COLLOQUIA 2011 - University of Groningen, Department of Sociology

December 15, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Thomas Pollet (VU University, Amsterdam): Age Differences in Couples from around the Globe: A Test of the 'Male Older Norm' Covering 47 Countries Using a Simulation Approach

One of the earliest findings from evolutionary psychology is that men tend to prefer younger women, whereas women tend to prefer older men. Previous research has documented cross-cultural evidence for these preferences (Buss 1989). Moreover, while these preferences for age differences are well-documented, little is known on whether they are actualized in mate choice. Using comparable demographic surveys we investigated age differences in married couples, assortative mating for age within these couples and the presence of a male older norm across 47 different countries. The data are from the IPUMS project (www.ipums.org) and consist of representative national samples covering over 4,000,000 married couples (18 to 35 years old). Across the 47 countries, we found a sizeable mean age difference within couples, with males being on average older than females (M= 2.9 years; range: 1.34 (USA) years to 7.1 years (Guinea); Cohen's D= .86). Interestingly, cross-cultural variation in age differences within couples is smaller than variation in a given population given that the variance within countries was larger than between countries (variance within: 12 years; variance between: 2 years),. In addition, we found evidence for assortative mating across all these countries (mean r= .62; range: .34 (Senegal) - .82 (India)). Subsequently, we used a modeling approach in R, where we simulated random mating with respect to age in each country 10,000 times and compared this to the actual distribution of age differences within couples for this country. For every country we found evidence for a 'male older norm', meaning that marriages where males were older than females were much more common than expected by chance (all p<.0005). The simulation approach also allowed assessing which age brackets are overrepresented across countries (mode: -1 to 4 years). In line with previous studies on mate preferences, our study suggests the existence of a cross-cultural male older norm in actualized mate choice. Findings are discussed with reference to the current literature on human mate choice, with an emphasis on cross-cultural differences and similarities in preferences for traits in a spouse. Finally, we discuss biological market extensions of our approach.

[Thomas Pollet](#) obtained his Ph.D. at Newcastle University (UK). He has since worked as Assistant professor at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) in the department of Evolutionary Social Psychology where he taught several courses on evolution and human behavior. He currently is employed as Assistant Professor at the VU University Amsterdam (Social and Organizational Psychology) where he carries out teaching and research using an evolutionary framework. He has published on a wide variety of topics such as sexual selection for male wealth, sibling relationships, grandparenting, childlessness, parental investment and the evolution of social networks. He is currently investigating the role of height for interpersonal aggression in males. He received a VENI grant in 2010.

November 17, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Raf Vanderstraeten (Ghent University, Belgium): Networks of Scientific Communication

The rise of disciplines is connected with the formation of groups/networks of specialists. It is connected with the emergence of 'scientific communities' – theorized about since Thomas Kuhn and Robert Merton. But how is such a community of specialists brought together, how are common orientations among members of a scientific community upheld? In this presentation, I build upon the idea that scholarly journals play a key role in modern scientific disciplines. Journals both secure the shared values of a scientific community and endorse what that community takes to be certified knowledge. Publications in scholarly journals have become the canonical form of communication in a discipline. Against this background, I discuss the communication networks within and between two disciplines, viz. science and technology studies (STS) and the history of science. I use journal relatedness data to analyze some of the structural features of their disciplinary identities and relationships. The results show that the history of science network is more cohesive than the STS network. The relatively strong cohesion within the history of science network is associated with comparatively high degrees of intra-disciplinary communication, but comparatively weak ties to only a few related disciplines. The differences can be related to differences in the departmental infrastructure of both disciplines.

Raf Vanderstraeten is Professor of Sociology at Ghent University. He is director of the Center for Social Theory.

November 4, 2011, 12:30-13:45:

Stefan Thau (London Business School, UK): Unethical for the Sake of the Group: Risk of Social Exclusion and Unethical Behavior in Groups

Building on the observation that people who are at risk of exclusion from their groups engage in behaviors that signal their value to the group, we propose that exclusion risk leads individuals to undertake unethical behaviors that will benefit their group. Study 1 showed that group members whose risk of exclusion is high are more likely to cheat on a test that increased the group's chances to win a competition compared to those whose risk of exclusion is low. Study 2 finds that only when others in the group know that the member has acted unethically, those at high risk of exclusion engage in more unethical behaviors than those at low risk. Our results suggest that people who are in danger of being excluded from their groups need to be managed carefully as they are willing to violate societal norms to help the group but may ironically hurt the group.

