

COLLOQUIA 2008 - University of Groningen, Department of Sociology

December, 18, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room GR15.008):

Nardi Steverink (University Medical Center Groningen): Social Stressors and Mental and Physical Health

This presentation focuses on gender differences in the associations between affection- and status-related stressors encountered earlier in life and physical and mental health problems later on. A representative sample of 447 men and 513 women (aged 40-79) filled in questions about affection- and status-related stressors encountered from birth on to the age of 40, a checklist of chronic somatic diseases, and items measuring mental health problems. Main outcome measures were number of chronic somatic diseases and level of psychological distress. Regression analyses showed no gender differences in the associations between affection-related stressors and physical and mental health problems later on. In contrast, status-related stressors encountered earlier in life were associated with physical and mental health for men only. The common gender distribution of parts that assumes that women suffer most from affection-related stress, and men from status-related stress, does not hold, at least not for affection. There seems to be more to the male experience of affection-related stress than is often assumed.

Nardi Steverink is a senior researcher at the University Medical Center Groningen.

November, 20, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Ernestine Gordijn (University of Groningen): The Influence of Metastereotyping when Anticipating Contact

When you are about to get into contact with other people, you may wonder what they will be like. Often, the prejudices and stereotypes you have about the salient social groups that these people belong to will influence your thoughts, feelings, and behavior (e.g., Fiske, 1998). However, you may also consider what the people you are about to meet might think of you. In that case, you could be aware of the stereotypes they have about the salient social groups that you belong to. Assumptions about the stereotypes of other social groups with respect to one's own group are called meta-stereotypes (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). Meta-stereotypes are not always activated and used. The question therefore is when meta-stereotypes matter, that is, when are people likely to activate and use meta-stereotypes in their (anticipated) contact with other people? Moreover, what are the consequences of these activated meta-stereotypes for feelings and behavior? In my talk I will discuss several studies that look at the antecedents and consequences of meta-stereotyping. Evidence for the influence of power, evaluation, stereotypic context and locus of control on metastereotyping will be presented. Moreover, I will show that negative metastereotyping could influence feelings and behavior, such as loneliness, expressing negative attitudes, bad performance and negative interactions with other people. Together this work points to the importance of meta-stereotyping in anticipated contact with people from other groups. The findings indicate that merely bringing groups into contact cannot be sufficient to improve intergroup relations. When people have negative meta-stereotypes about people they are about to meet, the results suggest that they are likely to have negative feelings and show negative behavior, which could be destructive for contact.

Ernestine Gordijn is professor in social psychology. She received a a VIDI grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). She published in major scientific journals such as the European Journal of Social Psychology and Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. Ernestine Gordijn is co-supervisor of the project of Tinka Veldhuis.

October, 16, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Anne-Rigt Poortman (Utrecht University): Legal Arrangements from a Sociological Perspective: Trends and Determinants

There is little sociological research about the legal arrangements of contemporary couples. Such arrangements, however, are an important way by which couples formalize their rights and obligations toward each other. Moreover, couples' legal arrangements have important implications in case the union ends. Using data from the HIN95 and the first wave of the NKPS, I will first describe change in legal arrangements over the life course and over historical time. The focus will be on: cohabitation without a contract, cohabitation with a contract, marriage with prenuptial agreements, and marriage in joint property. Next, I pay attention to how much people actually know about the arrangements they've made. Finally, the self-reported reasons for different legal arrangements as well as the sociological determinants of legal arrangements will be examined.

Anne-Rigt Poortman is assistant professor at the Department of Sociology at Utrecht University. Her research interests include union formation, union dissolution and new family forms. This lecture will also be presented to an audience of lawyers and legal scholars at the "Studiedag Vereniging Familie- en Jeugdrecht" in November.

October, 2, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Brent Simpson (University of South Carolina): Powerless People Have More Accurate Network Perceptions and Fare Worse as a Result

Previous work in sociology and related disciplines has led to divergent conclusions about how power affects the accuracy of network perceptions in groups. Our research builds on recent advances in the social cognition and social network literatures to develop a theory of power and network perception. A key feature of the theory is that it addresses both causal directions, i.e., how power affects perception of social ties, and how perceptual accuracy, in turn, mitigates power use. We introduce new experimental results to test both parts of the theory. Results from Study 1 show that, consistent with the theory, low-power actors (compared to those high in power) have more accurate perceptions of who is tied to whom in networks. Results of Study 2 support the prediction that perceptual acuity poses a social trap for low-power actors. That is, although it is individually advantageous for a low-power actor to have more

accurate perceptions about ties between others in the network, it is collective disadvantageous since increased perceptual accuracy among all low-power actors enhances the advantage of high-power actors. We conclude with general implications and suggestions for future work.

