

The Origins of the Dutch Society for Developmental psychology
(Vereniging Nederlandse OntwikkelingsPsychologie, VNOP)¹

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The birth of the Dutch Society for Developmental Psychology (VNOP) is the result of a cascade of changes in the funding of university research in the Netherlands. The funding scheme of Dutch universities consists, in broad outline, of funding by the Dutch Government (1st funding flow), funding by the Dutch Research Council (NWO, 2nd funding flow), and funding by other sources (e.g., European Community and other funding agencies, 3rd funding flow). The developments within the 1st and 2nd funding channels are most relevant for the coming into existence of VNOP but a few words are in order on the pre-history of scientific organization in Developmental Psychology in the Netherlands.

1. The pre-history of Developmental Psychology

In the beginning, the developmental psychology landscape in the Netherlands was a formless void. In the 60s of the former century, there were chairs in developmental psychology at almost all Dutch universities but the chairs were little islands with little contact between themselves, let alone that there was a coherent nation-wide discipline-oriented scientific organization. In 1971, J.J. van der Werff was appointed professor in developmental psychology at the University of Groningen. He invited all Dutch developmental psychology professors to his inaugural lecture in Groningen to discuss the possibility of national collaboration concerning, primarily, educational issues. The first step consisted of the distribution of a simple flyer, 'Information Bulletin for Developmental Psychologists', reporting issues worth knowing for all academic developmental psychologists. The bulletin was published around 4 times a year and continued to exist until 1988. This bulletin was the precursor of the Dutch-based 'Journal of Developmental Psychology', publishing primarily research reports, that appeared four times a year until 2000. The Groningen meeting and the Bulletin were the springboard for the creation of an official organization in 1973, the 'Association for Developmental Psychology'. Within the Dutch funding system, the Association evolved into a so-called 'werkgemeenschap' and together with the werkgemeenschap

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‘Functieontwikkeling’ (focusing on the psychonomics of developmental psychology), it provided the fertile ground for the coming into existence of VNOP.

2. Changes within the 1st funding flow

The funding of the universities (1st funding flow) was initially invoice-based until, in 1960, it shifted to funding guided by the number of registered students (Jongbloed & Salerno, 2003). During this period, the research climate was rather liberal, and within the various research domains of psychology, there was little pressure to publish or to pursue a doctoral degree (van Drunen & van Strien, 1999). In developmental psychology the situation was not different from psychology in its entirety. This can be illustrated by the record of the developmental psychologists of the University of Amsterdam. In 1980, this group counted 12 individuals; only 2 of them had a doctoral degree and, all together, they published 4 articles in international journals during the 1975-1980 period.

V-F Programs. The funding of universities changed in 1983 with the introduction of a system of conditionally funded research programs (V-F programs). To a large extent, research funding was de-linked from student number and based on a-priori and a-posteriori evaluation of research programs with a size of at least five person-years and a running time of five years. Koops (1990) presented information regarding the V-F programs in developmental psychology (see Table 1). The information presented in this table is noteworthy for at least three reasons. First, the organization of developmental psychology differs between universities (second column of the table). Distinct research groups can be found at the universities of Utrecht and Amsterdam and at the Free university and Radboud university. At the other universities, developmental psychologists are integrated within larger programs. Secondly, considering the program titles (third column), developmental psychology comes in very different flavors; the topics range from developmental psychology at large (Free University, Amsterdam), to more specific domains, including social, cognitive, kinetic, and self-concept development (universities of Amsterdam, Groningen, Tilburg, and Radboud University), and to clinical themes, assessment and interventions (Free University, Amsterdam, universities of Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht). Finally, at some universities, the research (groups) received the label ‘Developmental Psychology’ whereas at other universities the ‘Child’ label is used. In this regard, Koops (1999; p. 11) believed that, as most of the research at that time did not refer to ‘development’ *per se*, it would be more appropriate to use the label ‘Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence’ rather than ‘Developmental Psychology’. In fact, he considered ‘Developmental Psychology’ a sub-area of ‘Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence’.