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comparatively high degrees of intra-disciplinary communication, but comparatively weak ties to only a few related disciplines. The differences can be related to differences in the departmental infrastructure of both disciplines.

Stefan Thau did his PhD at the ICS Groningen and is currently Associate Professor at the London Business School. See also his website.

November 3, 2011, 14:30-15:45:

Johan Koskinen (University of Manchester, UK): Models for Multilevel Analysis of Binary Response with Peer Dependencies

When studying educational aspirations of adolescents, it is unrealistic to assume that the aspirations of pupils are independent of those of their friends. Considerable attention has also been given to the study of peer influence in the educational and behavioral literature. Typically, in empirical studies, the friendship networks have either been reduced to some summary measure or, when the complexity of the social structure has been used to its full extent, the studies have been limited to single networks, thereby effectively neglecting the context of the studied network. In this presentation I propose a multilevel probit model with correlated responses and a Markov chain Monte Carlo–based inference scheme for analyzing multilevel data where there may be dependencies not only within levels but also between peers that are directly relationally tied. The procedures are described in the context of the illustrative case of the Stockholm Birth Cohort, and the decision to proceed to higher secondary education for 12,660 pupils in 619 school classes in Stockholm.

Johan Koskinen got his PhD in Statistics from Stockholm University and has since worked at the Departments of Sociology and Statistics, Stockholm University, The Swedish Institute for Social Research, the MelNet group, University of Melbourne and at ReMiSS, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, and as a Non-Stipendiary Research Fellow of Nuffield College. Among his research interests are modelling and inference issues for different types of social networks in varying contexts and circumstances, with recent applications including single instances of networks and networks repeatedly observed through time and by different observers. Of special interest is a general concern with classes, positions, roles and context and how this may be approached in statistical analysis. These issues require approaches that draw on and incorporate elements from missing data modelling, a posterior block models, and latent class analysis.

November 3, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Thomas Grund (ETH Zurich, Switzerland): Emergence of Homophily: A Micro-Mechanism Approach Applied to Same-Sex Friendships in Scandinavian Schools

Homophily – the tendency of individuals to form ties with similar others – is one of the most consistent findings in social network analysis. Scholars interested in understanding its origins often refer to preferences (discrimination in friendship choices) and the sorting of individuals into homogenous groups (social foci). This article goes beyond these traditional explanations and explicitly focuses on the dynamic process of network tie formation. It thereby reveals the importance of opportunities and amplification effects induced by network size and triadic closure for the emergence of homophily. The paper shows that neglecting these effects – a common practice in sociology – can yield incorrect conclusions about when homophily is likely to be most pronounced. The proposed theoretical framework is used to derive hypotheses about the relationship between network size and homophily. The hypotheses are confirmed empirically with data on same-sex friendships in 519 Scandinavian schools.

Thomas Grund just finished his PhD in Sociology on social networks at Nuffield College, Oxford and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Chair for Sociology, in particular Modeling and Simulation at ETH Zurich, Switzerland. His research goal is to combine computer programming skills with sociological thinking to study how relatively simple interactions between individuals and groups lead to the emergence and diffusion of social patterns. Currently, he works on issues around social networks, diffusion, and social dynamics and examines macro-implications of micro-dynamics in various settings, e.g. the performance of football teams, the dynamics of the international art market, the diffusion of violence, and the emergence of homophily and cooperation.

Friday October 28, 2011, 15:30-16:45:

Peter McDonald (Australian National University): Forecasting Births

Statistical agencies conventionally project future births using only one parameter of the population at risk, the ages of women. Their results are very often wrong even in the short term. Errors arise primarily because of the failure to consider the impact of past changes in the timing of births upon future births. Projections of births are important because they are used for the planning of child-related services such as maternity services, childcare and schools. These are 'lumpy' services meaning that it is not easy to revise plans if the projections prove to be incorrect, or, in other words, errors are very costly. The paper argues that births can be forecast in the short-term much more precisely by using three parameters: age, parity and duration since previous birth. In the empirical example used in the presentation (Australia), it was observed that, given age at first birth, progressions to higher order births were highly predictable in the short-term. Thus, accurate forecasts of all births were a matter of being able to accurately forecast first births. Expressed in another way, births in the short-term are strongly influenced by the composition of the female population by age, parity and duration from previous birth and all three parameters should be used in forecasting.

