

## NIP-symposium

### When culture matters: The contribution of (cross)-cultural studies to the development of psychology as a science - 2nd of November 2017- Utrecht, The Netherlands

Focussing on '*diversity*' in psychology seems very popular today. However, despite the actuality and the relevance of the topic, cross-cultural psychology still remains a separate domain in the academic curriculum. This is rather controversial, because the contribution of the above mentioned studies to the development of psychology as a science turned out to be fundamental and, we dare to say it, even revolutionary. Cross-cultural psychology researches in particular the way in which our scientific findings could be generalised, by testing our results on groups with a variety of backgrounds: are our findings to be considered universal or merely cultural-specific? And, could we integrate these particular results into the corpus of knowledge that we may call 'psychology'? This is the question!

Prominent researchers and practitioners will present during this symposium an overview of the main findings in this domain in the last decennia and, subsequently, will demonstrate the scientific and social value of this particular type of knowledge. The following questions may be answered: what is meant by '**cultural specific**' in human behaviour, how could we filter that out in order to be able to generalise? Which methods are common in this research field? How could we avoid reasoning errors like, for example, sampling bias, assimilation bias, categorisation etc.? How could we take 'context' into account in our scientific evaluations and what does this mean for the interpretation of the data? What is the predictive validity of these data? Are psychological phenomena similar in all cultures?

Last but not least, how can we best reason about 'culture' as a concept: which new insights have we gained in the last time regarding this concept and how could these be applied in the practical fields of the psychologists and psychiatrists? What are the effects of 'altering' (when one is considered 'being different'). What are the implications of this knowledge for the field of human rights? Is 'culture' merely a political and moral instrument or is it a sui-generis scientific cornerstone?

#### Program

13.45- 14.00 Drs. Cristina Vellinga MRes: *Introduction*

14.00-14.40 Prof. dr. Ype Poortinga: *Culture of migrants: heritage or identity?*

14.40-15.20 Dr. Katerina Pouliasi: *Bicultural minds: how do they manage culturally conflicted situations and subjective well-being?*

15.20-15.30 break

15.30-16.10 Dr. Rens van de Schoot: *Shouldn't we stop testing null hypotheses and using p-values?*

16.10-16.50 Dr. Victor Kouratovsky: *Culture gets under your skin. about the relationship between culture and development (phylogenesis and ontogenesis) from the perspective of cultural neuroscience*

16.50- 17.00 break

17.00- 17.40 Dr. Hanneke Bot: *Why transcultural health care is a wrong idea*

17.40- 18.20 Prof. dr. Fons J.R. van de Vijver: *Effects of migrant integration policies on adjustment*

18.20-19.00 break (warm meals)

19.00-20.00 Debate Psychology 2.0 (chair: Dr. Jeroen Knipscheer (Utrecht University); special guests: prof. dr. Rolf Kleber (Utrecht University), drs. Polli Hageaars (EFPA Human Rights), Dipl. Psych. Ulrike del Ponte (EFPA Cultural and Ethnic Diversity), Drs. Ine Vink (founder of the section Interculturalisation NIP).

### ***1. Culture of migrants: heritage or identity?***

Ype H. Poortinga, Tilburg University

A well-known statement in the field of cross-cultural psychology has it that an individual person is like all other humans, like some other humans and like nobody else. The latter aspect, individuality, is central for psychologists engaged in diagnosis and therapy. At the same time, there is an awareness that clients cannot be seen separate from their background, with migrants especially the culture of the country they come from. The lead question in this presentation is how psychologists in professional interactions with members of minority groups can deal with the notion of “culture”.

Prof. Poortinga will give an overview how in the literature differences between groups of people have been presented and will discuss the validity and utility for the praxis of various suggested distinctions, such as between more static and more fluid approaches, and between types of societies (notably individualistic versus collectivistic). However, a real solution for the contrast between heritage and identity, as suggested in the title, cannot be provided, but he hopes to illustrate how the meaning and implications of this contrast vary with conceptual orientations on cross-cultural differences.

**Short bio:** Ype H. Poortinga is emeritus professor at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, and at the University of Leuven in Belgium. His most consistent interest has been in the conditions under which data obtained in different cultural populations can be meaningfully compared. He has also written on theoretical issues in cross-cultural psychology. His empirical research has dealt with a variety of topics in culture-comparative research, including information transmission, basic personality variables, emotions, and social psychological variables. His experience in applied fields includes program evaluation, development of psychometric tests and intercultural training. He has worked in societies as far apart as South Africa, India, Indonesia and Mexico. He received in 2007 the Sindbad-award.