Brent Simpson received his PhD in Sociology at Cornell University in 2001. He is now Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina. His primary interests include altruism, cooperation, and other forms of prosocial behavior. His talk on power and perception in social networks has no relevance to any of these interests.

Tuesday, September 30, 13.00-14.30 (Room B136):

Bob Mills (Canadian Parliament): Change: New Ideas to Deal with Climate Change

Bob Mills has been a Member of Parliament in the Canadian government since 1993. His primary interest lies in the area of the environment. He is a Steering Committee Member for the G8+5 Climate Change Dialogue Group, the Canadian Representative to the Arctic Council, Member of the International Polar Year National Commission and Chair of the Canadian Standing Committee on the Environment. In 2004, he received the Sierra Club Bronze medal for work on the endangered species law and in 2005 the IFAW annual 'Animal Action Award' for work on C-15. In June of this year he received the GLOBE award in Tokyo for Lifetime Achievement for Environmental contribution. He also holds the record for the longest speech ever given in Canadian parliament, where he talked for over 11 hours about Kyoto.

September 1, 2008, 12:00-13:30 (Room M140):

Martijn Aslander (lifehacking.nl): Slimmer en effectiever werken in de netwerksamenleving

Het kan gebeuren: u zit in het buitenland, maar u wilt in een internetcafé toch even uw bankzaken online regelen. Grote vraag: hoe beschermt u dan het beste uw wachtwoord? Een lastige vraag, maar het antwoord is minder lastig dan het lijkt. Een simpel handigheidje kan al uitkomst bieden. Een speciaal softwareprogrammaatje bijvoorbeeld. Of het gebruik van een virtueel toetsenbord, dat op elke pc aanwezig is. Het zijn twee manieren om te voorkomen dat criminelen of computerhackers kunnen achterhalen wat u op uw computer heeft ingevoerd. Op internet hebben soortgelijke handigheidjes ook een naam: lifehacks. De term, die overwaaid uit de Verenigde Staten, beschrijft alle manieren om bepaalde problemen op te lossen en daarmee een hoop tijd te besparen. In Nederland werd lifehacking geïntroduceerd door het weblog Lifehacking.nl, waar tegenwoordig zo'n twintig lifehackers dagelijks hun favoriete hacks posten. Van hoe je handig gebruik kunt maken van het programma 'Mail' op een Mac tot en met hoe je internet op de laptop krijgt via de telefoon. Een paar simpele lifehacks is onmisbaar in Aslanders digitale bestaan. Het gebruik van zogenaamde RSS-feeds bijvoorbeeld om het nieuws te kunnen volgen zonder te hoeven surfen over het web. Volgens Aslander vormen die inmiddels zijn "persoonlijke informatieradar en filter". Verder zijn er twee handige programmaatjes die hij dagelijks gebruikt. Het programma Evernote voor het vastleggen van waardevolle zaken als knipsels en dingen op het web. En Textexpander, een programma waarmee hij kan typen zonder te typen. "Textexpander is een bizar krachtige tool, waarmee je automatisch formulieren op internet kunt invullen of tikfouten kunt voorkomen", aldus Aslander.

Martijn Aslander is lifehacker, connector en resourcer. Artikelen over hem verschenen onder meer in NRC Handelsblad en Metro.

June, 24, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Jan Kratzer (University of Groningen, Management and Organization): National and International Interlocking Directorates Within Europe: Corporate Networks Within and Between 15 European Countries

Analyses of European interlocking directorates networks are presented. Data are collected in the beginning of 2006 of 15 European countries, with a total of 362 corporations, and 6115 board positions. First, interlocking directorates networks within countries show large differences in density. It is shown that these differences are strongly related to the type of capitalist system in place. Second, the European transnational interlocking directorate network is presented. The different countries show different positions within this transnational network. Duration of EU membership strongly correlates with the centrality a country has in this European network. Finally, the relation between national and international networks has been studied.

Jan Kratzer was a Ph.D. student at the ICS. Presently, he is appointed a associate professor in Innovation Management and Strategy at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Groningen. This presentation is a co-production with Kees van Veen.

May, 22, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Tim W. Fawcett (University of Groningen, Theoretical Biology): Flexible Mating Strategies in Humans and Other Animals

Sexual selection is a potent evolutionary force, generating an incredible diversity of courtship displays which serve to attract the opposite sex. According to standard 'textbook' theory, all individuals should strongly prefer mates offering high-quality genes or plentiful resources, because this gives them the greatest fitness. This view is at odds with the considerable variation in mate preferences we see in real animals: some individuals have strong preferences, some have weak preferences, and some prefer a different type of mate altogether. In collaboration with others, I have been building evolutionary models to try and understand why such differences exist. Rather than fixed, uniform preferences, our work suggests that mate preferences should be flexible, with individuals adjusting their choosiness according to their current condition and circumstances relative to others in the population. For example, individuals in poor condition have slim chances of obtaining a high-quality mate, so they might do better by courting low-quality individuals. Our predictions can be tested in a wide range of species; some evidence of flexible mate-choice already

exists for orb-weaving spiders, field crickets, sticklebacks, zebra finches and fruit flies. We are now testing the specific predictions of our model by studying humans taking part in a 'speed-dating' event.