Peter McDonald is Professor of Demography and Director of the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute at the Australian National University. He is President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population for the years, 2010-2013. He is frequently consulted on the issue of population futures (causes, consequences and policies) by governments around the world, especially in Australia, Europe and East Asia. In 2008,

he was appointed as a Member in the Order of Australia. He is Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research.

October 6, 2011, 13:00-14:15:
Jörg Raab (Tilburg University): Heading towards a Network Theory of Effectiveness: Combining Structure, Governance and Context
Despite the ever-increasing importance of networks as a societal phenomenon, network researchers in sociology, business, public management, and health care services still have only a marginal understanding of consciously created, goal directed inter-organizational networks consisting of three or more organizations (Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007). One of the few studies that address the effectiveness of those networks is the study by Provan and Milward (1995), which investigates the relationship between structural network characteristics and network effectiveness in four mental health care networks in the U.S. Building on this earlier work I will present two studies conducted in the Netherlands in the area of mental health care and crime prevention networks that attempt to replicate and further refine previous insights into the relationship between structural characteristics and network effectiveness including more recent work on the governance of networks. The analysis combines network analysis and QCA (Ragin 2000). This increasingly popular method of analysis allows researchers to identify different configurations of conditions that lead to certain outcomes. The results of the two studies confirm the main findings by Provan and Milward; namely, the positive impact of centralized integration, resource munificence, external control and stability of the network for network effectiveness. The configurational approach, however, enables us to further specify earlier findings and identify distinct constellations of conditions including the governance and context factors of networks that lead to effective outcomes.
Jörg Raab is Assistant Professor of Policy and Organization Studies at the Department of Organization Studies, Tilburg. His research focuses on inter-organizational networks, networks and teams, public organizations, and dark networks as organizational problems. He has published in the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, the Journal of Management Inquiry, and the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management.

September 15, 2011, 13:00-14:15:
Johannes Huinink (University of Bremen, Germany): Family, Social Mobility, Spatial Mobility, and the Life Course
Family development, social mobility, and spatial mobility are closely connected dimensions of the individual life course. A theory of the individual life course providing a sound conceptual basis to study these kinds of interdependences is still missing, however. In my talk I will present an outline of such a theory. Empirical examples drawn from different studies dealing with family dynamics and social mobility illustrate some ideas of such an approach.
Johannes Huinink is Professor of Sociology (Social Structure Theory and Research) at University of Bremen since 2003. He is member of the Institute for Empirical and Advanced Sociology (EMPAS). Since 2004 he is Co-PI of the "Panel Study of Intimate Relationship and Family Dynamics" (pairfam) funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. His research focuses on life-course research (theory of the life course in a multidimensional, multi-level perspective), family dynamics (social change of the transition to adulthood and fertility in national and international perspective), spatial mobility (internal migration), and social structure analysis (social mobility). He published in a variety of international journals such as American Journal of Sociology, Social Science Research, and International Sociology.

September 7, 2011, 16:00-17:15:
Daniel McFarland (Stanford University, USA): 'We Just Clicked': Conversational Features of Social Bonding in Speed Dates
Most sociological research on social bond formation has argued that status-attraction and self-selection narrow the pool of suitable persons and then within the remaining set the quality of social interaction is such that some persons "click" / "connect" and form bonds while others do not. But what does it mean for persons to "click" and how is that accomplished? This paper studies how different features of speech – e.g. lexical (word usage), prosodic (pitch) and dialogue acts (backchannel) - are used differently by men and women to establish a reciprocal social bond. To study dating conversations we collected original data on multiple speed dating events using surveys on dating decisions and interpersonal perceptions and audio recordings for information on speech acts. We then analyze these data using dyadic data analysis (Kenny, Kashy and Cook 2006) and discern which speech styles are more or less associated with desired forms of tie formation (i.e., date selection).
Daniel McFarland is Professor of Sociology at Stanford University. He studies the social dynamics that surround and constitute educational systems. He characterizes these dynamics as having identifiable structures or patterns, and argues it is through an understanding of these features that there arises a richer, lasting capacity for organizational change. His early work developed from in-depth studies of high school classroom settings, with special attention placed on the determinants of student engagement and resistance to learning. Since then, he has gone on to research the structure of high school course-taking, the variable qualities of student governments, how extra-curricular activities socialize citizens, and how social networks and membership affiliations influence identity-formation. He has published in major scientific journals such as American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, and Sociology of Education.