### ***2. Bicultural minds: how do they manage culturally conflicted situations and subjective well-being?***

Dr. Katerina Pouliasi

When you live actively with more than one culture you may, partly unconsciously, partly deliberately, acquire a ‘bicultural mind’. Katerina Pouliasi has investigated how children and adults who are constantly immersed in two cultures (in their own family, organizations, society at large or even in cross-national professional interactions) are able to develop a bicultural mind: i.e. have the ability to think and behave in ways that fit the patterns of either culture depending on the salient context. In her experimental studies she uses typical cultural symbols and the language connected to these symbols to activate each culture’s input on targeted domains, like aspects of the Self, endorsement of values, cognition in social behaviour and even on how associations are culturally networked. A critical principle is that conflicting input rooted in different cultures cannot simultaneously guide cognition and behaviour. Cultural Conflict between one’s origin and host culture plays a critical role in this process and her findings with the Dutch as host culture are consistent to other studies with the American as host culture.

Most important for psychologists, the contributions of a positive 'I' feeling to subjective well-being, taken for granted for the Dutch, can be less effective than that of a strong 'We' feeling for people with a collectivistic background.

**Short Bio:** Katerina Pouliasi obtained her Ph.D. on 'Culture, Self-Understanding and the Bicultural Mind' at the University of Utrecht (2010). Since then, she conducts tailor-made surveys and workshops on how different cultures influence the 'ideal' self, values, well-being, self-esteem, understanding of certain 'words'. Next to cross-cultural factors, she employs cultural priming techniques to elicit spontaneous behaviour in shifting cultural context. She provides training and consultancy for multinational companies on Cross-Cultural Management, and for expats, international students and Dutch interested in intercultural competence in private and/or professional settings.

### ***3. Culture gets under your skin. about the relationship between culture and development (phylogenesis and ontogenesis) from the perspective of cultural neuroscience***

Dr. Victor Kouratovsky, Clinical psychologist, Child- and adolescent psychologist (Specialist NIP)

Cultural neuroscience represents an interdisciplinary domain connecting psychology, anthropology, neuroscience and developmental biology, researching interactions between neurobiological processes and cultural values, habits and beliefs. After a brief introduction to this domain, dr. Kouratovsky will focus on the practical implications and on how culture influences individual development across the lifespan and what this means for diagnosis and therapy.

**Short bio:** Victor Kouratovsky is since the late 1980's involved with the theory and practice of diagnosis and therapy of migrants and their offspring. In 2015 he received the Sindbad-award of the Dutch institute of psychologists (NIP) for his contributions to intercultural psychology. His current affiliations include Lucertis centre for- child and adolescent psychiatry, the Parnassia academy, the Expertise Centre for Transcultural psychiatry, and ExpatPsy: psychological and psychiatric expertise for expats

### ***4. Shouldn't we stop testing null hypotheses and using p- values?***

Dr. Rens van de Schoot

We do know quite a lot about cross-cultural research, isn't it? Why do we still bother testing the null hypothesis which asserts that there is no difference in the population? Even if we would not expect any difference, which is by the way a good hypothesis, the p-value would not give us an answer at all on this question. In this presentation, dr. Van der Schoot will explain in which cases the null hypothesis and p-value, when used correctly, would give a correct answer. He will also show us how often we abuse the p-value and gives us a reason why we should stop doing so. Rather than accusing, he hopes in this way to start a discussion about how to make together a better science. In addition, he will show us how Bayesian statistics work and what type of solutions could they offer. He will demonstrate through examples from cross-cultural psychology how the respective questions could have been answered in a better way. He will also show us however that also Bayesian statistics can be abused. This presentation forms part of the project "The Living Room of Science" from the Young Academy of the KNAW, where a discussion is being carried out about a responsible way of making science.

**Short bio:** Rens van de Schoot first studied Medical imaging techniques and worked for four years at the university hospital in Utrecht, The Netherlands. After this, he started studying again, completed his Psychology bachelor with a minor in juvenile delinquency and graduated cumlaude for the research master Development

and Socialization of Children and Adolescents. He obtained his PhD (also cumlaude) on applying Bayesian statistics to real life data at the department of Methods and Statistics. The title of his dissertations is "Informative Hypothesis: How to move beyond classical null hypothesis testing". His dissertation was awarded the APA award best dissertation of division 5. Currently, he is appointed as associate professor at Utrecht University and as extra-ordinary professor at the Optentia research programme, North West University in South-Africa. He recently became a member of the Young Academy (Jonge Akademie) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). Rens is working on a grant from the Netherlands organization for scientific research on longitudinal Bayesian models for small samples. Recently, he received the prestigious VIDI grant.

### **5. Why transcultural health care is a wrong idea**

Hanneke Bot has a long-standing career in mental health care in Kenia and The Netherlands, focussing on asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Although she is seen by most of us as a 'transcultural mental health care professional', she does not call herself in this way. More excitingly, she has never understood why 'culture' is considered a factor of importance when treating foreigners, while the problems of Dutch patients would be addressed from a psychological perspective.

In her presentation, she will explain her view on the care system for foreigners, the grounds on which this reasoning is based (theoretically, practically and socially), why transcultural health care is a wrong idea, and subsequently, she will argue for a concept where asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and other 'aliens' can be fully seen as the person they are, and receive the care they might need.

