

Editorial

In this issue of the International Journal of Developmental Science (IJDS) we continue with a special section titled “Probabilistic Epigenesis: Its Past and Prospects for the Future”, edited by Jaan Valsiner and Herbert Scheithauer. The first edition of this special section has been published in 2013 (Vol. 7, Issue 2), including a target article by Vanessa Lux (2013) and commentaries by Robert Lickliter (2013), Gary Greenberg (2013), and Ehud Lamm (2013). We are pleased that Peter C.M. Molenaar (2015a) took up our invitation to contribute a target article titled “An Interpretation of Part of Gilbert Gottlieb’s Legacy: Developmental Systems Theory Contra Developmental Behavior Genetics” that we present in the current issue of the special section, accompanied by outstanding commentaries from renowned scholars/author groups, namely Alexander von Eye (2015), Richard M. Lerner, Milena Batanova, Andrea Vest Ettekal and Cristina Hunter (2015), and Lars. R. Bergman (2015). We are especially pleased that Peter C.M. Molenaar (2015b) – in addition to his target article – contributed an Author’s Response to the respective commentaries. All of the articles included in the special section are excellent contributions in order to achieve a better understanding of “Gilbert Gottlieb’s legacy”.

The second part of the present issue includes an article by Harrie Jonkman, Claire Aussems, Majone Steketee, Hans Boutellier, and Pim Cuijpers (2015) titled “Prevention of Problem Behaviours among Adolescents: The Impact of the Communities that Care Strategy in the Netherlands (2008–2011)” accompanied by a guest editorial by Richard F. Catalano and Harrie Jonkman (2015) about the promise and caution of international translational research. Following a thoroughly review process we decided to publish the study particularly because the evaluation of the implementation of the Communities that Care strategy in communities in the Netherlands revealed – unexpectedly – “zero results”: “No impact of CTC could be detected on the development of a broader range of behaviours, or on the initiation of drinking and smoking” (p. 1). In our opinion, there is a lack of published (evaluation) studies with non-significant effects, leading to a knowledge bias – beside the fact that publication of replication studies

are – from a positivists’ perspective – a necessary feature of scientific knowledge. However, we are aware of the controversial discussion of positivists and hermeneuticists in the literature:

So, social scientists are torn between two forces. On the one hand, they may be swayed by the ideal of positivist science and the desire to attain similar prestige as that held by natural scientists. On the other, they may be swayed by the insights of hermeneuticists and repelled by the epistemic imperialism of positivists. Moreover, their research tends to suggest that invariable laws are almost impossible to come by in social science. The positivist ideal seems impractical.” (Tsang & Kwan, 1999, p. 761)

To our opinion we are all supposed to learn from our mistakes – and we can learn from (evaluation) studies with non-significant, so called “zero” results and from replication studies. Thus, we hope to contribute with the publication of the manuscript by Jonkman et al. to a growing body of necessary publications of “zero” results and replication studies.

Herbert Scheithauer
Editor-in-Chief

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