Table 1. V-F Research Programs in Developmental Psychology at Dutch Universities (derived from Koops, 1990)

University	Section	Title of Program
Free University, Amsterdam	Psychology of childhood and adolescence	The development of children's behavior: Developmental, neuropsychological and clinical perspectives
Utrecht University	Child studies*	Developmental problems in young children
Utrecht University	Development and socialization	Development, parenthood, and professional interventions
University of Amsterdam	Developmental psychology	Cognitive and social development
Radboud University	Developmental psychology	Social and cognitive development
University of Groningen	Psychology/developmental research	Information processing and task performance/ Cognitive development/ Development of the self-concept and identity problems/Early risk for psychopathology
University of Leiden	Developmental and educational psychology	Education and upbringing/ Early assessment and intervention/ Developmental sequences Behavioral modification techniques for severely mentally retarded children
Tilburg University	Social psychology/ developmental research	The development of kinetic behavior

* It should be noted that some programs extended into the Pedagogical Sciences, for example at the University of Utrecht.

The goal of the introduction of conditionally funded research programs was to stimulate the quality and coherence of research. V-F programs should be evaluated periodically, and the outcomes of such evaluations should result in a re-allocation of research funds between universities, disciplines, and research programs. New promising research programs could be initiated only when existing, less successful programs would be terminated. The task of evaluating the quality of research of Dutch psychology was first assigned to Association of Dutch Universities (VSNU). Subsequent evaluations were performed by QANU, an independent agency organizing and coordinating the assessment of research quality by peers. The programs in developmental psychology evaluated by VSNU and QANU are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research programs in developmental psychology evaluated by VSNU (1994), and QANU (2006, 2012, 2017).

University	Year of Evaluation	Program (Group) Title	Focus
Free University	1994	Development of children's and adolescent's behavior	Normal and clinical aspects of developmental psychology
	2006	Developmental psychology; Emotional development	Development of emotion understanding and emotion regulation; relations between emotions, self-regulation and psychopathology
	2012	Social and emotional Development	Developmental psychopathology; assessment, etiology, time-course and outcome of child and adolescent psychopathology
	2017	Clinical, neuro-, and developmental psychology	--
Utrecht University	1994	Developmental tasks	Process-oriented explanations for developmental tasks of educational relevance
	2006	Social and personality development	Normal and deviant development of children and adolescents by focusing on person and environment characteristics
	2012	Developmental psychology; A transactional approach	Transactional processes between children and their environment with regard to normal and problematic behavior; socio-cognitive information processing relating to interaction styles
	2017	Developmental psychology	--
University of Amsterdam	1994	Cognitive and social development	Structural development; modelling of growth and development; brain development; collaborative efforts
	2006	Developmental psychology	Cognitive development; dynamic systems and brain functioning
	2012	Developmental psychology	Life-span development of normal and deviant cognitive development; statistical modelling of brain/behavior relations and the use of implicit measures
	2017	Developmental psychology	--
Radboud University (KUN)	1994	Social and perceptual development of children and adolescents	Parent-child relations and personality development; peer relations; development of perception and action; giftedness
	2006	Not evaluated	
	2012	Not evaluated	

Table 2 continued.