**Short bio:** Hanneke bot studied sociology at the Wageningen University and became a Dutch registered psychotherapist in the early 1990's. She worked in several countries in Africa and Asia and was among others a counsellor in Nairobi, Kenya. In the past twenty years she worked at Phoenix- Pro Persona as a therapist and program manager. Phoenix is a department for the treatment of severe psychiatric disorders and has decades of experience in the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. Hanneke Bot obtained her PhD in 2005 (Utrecht University) with research on interpreter-mediated communication in mental health care. She has been a lecturer at the University of Leuven and is currently teaching both interpreters and psychologists as a self-employed expert. She developed a generic training for interpreters working in mental health care which she teaches yearly. In 2013 she received the Sindbad-award. She has numerous (inter)national publications on health care for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and on interpreting in (mental) health care systems.

### **6. Effects of migrant integration policies on adjustment**

#### **Fons van de Vijver**

Prof. Van de Vijver will offer us a comparative analysis of the effect of migrant integration policies on adjustment in the Netherlands and in several other countries. He will discuss this effect on four levels:

(1) performances in school (how big are the differences in performances at school between children with various backgrounds compared to indigenous children, at an international level?); (2) the role of (so-called) tracking and early career choices (technical, scientific); (3) level of command of Dutch and of own background language; (4) well-being. He is arguing that immigrants in the Netherlands (where we may speak of a relatively tolerant climate, internationally compared) obtain relatively high scores on international exams, that the dominance of the Dutch language and the loss of own background language differs greatly between ethnical groups, and that immigrants often show lower levels of well-being than the dominant population, even if this difference is rather small by international standards.

**Short bio:** Fons van de Vijver is Professor of Cross-Cultural Psychology at Tilburg University (the Netherlands) and has extraordinary chairs at North-West University (Potchefstroom, South Africa) and the University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia). His main interest is on methodological aspects of comparisons among groups, acculturation and personality. He has more than 500 publications in this domain. He is also the past-President of the European Association of Psychological Assessment and the current President of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology. He received in 2014 the Sindbad-award.

## 7. Debate: Psychology 2.0

**Chairman:** Dr. Jeroen Knipscheer (Utrecht University)

**Special guests:** prof. dr. Rolf Kleber (Utrecht University), drs. Polli Hagedaars (EFPA Human Rights), Dipl. Psych. Ulrike del Ponte (EFPA Cultural and Ethnic Diversity) & Ine Vink (founder of the section Interculturalisation NIP).

The participants will have the possibility to interact and debate with the speakers and our special guests over the new insights gained during this symposium and their relevance to the (further) development of psychology as a science, as well as the way the academic curriculum should incorporate this knowledge.

### Korte biografie:

**Jeroen Knipscheer** Ph.D. is assistant professor at the department of Clinical psychology (Utrecht University) and Sr. researcher/coordinator of the program *Trauma and Diversity* at the Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group; in the same time, he works as a psychotherapist at both institutes. Additionally, he is chief-editor for the *Impact Magazine*, a magazine over the psychosocial effects of traumatic events. His main focus is on the intercultural aspects of psychotrauma, the applicability and effectivity of evidence-based treatments within a diverse population and on the development of cultural-sensitive treatment programs for those affected by traumatic events. He received in 2017 the Sindbad-award.

**Rolf J. Kleber** Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Psychotraumatology, Department of Clinical & Health Psychology, Utrecht University as well as Head Research of Foundation Arq (a holding combining the Institute for Psychotrauma, The Netherlands as well as Centre '45, the national expert centre for medical-psychological treatment of victims of war and organized violence). He was lecturer at the University of California, Irvine (U.S.A.) and held academic positions at several Dutch universities. He was also supervisor of the Continuing Education Department of the Dutch Association of Psychologists.

**Polli Hagedaars** is a registered, practicing healthcare psychologist in Amsterdam-NL and a trainer in diversity and non-discrimination. Since 2013 she is also the convenor of the Board Human Rights & Psychology of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA).

**Ulrike del Ponte** is the managing director of the OTH Regensburg study programme "Intercultural Competence", and therein chief scientist since 2011. She is also working for the EFPA since 2013, and since January 2016 is the current convenor of the EFPA Board for Cultural and Ethnic Diversity.

**Ine Vink** is health psychologist working at Winnock Achmea and at Esens, she is the founder of the section Interculturalisation NIP and of the Task Force Diversity EFPA.

**Cristina Vellinga** is the chairwoman of the department for Interculturalisation NIP (affiliated since 2003), the initiator and coordinator of the present symposium. She received her education as a researcher in developmental neurocognitive psychology at the University of London (Birkbeck College) and as a researcher in philology at the University of Leiden (NL) and the University of Valladolid (ES). She works also as a practitioner in the clinical domain and is *Europsy* registered (Clinical&Health, Work&Organisation).