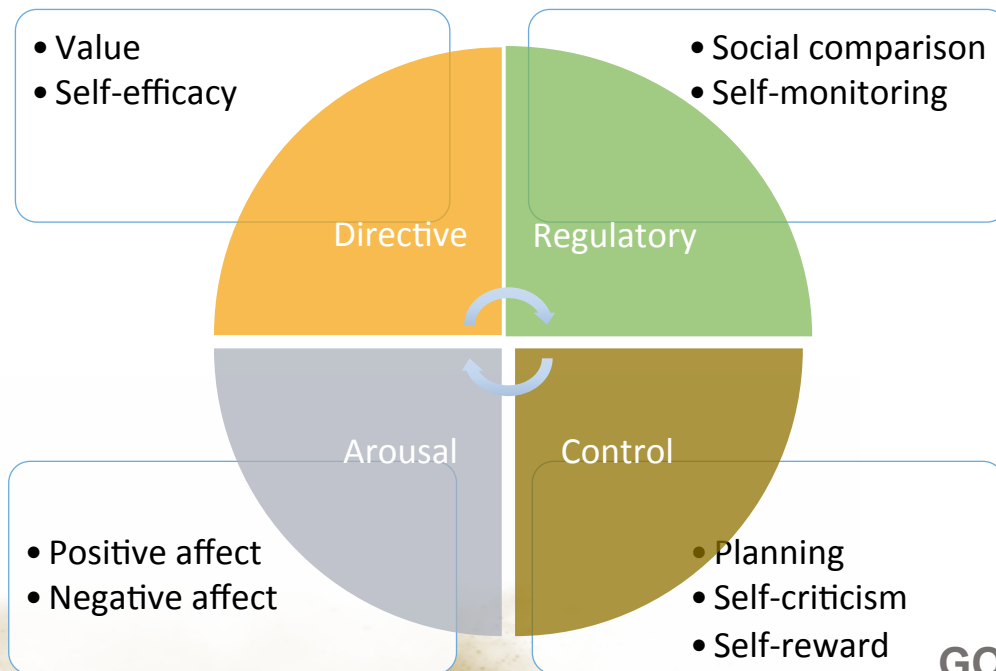
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Socio-cognitive perspective on goal regulation

Goal systems approach (Karoly, 1999; Karoly & Ruehlman, 1995; based on Ford's transactional model of adaptive control systems (1987):
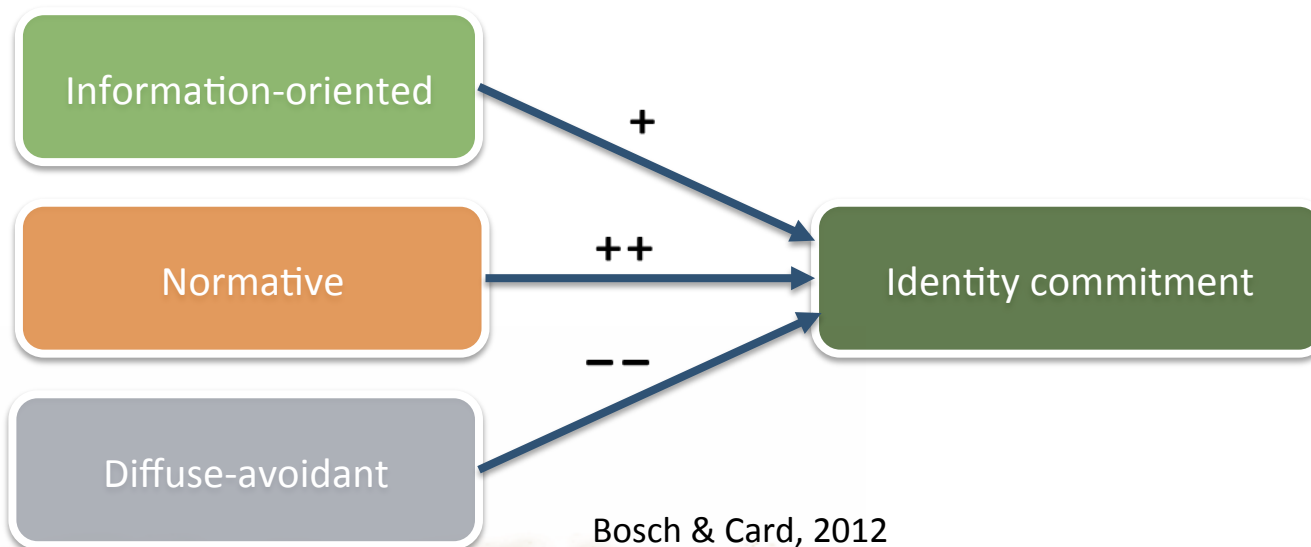

- Value
- Self-efficacy

Directive

- Social comparison
- Self-monitoring

Regulatory

- Positive affect
- Negative affect

Arousal

Control

- Planning
- Self-criticism
- Self-reward

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Socio-cognitive perspective on identity

People differ in decision-making and problem-solving related to identity-relevant choices (Berzonsky, 1994, 2004, 2011):