	2017	Not evaluated	
University of Groningen	1994	Normal and deviant development	Dynamic systems model of human development; adolescent identity; biopsychology of development
	2006	Developmental processes	Dynamic systems approach and modelling of a broad range of developmental processes (cognition, language, learning, personality, identity formation)
	2012	Developmental processes	Dynamic systems approach to developmental processes with an emphasis on the age range from birth to young adulthood
	2017	Developmental psychology	--
University of Leiden	1994	Education and development in a changing society	Analysis of handwriting; attachment; temperament; Intelligence; quality of self-concept
	2006	Not evaluated	
	2012	Pathways through adolescence	Focus on adolescent development combining experimental, brain and longitudinal approaches
	2017	Pathways through Adolescence	--
Tilburg University	1994	Developments in and functions of gestures	Development of gesture; abnormal development of gesture; ADHD children
	2006	Absent	
	2012	Developmental psychology	Impact of early life-events (pre- and post-natal stress) on cognitive, social and emotional development
	2017	Development of individual differences	--
Maastricht University	1994	Absent	
	2006	Developmental biopsychology (not a separated program but integrated within Neurocognition)	Development of behavior and cognitive function in relation to brain maturation
	2012	Integrated within Cognitive Neuroscience	Normal and abnormal development of perceptual and cognitive functions during the childhood and adolescent periods
	2017	Integrated within Cognitive Neuroscience	--
Erasmus University	1994	Not evaluated	
	2006	Not evaluated	
	2012	Not evaluated	
	2017	Educational and developmental psychology	--

Note. Some universities opted for another organization of the assessment of research quality or did not offer a developmental psychology program (indicated by 'not evaluated'). It occurred that some programs were not evaluated (indicated by 'evaluation absent'). The QANU (2017) evaluation was concerned with a quality assessment at an institutional level. Specifics for developmental psychology are lacking in this assessment (indicated by a 'blank' (--) in the table).

The first evaluation by VSNU (1994) referred to developmental psychology as the discipline serving two aims:

“to describe what developments take place and to discover the causes of these developmental changes” (VSNU, 1994; p. 24).

The quality of Dutch developmental psychology research programs was judged to range from moderate to excellent. The work on dynamic systems was considered to be truly innovative and deemed excellent internationally, with publications in high-impact journals.

The QANU evaluations reported in 2016 and 2012 provide information on the quality of psychology research at each individual university, as well as information on each sub-discipline. The evaluation reported in 2017 concerning the quality of research of Psychology at an institutional level but, unfortunately, does not provide information for each separate discipline and sub-discipline.

The QANU 2006 and 2012 evaluations were quite favorable for developmental psychology:

“In recent years, developmental psychology has become a very dynamic interdisciplinary field of science...The place of Dutch developmental psychology in this frame is exemplary and enviable. The research produced is of the highest international standard, and in some fields, the Netherlands has been an international leader...The future of the community seems to be ensured by the high level of training offered to graduate students, the excellent facilities and infrastructure available for research...” (QANU, 2006, p. 18-9).

“As clinical psychology, this subfield attracts many students who are interested in practice and not in research. This subfield was also rather weak but has improved considerably during the last two decades...Developmental psychology is generally a very strong area of research within Dutch psychology, with several groups doing excellent research at the international forefront, particularly as they increasingly move into the field of developmental neuroscience” (QANU, 2012, p. 14-5).

Research schools. At this point, it should be noted that the idea of a re-allocation of funding within the 1st funding flow based on periodical evaluations of research quality did not materialize. Since 1993, the 1st funding flow scheme already included a reservation for ‘research schools’, but this type of funding awaited the moment that a balanced system of research schools would come to fruition. Research schools, as conceptualized originally, referred to partnerships of research units of several universities, with one coordinating university. The coordinating university would be responsible for periodical evaluations of the quality of the research of the participating units and the training of PhD students. The goal of research schools was twofold. First, the research schools should provide a platform for interaction and research programming. Secondly, the research schools should develop a training program for PhD students and monitor the progress of the research performed by these students.