March 17, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Eva Jaspers (Utrecht University): The Division of Paid Labor in Same-Sex Couples

The division of (paid) labor in households is affected by efficiency considerations and / or gender roles. Both result in a high male labor force praticipation and fewer working hours for females. Same-sex couples have more equal divisions of paid labor than opposite-sex couples, partly because of a lower need for specialization due to lower fertility, partly because of stronger equity norms. However, when comparing between gay male and lesbian couples, gender roles may affect their labor market choices as well. Gay males are expected to work more hours, each and as a couple, than lesbians. We merged 17 waves of the Dutch Labor Force Surveys, resulting in 987 gay male and 1,021 lesbian couples, to test these claims empirically. Results support the hypotheses. I will discuss how results could translate to other national contexts.

Eva Jaspers received her PhD in Social Sciences from Radboud University Nijmegen in 2008. She currently holds the position of assistant professor at the department of Sociology at Utrecht University. She is the national coordinator of a large scale, longitudinal, European data collection amongst high school pupils, modelled after the famous Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study in the US. Her research interests include (1) interethnic contact and/or conflict; (2) attitude formation and change; (3) (ethnic) inequality; and (4) gay male and lesbian families. She published in a variety of international journals, such as European Sociological Review, Public Opinion Quarterly, European Union Politics, and the Journal of Family Issues.

February 17, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Tom van der Meer (University of Amsterdam): The Myth of the Dutch Trust Crisis: Reframing the Problem

Politicians, journalists and scholars seem convinced that the Netherlands are experiencing an electoral crisis. The Dutch elections consistently belong to the most volatile in post-WW2 Western Europe. Populist movements are on the rise. Simultaneously, scholars such as Francis Fukuyama (JHU) and Paul Schabel (SCP) claim that the Netherlands is no longer a high-trust country. Citizens' trust in government and parliament has supposedly gone into a dip after 2002. But is that the case? Is there such a thing as the Dutch drop? Are the Dutch really so dissatisfied with their institutions and politicians? If so, what is the explanation? And if not, why do we think that we have become distrusting? Based on two finished studies and an ongoing project, I argue that the current electoral changes do not point to a (structural) decrease in political trust, but to an increase in electoral volatility. Preliminary analyses on electoral volatility will be presented, based on a panel data set of more than 70.000 respondents, that support the theoretical framework: it shows when voters switch parties, between which parties they switch. I conclude that the Dutch electorate is surprisingly more structured than aggregate levels of volatility in political trust and party support might suggest.

Tom van der Meer received his PhD (cum laude) from the Radboud University Nijmegen in 2009. He is now an assistant professor of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. He was recently awarded a NWO-grant for his project on electoral volatility, and a VENI grant for his project on ethnic diversity and social cohesion. His current research projects focus on (1) trust and electoral volatility; (2) civic and political participation; (3) ethnic diversity and social cohesion; and (4) party systems and party system change. He published in various international journals such as the Americal Sociological Review, Comparative Political Studies, European Journal of Political Research, and European Sociological Review.

February 10, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Frans Willekens (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague): Multistate Event History Analysis

In multistate analysis, the life history is represented by a sequence of states and transitions between the states. The history may be described in discrete or continuous time. In this presentation I consider histories in continuous time. The movements between states are governed by origin-destination specific transition intensities that vary with age and depend on covariates. The transition intensities may also depend on the individual life history (e.g. duration in the state, characteristics at an early age) and contextual factors. Multistate models have two major uses: (1) to determine effects of personal attributes, past experiences and other factors on transitions and (2) to predict outcomes, i.e. states and transitions at higher ages, and life course trajectories. In the presentation I illustrate multistate event history analysis using SHARELIFE. SHARELIFE is the third wave of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). It focuses on people's life histories. For the analysis, I use the new R package Biograph. The package was designed to help explore life history data before multistate models are estimated. It includes functions that produce input data in the proper format for statistical packages devoted to competing risks and multistate models. Several of these packages were recently introduced in a special issue of Journal of Statistical Software (Vol, 38, Issue 1, January 2011; special editor Hein Putter, Leiden University Medical Center). Biograph also includes functions that produce the multistate survival function and associated expected sojourn times. The package is fully described in F. Willekens (2011) "Biograph. Multistate analysis of life histories with R". To predict life course trajectories the multistate life table and multistate demographic projection models are used in combination with dynamic microsimulation. The methodology is implemented in the new R package MicMac, developed by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock as part of the EU-funded project MicMac; Bridging the Micro-Macro Gap in Population Forecasting.