Information-oriented +→ Identity commitment

Normative ++→ Identity commitment

Diffuse-avoidant − −→ Identity commitment

Bosch & Card, 2012

Research question

To which extent are the **differences in the use of identity processing styles** related to the differences in goal regulation,

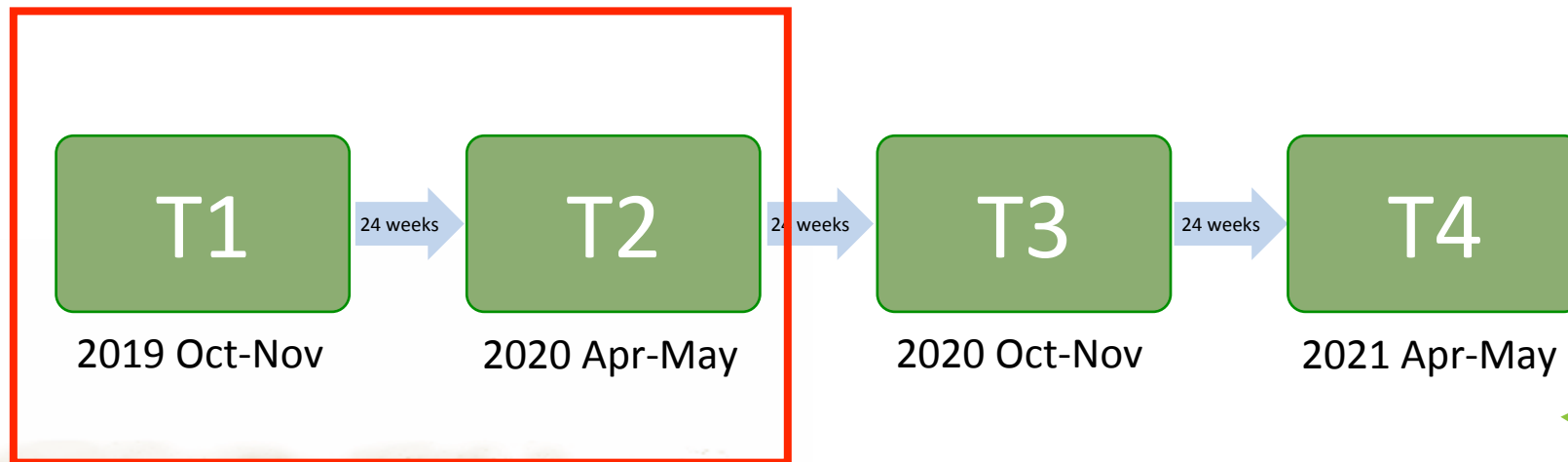- specifically, **to the differences in goal regulation changes over a school year**?

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Goals Lab study design

- School-based online assessment
- Mixed-quota sampling of municipalities and schools (SES x achievement)
- 36 gymnasiums across Lithuania (6 in a major city, 21 urban, 9 non-urban)

| T1	24 weeks →	T2	24 weeks →	T3	24 weeks →	T4
2019 Oct-Nov		2020 Apr-May		2020 Oct-Nov		2021 Apr-May

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Participants

- T1 & T2 participants of a longitudinal *Goals Lab* study

- **1268** adolescents (51,7% females)

- Age 14 - 16 (M = 14.87 SD = 0.39) at T1

- Diverse family and socio-economic background:
  - 67% live with two parents; 22% parental divorce, 4% parental loss, 4% migration
  - 12.9% receive social support (free nutrition at school) (on a national level – 13.7%)

- Homogenous ethnically (> 98% Lithuanian)

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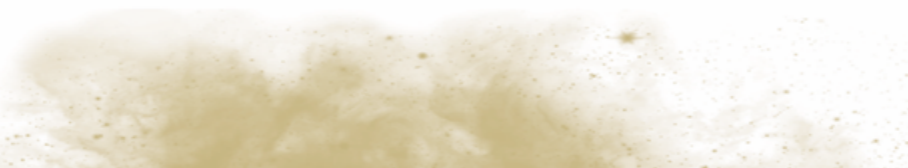
Instruments

Predictor T1: *Identity processing styles inventory (ISI)* (Berzonsky, 2015)

ISI Subscales	Items	Cronbach's alpha	
		T1	T2
Information-oriented style	9	,877	-
Normative style	9	,741	-
Diffuse-avoidant style	9	,740	-

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Instruments

Outcome T1 & T2: *Goal systems assessment battery (GSAB)* (Karoly & Ruehlman, 1995)

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Regulatory functions	GSAB Subscales	Items	Cronbach's α at T1, T2	
Directive	Self-efficacy	4	,837	,844
	Value	4	,891	,887
Regulatory	Social comparison	4	,815	,822
	Self-monitoring	4	,745	,737
Control	Planning-stimulus control	4	,748	,751
	Self-criticism	4	,832	,82
	Self-reward	4	,871	,885
Arousal	Positive affect	4	,892	,918
	Negative affect	4	,786	,787