In psychology, one of the first research schools, which originated within the new funding scheme, was the 'Interuniversity Graduate School of Psychometrics and Sociometrics' (IOPS), founded in 1987 and accredited officially by the KNAW in 1994. In developmental psychology, there has been an attempt to establish an interuniversity research school adopting the model of IOPS. Unfortunately, this research school, 'Growth and Development', never saw the light of day. The reasons for this failure included, amongst others, the founding of local, interdisciplinary research schools (e.g., the Research School of Behavioral and Cognitive Neurosciences (BCN) at the RUG, the Donders Institute at the RU. For developmental psychology, the situation remained unclear for a prolonged period of time. The Department of Psychology at the UvA required their developmental psychologists to participate in the interuniversity research school 'Experimental Psychology Onderzoeksschool' (EPOS) that was founded in 1993 and KNAW accredited in 1994. The greater part of Dutch developmental psychology, however, participated in the 'Institute for the Study of Education and Human Development' (ISED), an interuniversity and interdisciplinary graduate school for developmental and educational sciences, founded in 1993 and accredited in 1994. Both EPOS and ISED received 2nd flow funding—a premium of one million guilders each.

Graduate schools. Despite the initial enthusiasm for interuniversity collaboration there was a growing dissatisfaction among universities about the apparent loss of control over research programming and training efforts. Soon, universities began to establish local graduate schools. In response to these developments, the VSNU, KNAW and NWO requested an advisory opinion on this diffuse state of affairs. This opinion report ('Samen Slimmer', 2010) emphasized the added value of interuniversity research schools. In spite of the support for research schools, and the positive response to the opinion report from all parties involved (VSNU, KNAW, and NWO), the increase in the number of local graduate schools continued and the associated decrease in the impact of research schools could not be prevented. These trends obviously called for another organization of interuniversity interaction among academic developmental psychologists.

3. Changes within the 2nd funding flow

Psychonomics. The post-war changes within the 2nd funding flow have been aptly reviewed by Rijkschroeff (2003). Until 1962, the funding of the social and behavioral sciences by the Dutch Research Council (at that time, The Dutch Foundation for Fundamental Research, ZWO) was funneled through the humanities. The only foundation in psychology that would acquire official status within ZWO was the 'Psychonomics' foundation, established in 1968. This foundation was concerned with experimental psychology and included distinct sections ('werkgemeenschappen'), referring to the various research domains within experimental psychology. The foundation included a section for developmental psychologists ('functieontwikkeling') interested in the experimental-psychology study in age-related changes in mental functions (e.g., perception, attention, memory).

PSYCHON. Around 1979, there were ten organizations that aimed to promote research in psychology, including the Association for Research in Developmental Psychology, but none of those rose to the level of an official ZWO foundation. Most of these organizations were affiliated with the Council for Research in Psychology (RWOP). The RWOP felt the increasing need to establish an integrated foundation for research in psychology and, in 1981, the Foundation for Research in Psychology (SWOP) was established. Further developments resulted, in 1985, in the Foundation for Research in Psychology and Psychonomics (PSYCHON). PSYCHON included a section on developmental psychology ('Werkgemeenschap Ontwikkelingspsychologie'), which originated from the Psychonomics developmental psychology section and the RWOP 'Association for Research in Developmental Psychology'.

'Werkgemeenschap Ontwikkelingspsychologie'. The creation of a PSYCHON section for research in developmental psychology was fortunate in at least two respects. First, the developmental psychology section provided, for the first time, a national platform for researchers interested in developmental psychology. Secondly, research grants on developmental psychology were channeled through this section, receiving expert evaluation. The research domain of the PSYCHON developmental psychology section was defined as follows:

"The developmental psychology section is concerned with the nature and underlying causes of systematic changes in behavior vis-à-vis the human lifespan. It is assumed that humans, in view of differences in predisposition and functional possibilities, and in view of exposure to environmental influences and in the processing of these influences, exhibit different pathways of developmental change or a different timing of similar developmental trends." (cf. Rijkschroeff, 2003; p. 90).

During the 1987-1991 period, a total number of individual 377 research grants were submitted to PSYCHON; the largest number of research grants (40) was submitted through the developmental psychology section. Typically, the individual research grants consisted of the funding of salary cost of one PhD students for four years and operating costs; infrastructural requirements were not funded. A total of 103 research grants were funded; 7 research grants on developmental psychology. Thus, it appears that the proportion of funded research grants, relative to the number of submitted research grants, was quite low in developmental psychology, only 17,5%. In comparison, in Psychometrics, the proportion was 66%.