Frans Willekens (1946) is senior researcher at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) and Honorary Professor of Population Studies, University of Groningen. He is a member of Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). He was director of NIDI from 2003 to 2010. In 2005 Frans Willekens and colleagues established the European Doctoral School of Demography. When he was Professor of Demography at the University

of Groningen (1989-2003), he founded the [Population Research Centre](#) (1991). He successfully supervised 37 PhD candidates ([co-]promotor). His main research interest is the development of simulation models of life histories. These biographic models produce synthetic biographies that are extensions of the synthetic cohort concept in demography. The research on synthetic biographies should ultimately result in synthetic populations, a virtual world based on sound empirical evidence. Frans Willekens holds a PhD in Urban Systems Engineering and Policy Planning from the Technological Institute, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA (1976).

January 20, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Tom Postmes (University of Groningen): The Role of Shared Cognition in the Formation of Social Identities: Re-Lating Inequality, Inequity and Social Categorization

There is a long-standing tradition in social psychology of exploring the cognitive foundations of discrimination and other forms of group-based inequality. In this tradition, social categorization is assumed to be the foundation of social-cognitive and group processes such as stereotyping, prejudice and ingroup favoritism. These processes in turn are the basis for intergroup conflict and social inequity. We present a new line of research in which we are exploring the question upon what basis those social categorizations are made, in the first place. Specifically, we ask the question under what conditions people start categorizing members of a relatively homogeneous group in which they collaborate towards a common goal. In several studies, we demonstrate that the perception of inequality per se is not sufficient for social categorization to take place. Shared cognition (and the sharing of cognitions through interaction) appears to be a prerequisite for the emergence of categories of "us" and "them", and the inference of group-based inequity.

Tom Postmes is professor of social psychology at the University of Groningen. After receiving his PhD from the University of Amsterdam (1997) he became a lecturer at the same university. In 2001, he joined the University of Exeter where he was promoted to full professor in 2004. Among his awards are a postdoctoral fellowship of Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (1998) and a research fellowship of the ESRC (2003). Since 2007, he works at University of Groningen. His research and teaching is concerned with communication via Internet, group processes within and between groups, and social identity. With Jolanda Jetten, he edited *Individuality and the group: Advances in social identity* (Sage, 2006).

January 6, 2011, 13:00-14:15:

Sterett Mercer (University of Southern Mississippi): Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Social Skills, and Academic Achievement: Linear or Nonlinear Relations?

The association between symptoms of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and adjustment-related variables (i.e., social skills and academic achievement) will be examined in 9-12 year-old children. Recent taxometric research suggests that despite common concpetualization of ADHD as a categorical disorder, symptoms of ADHD appear to have a dimensional structure. Despite the relatively continuous distribution of ADHD symptoms in children, ADHD appears to be non-linearly related to adjustment variables such that at higher levels of ADHD, the relation between ADHD symptoms and impairment is stronger. Results will be discussed in reference to categorical vs. dimensional conceptualizations of ADHD, and possible implications for assessment and identification of ADHD will be addressed.

Sterett Mercer is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Southern Mississippi and will be joining the faculty of the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education at the University of British Columbia in Summer, 2011. His primary research interests concern the impact of the school social context (i.e., relationships with teachers and peers) on student behavior and academic achievement. A second, emerging area of research broadly concerns the application of quantitative methods to single-case research and school psychology practice. This presentation is more reflective of this second area of research-- in addition to the substantive topic of the dimensionality of ADHD, the presentation will highlight a semiparametric approach to investigate nonlinear relations among latent variables using structural equation mixture modeling.