Tim Fawcett is a postdoctoral researcher in the Theoretical Biology Group at the University of Groningen, based in Haren. He read zoology at the University of Bristol, did his PhD at the University of Cambridge and came to Groningen in 2003. His current work focuses on 'The Evolution of Flexible Mating Strategies', an NWO-funded project combining mathematical models with empirical research. This is a collaborative effort involving members of the Social Psychology group in Groningen. For more information, please visit [the website of his department](#).

May, 14, 2008, 16:00-17:15 (Room B128):

Ken Frank (Michigan State University): Toward a Utility Theory of Socially Embedded Action

In this presentation I will build a theory of the utility of socially embedded action by including sociological motivations as part of utility. Akerlof and Kranton (2002) show how the psychological utility of conformity in a social context can be combined with the standard economic utility of work and leisure. To these I add sociological theory regarding expected utility of investments in others. The investments define a social technology that elaborates on social, generalized, and group generalized exchange. The returns influence future productivity and depend on system level characteristics associated with social capital such as norms, institutions and resources.

Ken Frank is a Professor of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education at the College of Education, Michigan State University. He is also appointed as Professor of Fisheries and Wildlife at the College of Agriculture, Michigan State University. He is interested in social structures of organizations and systems. How do the structures evolve, how do they affect what an organization does? He often uses quantitative methods drawing on social networks and multilevel models. Typically he studies small systems, in particular schools as organizations. He has published in American Educational Research Journal, American Journal of Sociology, Review of Research in Education, Social Networks, and Sociology of Education. He also co-authored a publication in Nature.

April, 17, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Allan V. Horwitz (Rutgers University): Creating Epidemics of Mental Disorder: The Social Transformation of Sadness and Fear into Depressive and Anxiety Disorders

Recent estimates of rates of mental illness in community populations indicate that nearly a third of the population will suffer from some anxiety disorder and nearly a quarter from a depressive disorder at some point in their lives. These studies also indicate that over half of the population will suffer from a mental disorder at some point in their lives. These figures are widely seen as evidence of an epidemic of mental illness that should call for major efforts to bring people into treatment and provide them with medication or psychotherapy. This talk challenges the assumptions behind these studies and argues that the high apparent prevalence of mental disorder is a result of methods that do not distinguish between normal sadness and fear and disordered depression and anxiety but instead that call both normal and disordered emotions "mental disorders." It also considers some of the social groups that benefit from and perpetuate high estimates of prevalence rates of mental disorders.

Allan V. Horwitz earned a doctoral degree in Sociology from Yale University where he was trained in psychiatric epidemiology and in deviance and social control. He is currently Professor II in the Department of Sociology and Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research at Rutgers University where he also serves as Dean for the Social and Behavioral Sciences. He has studied a variety of aspects of mental health and illness, including the social response to mental illness, family caretaking for dependent populations, the impact of social roles and statuses on mental health, and the social construction of mental disorders. His current work integrates biological and sociological perspectives in distinguishing between normal and dysfunctional types of depression. He has published over 60 articles and chapters in the main journals in his field. In addition, he has published several books including *The Social Control of Mental Illness* (Academic Press 1982; new edition Percheron Press 2002); *The Logic of Social Control* (Plenum Press 1990); *Creating Mental Illness* (University of Chicago Press 2002) and *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Misery into Depressive Disorder* (Oxford University Press 2007). He is also the co-editor, with Teresa Scheid, of *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories, and Systems* (Cambridge University Press 1999). Since 1980 he has been the co-director (with David Mechanic) of the NIMH funded Rutgers Postdoctoral Program in Mental Health. Professor Horwitz has also been elected Chair of the Mental Health Section of the American Sociological Association and of the Psychiatric Sociology Section of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. In 2006 he received the Leonard Pearlman Award for Distinguished Lifetime Contributions to the Sociology of Mental Health from the American Sociological Association. During the 2007-08 academic year he is a Fellow-in-Residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study.

March, 20, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (GR15.033):

Christiano Vezzoni (University of Milan): Religion and Politics in Italian Electoral Choice. Which Comes First in the New Century Electoral Divisions?

