

EARLY RESEARCHER UNION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2016



Dear ERU/EADP members,



This has been a very active year for all of us and ERU/EADP members across Europe. ERU/EADP young scholars and ERU National Representatives have actively contributed as participants, speakers, or chair across **several European conferences**, among these are *Family Safety in the Changing World* (Poland), the *International Relations and European Study* conference, *International Colloquium of Social Science and Communication* (Romania), *The Cultural diversity, migration, and education: Integrating multiple perspectives to promote school success* Conference (Germany), the *24th biennial meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development* (Lithuania) and the *18th Biennial international conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence* (Spain). Also, In collaboration with Humboldt University (Germany) and Tilburg University (the Netherlands), thanks to Loes Keijsers and Maja Schachner, the ERU/EADP organized the **Advanced Statistical Methods in Psychology Workshop** in Berlin in October 2016. The event covered most exciting and novel data-analytical techniques, such as continuous time modelling, random intercept cross-lagged panel models, and multilevel structural equation modelling (for further details: <http://www.eadp.info/news>).

If the past months have been so interesting, we cannot get bored for the future! Great pre-conference events, and social meetings, will take place during the **18th European Conference of Developmental Psychology**, that will take place in Utrecht, Netherlands,, **from August 29 to September 1, 2017**, with preconference workshops on August 28 and 29 (<http://www.ecdp2017.nl/>)

You will find a taste of all these great initiative in this Newsletter.

Looking forward to meeting you in Utrecht, we wish to you all a joyful Christmas and a very happy New Year!

The ERU/EADP board

The ERU lunch meeting at the European Association for Research on Adolescence Biennial Conference

Representatives of the Early Researchers Union met for lunch on September 18th at the biennial international conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA), held September 16-19, 2016 in the beautiful setting of La Barrosa, Cádiz in southern Spain. The title of the conference was “¿Qué será, será? Adolescent Research into the Future: Visions and Challenges”. Following the lines of the organizing association, the aim of the biennial conferences is to enhance knowledge on adolescents and young adults among researchers and practitioners from different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social work, anthropology, pediatrics, and education. This XVth biennial meeting was co-organised with the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Participants were mainly from Europe but also from elsewhere and the conference included interesting key-note lectures, invited symposia, round-table discussion groups and poster sessions, not to forget the social events, Student and Early Career (SECNet) activities for young scholars as well as several pre-conference workshops. The EARA conference is attractive for its multidisciplinary perspective on adolescence and young adulthood and for its encouraging and inspiring atmosphere. The conference is small-scale with about 500 participants, so spontaneous discussions with colleagues are easily held.

On a final note, the beautiful setting and the sunny weather were warmly welcomed in the middle of the fall semester. ERU representatives met for lunch during the conference on Sunday, September 18th, to discuss common and current topics related to ERU and EADP in general. The lunch was attended by five participants, including the ERU president Loes Keijsers. The discussion included current issues and activities, such as the present state of the planned EADP Summer School as well as the statistical workshop organized in October in Berlin. Other topics were related to current research and academic career-related issues, and comparing experiences between countries, from the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Belgium and Finland. The EARA conference topics and the program were also discussed, being of great interest from the perspective of developmental psychology. A warm thank you for the lunch company, as for the EARA conference once again!

Mette Ranta,
ERU/EADP National Representative in Finland
University of Helsinki

ERU members at the biennial meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development



Between 10th and 14th of July 2016, the 24th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) took place in Vilnius, Lithuania. In addition to enjoying the exciting scientific program delivered by scholars conducting research on human development across the lifespan, ERU members attending the

conference had the chance to meet each other as well as other early career colleagues, such as ISSDB early career scholars.

We met on 11th July 2016 in the late afternoon and there was soon a great enthusiasm! We started by introducing ERU and its mission to new aspiring members. Then, ERU members and ISSDB early career scholars shared their experiences “within” and “between” the early career networks, highlighting how these networks promote the career of starting researchers in terms of best possible resources. After discussing further potential connections between ERU members and ISSDB early career scholars, each ERU member described what activities were being conducted at national level and invited early career colleagues from the same country to join the organization. Finally, we concentrated in developing new good ideas about next steps that could be beneficial for ERU and its members. A rather common idea for the future was that ERU network could benefit a lot from sharing study ideas involving cross-national/cultural component. Starting points could be a short preregistration of study ideas and joint cooperation on web platforms like OSF (<https://osf.io/>) to use the collaborative data-sharing options. It would be great to see such pre-registered ideas in next ERU newsletters!