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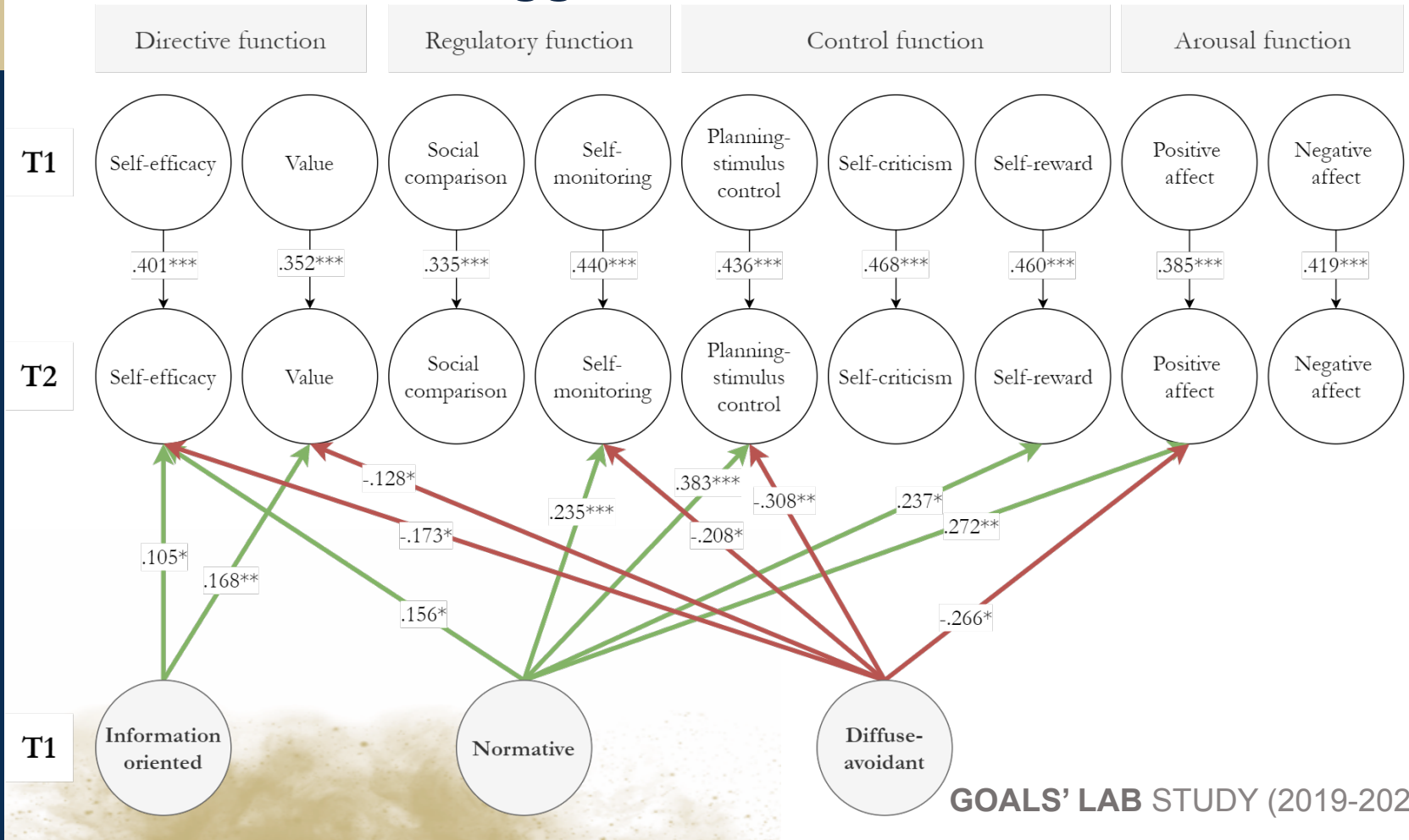# Analyses

Cross-lagged model

- To which extent do initial (T1) differences in the use of identity styles predict relative change in goal regulation over a school year (T1/T2)?

   Otherwise, to which extent do initial differences in identity styles predict how much one has changed in relation to others in goal regulation?

Results: Cross-lagged model

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Conclusions and limitations

How adolescents approach their self-related issues contributes to how they pursue their personal goals over the 1st year of high school:

- Higher reliance on **information-oriented and, especially, normative** identity processing style at the beginning of a school year predicts a relative **increase** in the use of a number of goal regulation strategies over a school year.
- Higher reliance on **diffuse-avoidant** identity style at the beginning of a school year predicts a relative **decrease** in the use of a number of goal regulation strategies over a school year.

Favorable formation of identity may be an important resource for adolescents in pursuing their goals.

More extended longitudinal design is necessary to better understand the directionality of the effects.
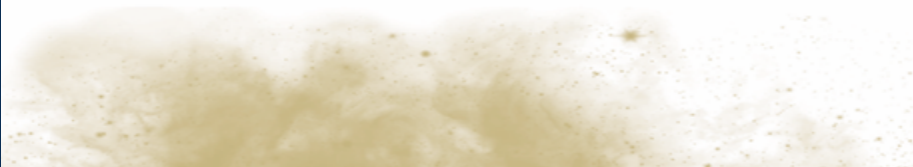
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Acknowledgements

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Thank you!

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Visit the study web: https://tikslulaboratorija.ktu.edu

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