This presentation focuses on the changing links between religion, politics and voting behavior. After a brief description of the changes occurred in the relations between religion and vote in Italy in the last decades, I contrast the explanations of these changes by two theories of political change. The starting point of both theories is that, the relation between social identities, namely religious identities, and party choice has weakened. However, the first theory, that we called dealignment theory, proposes an exclusively sociological explanation of the changes occurred, while the second theory, that we called "politics matters" theory, underlines the fact that the political and institutional context can interact with social change in defining and constraining the political behavior of citizens. The test of the different hypotheses derived from the two theories is run against the empirical evidence coming from several Italian

electoral surveys (1972, 1985, 2001 and 2006). The finding suggests that, similarly to what happened in the Netherlands, in Italy the relation between religiosity, ideology and party choice was mainly influenced by changes in the political-institutional sphere (namely, the almost complete change of the political offer and the reform of the electoral law at the beginning of the 90s). The strong process of secularization intervened in Italian society only warrants that, after its disappearing, the religious cleavage will not come back to life in the same form we have known before, even if political entrepreneurs or parties will try to mobilize voters on a religious appeal.

Cristiano Vezzoni is Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Sociology, Department of Social and Political Studies, University of Milan, and he is a member of the consortium for Italian National Electoral Study (Itanes). His current work focuses on Religiosity, Ideology, and Vote in Southern Europe, in the framework of a project in collaboration with the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid and the Juan March Institute. His substantive research interests are in political behavior, relations between religion and politics, contextual effects on vote. He is currently instructor at the Summer School in Data Analysis of the University of Essex for the course of Measurement.

February, 21, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Herman van de Werfhorst (University of Amsterdam): Vocational Education and Active Citizenship Behavior in Cross-National Perspective

Educational systems should provide students with job-relevant skills as well as prepare students for active citizenship. These two core functions of schools may be in conflict with each other, as diversified and vocationally specific educational systems usually do well in terms of labor market preparation (e.g. reduce youth unemployment) but may be detrimental to (commonality in) citizenship education. Yet, there has been no cross-national research that examines the relationship between educational track (vocational or general) and citizenship behavior. This paper investigates whether track placement affects political interest and participation in voluntary organizations for 17 countries, using IALS data and employing multilevel models. It was shown that people educated in vocational programmes were less active citizens than people educated in general education. Moreover, these differences were stronger in strongly stratified educational systems relative to comprehensive systems, indicating that vocationally oriented schooling systems prepare less well for active citizenship than for the labor market.

Herman van de Werfhorst is professor of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. His primary research interests are in comparative studies on education, social stratification, and labour markets. He completed his PhD at the University of Nijmegen (at the ICS) in 2001; and was Prize Research Fellow at Nuffield College, University of Oxford, from 2000 to 2002. He has been working at the University of Amsterdam since 2002. Since October 2007 Van de Werfhorst has been running a VIDI grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), which aims to connect mechanisms why education pays off on the labour market with institutions that affect the likelihood that actors (employers, employees) behave in correspondence with the behavioral models underlying these mechanisms. So rather than run 'mechanism contest studies' that test whether, e.g., human capital or social closure theories better explain the impact of education, this project seeks to find institutional conditions under which it is likely that a particular theory offers an appropriate mechanism.

January, 24, 2008, 13:00-14:15 (Room B128):

Marc Hertogh (University of Groningen, Faculty of Law): What's in a Handshake?: Legal Equality and Legal Consciousness in the Netherlands

In this presentation, I examine how ordinary citizens and legal professionals in the Netherlands understand non-discrimination law, using the theoretical framework of legal consciousness. In 2006, the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission ruled that a school was wrong to suspend a female Muslim teacher who, for religious reasons, refused to shake hands with men. This ruling provoked a wave of controversy. I examine to what extent these reactions were indicative of the overall level of public support of the Dutch Equal Treatment Act. I first provide a brief summary of Dutch discrimination law and I discuss several recent critiques of legal consciousness as a framework for socio-legal research. People's understandings of legal equality are then examined using data from a large-scale multi-method study, which included an on-line survey, case-studies and in-depth interviews. Moreover, I provide a brief reconstruction of the Muslim-case. I argue that the controversy in this case was not an isolated incident, but an important illustration how non-discrimination law matters – or fails to matter – in the Netherlands.

Marc Hertogh is Full Professor of Socio-Legal Studies at the Faculty of Law, University of Groningen. He received his PhD from the University of Leiden. Prior to joining the Groningen faculty, he was a Research Fellow at the (former) Leiden Institute for Law & Public Policy, a Senior Research Fellow in the multidisciplinary research group 'The Importance of Ideals in Law, Morality and Politics' and a (Senior) Lecturer in Socio-Legal Studies at Tilburg University. His current research focuses on the role of law in everyday life, using concepts such as 'legal consciousness' and 'legal alienation'. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the the Dutch Lawyers' Journal (NJB) and a former member of the Editorial Board of the Dutch/Flemish Journal for Law & Society. For more information, please see [his website](#).