Pasquale Musso,
ERU/EADP President-Elect
University of Palermo, Italy

Advanced statistical methods in psychology, 10-14 October, 2016, Berlin

In mid October 2016, the Early Research Union of the European Association for Developmental Psychology (EADP), Humboldt University, and Tilburg University invited 20 young scholars from all



around Europe to Berlin for a 4-day workshop on some of the most exciting novel data-analytical techniques.

Already on the first day, in the opening talk, Loes Keijsers has fired us with enthusiasm for providing better answers to the "same old questions" and for asking new questions that could not have been asked before. Excited and looking forward to the

upcoming days, we shared also our expectations and things we were willing to offer to the network of young scholars. These included everything from knowledge on empathy, identity, media multitasking, and prejudice/bullying to the tips about travelling the world with no money. Starting from day one, there was a welcoming atmosphere of trust and professional exchange, which resulted in attempts of collaborative grant proposals at the end of the workshop.

During the remaining days, we worked intensively with Daniel Oberski, Loes Keijsers, Manuel Voelkle, and Christian Gische on recent methodological developments, e.g. the continuous time modeling, multilevel structural equation modeling, and sensitivity analysis, in two statistical packages, i.e. R and Mplus. Daniel has sensitized us to assessing how possible model misspecifications affect our parameter estimates and to considering various "what if" scenarios. As Daniel put it himself, "the instructor had labored many a dark and stormy night to prepare the lecture, datasets, and codes for the participants' enjoyment", which greatly eased our understanding :) Loes has shared the advantages of looking into within-person processes and of examining the potential differences in developmental processes between persons and groups. Given that these

methods allow for more fine-tuned recommendations for practice and conclusions that do not shy away from the issue of causality, we have all been thrilled about the opportunity to learn them. Plus, the dynamic and interactive lecturing style of Loes kept everyone's attention equally well to the coffee consumed by everyone in liters :)

Finally, Manuel and his team have done an excellent job in translating nuances of continuous time modeling for those of us with shorter stats experience. By making the time more salient in statistical models they have encouraged us to consider how our results are affected by the measurement timing. All of the instructors were extremely accessible and helpful in getting us started in R, in running the codes, and in interpreting the outputs. As a result, all of us, from the beginners to the fluent users of R and Mplus, have benefitted from their expertise.

Apart from being a very informative scientific event, the workshop included nice social activities! Already on the first day, we went to an old-school gymnastic hall that has been turned into a great restaurant. Some of us have tasted the famous German flammkuchen for the first, but definitely not last, time. Also, not every day you get to dance with your statistics guru! Daniel turned out to be a lindy hopper as well, and so after dinner we joined the local lindy hop party. Loes, Manuel, and Jana made sure we had the opportunity to experience Berlin: during the remaining evenings we walked around the center, joined the Festival of Lights that was exhibiting in Berlin, and visited cosy bars. Loes even guided us to East Side Gallery as seeing the Berlin Wall is a must. Not an easy task to take care of a crowd of researchers after the whole day of lecturing!

In sum, this event has been a success both scientifically and personally. Knowledge of the novel methods allows us to "mix and match" the techniques to address the research questions that we really want to ask but, thus far, we have been afraid of asking :) We have also established positive and more personal relationships, as we shared many laughs over the dinner table (some of us even tasted rosemary for the first time). Great job team! Looking forward to seeing everyone again!

Marta Miklikowska & Darun Jaf,
Örebro University

Public Science – Why bother? Looking forward to ERU Preconference at the 18th ECDP

„I am still early in my academic career, why would anyone be interested in what I have to say?” – “I have only done research on a very specific issue, I probably do not know enough to advise practitioners or the general public” – “The academic job market is so competitive, I should rather focus on publications in high-impact journals” – “What if I say something wrong or the media misrepresent what I actually wanted to say?” these are just some thoughts that junior scholars may have when thinking about public science.

As academics we are part of an extremely highly qualified community, and we tend to criticize our own work a lot (e.g., through peer review). When we compare ourselves within that community, conclusions as in the first two quotes above may seem reasonable. But actually, there are many people out there who are much less qualified than we are, and taking decisions in areas where we would have a lot of knowledge to contribute. So we should get out there and share our knowledge, in order to allow these decisions to be more informed. Also, a lot of the time, media do not approach researchers but as researchers we have to reach out to the media. If we think we have solid knowledge (backed up with some solid publications in peer-reviewed journals) in a particular area, and even if we are not yet professors, we can think about how we could communicate this

knowledge to the general public. This could be through a press release about an event or a particular study or publication (the press office of your university can advise you on this), or writing a contribution for an applied newsletter or an applied journal.

You may think along the lines of the third quote, that writing such a contribution takes time and you should rather invest that time on publications with an impact factor. Even though there is no impact factor, contributions in applied outlets can actually have much more of an impact than what you would wish for your scientific publications. They are often widely read and they immediately reach people who can actually apply the knowledge that is conveyed. They can also spark interest in your work in the applied field and lead to invitations for talks and workshops. Even though these things are time-consuming, too, they can actually be very rewarding (some positive feedback without a lengthy peer-review process preceding it! ;-)). They can also be fruitful for your research. You can get new insights through hearing some real-life experiences (rather than abstract data) and develop more informed research questions, which are really getting at pressing societal issues. You can also establish a good applied network, which may be helpful for the next data collection, grant application (quite a few grant agents require applied partners) or if at some point you decide to leave academia and follow an applied career. The skill of communicating complex issues in a simple way can also be helpful, for example when explaining your research to a reviewer (of a grant application or a manuscript) who is not from your field. It can also be helpful for teaching at university.

So, science communication definitely pays off, also at an early stage of the career. As many of us are paid by tax money, it is also our duty and moral responsibility to put our knowledge at the service of the society. However, as we can have quite some impact with our communication to the public, we also have to take responsibility for WHAT we actually decide to communicate. We have to be certain we really know what we are talking about and there is some agreement in the scientific community on the findings we want to share. This also means that sometimes it is better to share well-established associations than a ground-breaking new finding which may require confirmation with further evidence. It is also better to have one key message than many, which may be more easily misunderstood.

This also brings us to the last quote from above: What if the media misrepresent what you actually intended to say? There are things you can do to prevent this: First, it is safest if you draft the content yourself. You can then ask some people (preferably also ones representing the target audience) for feedback and how they understood your message. Second, if someone else is writing something about you (e.g., following an interview), you can ask them to see the article before it is published. In many countries (such as Germany), the opportunity to see and have a say in what will be published beforehand is a legal obligation. Third, if you cannot directly see or influence the content of a contribution, it is even more important to have a clear message (which can also be repeated, to make sure it really reaches the receiver). If it still happens that you are misrepresented, e.g. in the headline of an article in a daily newspaper (which you may not see before it is published), this is unfortunate. However, there will be new news with new headlines tomorrow and you and the reader will soon have forgotten that one unfortunate headline.

I have personally had many rewarding public science experiences in the last year. I would like to encourage all early-career scholars to also try it out if you have not done so already. I think the aim here should not only be to “get our message across” in terms of the content we want to convey. It is also to advocate for and promote a scientific perspective, that is transparent and understandable for lay people, and that can help to provide answers for real-life issues.

Together with Stefanos Mastrotheodoros and Loes Keijsers from ERU, I am organizing a public science workshop prior to the next EADP conference in Utrecht. More news on this will follow and you are welcome to join the workshop and learn more about public science.

Maja Schachner,
ERU Valorisation Officer
University of Potsdam, Germany

We wish you all the best for your recovery, Radosveta!

One of the most important and involved young scholars in the European Association of Developmental Psychology and ERU past-president, Radosveta Dimitrova, has been involved in a severe car accident. She is currently in process of a long-time rehabilitation. Radosveta is a highly dynamic, proactive, and relational person as well as a very productive researcher receiving several awards for her works. She is also passionately involved in international professional service for young scholars as member of various committees of different psychological societies. She contributed to numerous successful ERU/EADP initiatives, including the Writing Week, the ERU Events at the EADP Biennial Meeting, and even this Newsletter. Her energy is contagious and inspires us all! We wish her all the strength, power, and optimism needed to recover well and hope that she will soon come back and be as active for ERU as she has always been.



The ERU/EADP Board

If you would like to contact Radosveta and leave her a personal note, you can do that via her e-mail (her husband is replying) or via contact info on her website.

Email: dimitrova.radosveta@gmail.com

Website: www.radosvetadimitrova.org

ERU/EADP CALL FOR NOMINATION

On July 2017, ERU elections will take place. We are looking for nominations (self and other-nomination) of people eager to take an active role within the ERU Board and/or as a National Representative for their Country!

If you would like to give your contribution, please send your nomination about you and/or one of your friends and/or colleague explaining why she/he could give a relevant contribution to ERU!

Deadline for nomination is the 15th of June; nominations can be sent at ERU Secretary, Francesca Lionetti at f.lionetti@qmul.ac.uk. Please ask for a confirmation of receipt to be sure that your nomination has been safely received!

The ERU board will select the most valuable nominations within June, and ERU elections will open immediately thereafter in July.

Warm wishes,

The ERU Board