Developmental psychology behind the dykes. The board of the developmental psychology section decided that next to the peer review of research grants, interaction among the members should be promoted and in pursuing this goal a national meeting was organized. The meeting took place in 1989 and provided the membership/members with the opportunity to exchange research findings and discuss 'hot topics' in developmental psychology. The meeting was organized around three symposia—'Developmental gerontology'; 'Energetics of cognitive development'; 'Developmental psychology and pedagogy'. The presentations, together with a listing of the members and an overview of Dutch developmental psychology, are published in a book with

the appropriate title 'Developmental Psychology behind the Dykes' (Koops, et al., 1990). This meeting was important because it was the first time that all members of Dutch developmental psychology convened for collegial interaction. The success of this first meeting prompted the board to initiate the notorious bi-annual Dalfsen meetings. Dutch developmental psychologists convened for two days in a small conference center in the east of the Netherlands. Research findings were presented and new initiatives discussed during daytime, while there was ample room for collegial interchange during the long evenings and late nights.

Foundation for Behavioral Sciences (SGW). Developments within the 2nd funding flow continued. To increase the impact of research efforts and, simultaneously, decrease the pressure on the evaluation system, NWO decided that 25% of the budget available for research in the social and behavioral sciences would be devoted to interuniversity research grants ('aandachtsgebieden'). During the 1989-1997 period, four interuniversity grants for research on developmental psychology were funded—'Functional literacy'; 'Developmental transitions'; 'Inhibition: developmental change, biology and pathology'; and 'Aging and cognitive slowing'. Another interuniversity research grant was funded directly (not through the developmental psychology section), 'Lifespan turnings'. In addition, NWO decided to reduce the number of foundations. In 1994, PSYCHON merged with PEDON, the foundation for pedagogical sciences, into the Foundation for Behavioral Sciences (SGW) that included 19 distinct sections, including one for developmental psychology. During the same period, the funding scheme changed from the relatively modest funding of individual PhD projects into the substantial (PIONIER) funding of person-oriented research. During the 1990-2002 period, 12 PIONIER programs received funding, including one within the developmental psychology - pedagogy domain; 'Transmission of Attachment Across Generations'.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (MaGW). The reorganization of the 2nd flow funding did not stop. SGW was shut down in 1998 together with all other NWO foundations. From this time onwards, NWO consisted of two management layers—a general management body and various sectorial management bodies, including one for the social and behavioral sciences (MaGW). This change in the 2nd funding flow signaled the eclipse of the developmental psychology section. During its lifetime, developmental psychologists acquired funding for 16 research grants listed in Table 3. Together with the change in management structure, the evaluation procedures for grant proposals were revised. Individual referees were now recruited for comments and intermittent evaluation committees were put in place for advice and prioritization. Moreover, funding priorities changed drastically. The person-oriented funding scheme received a forceful impetus. Innovative research for investigators at different stages of their career would be facilitated (Vernieuwingsimpuls).

The NWO Talent Program made funding available for postdocs who graduated recently (VENI), postdocs involved in research during some years after graduating (VIDI), and for senior investigators who demonstrated to be successful in independent research (VICI). Parallel to the person-oriented emphasis, NWO increased funding for thematically oriented research lines. Typically, this funding consists of interdisciplinary research programs. One example of such a program is 'Fruits of Enlightenment' that aimed at strengthening interdisciplinary research in the cognitive sciences. The growing concentration within the 2nd funding flow, and

the annihilation of the developmental psychology section that went with it, resulted in the lack of a national platform for interaction. Consequently, developmental psychologists resorted to the research school (EPOS or ISED) or local interdisciplinary graduate schools for collegial exchange.

Table 3. Projects funded through the developmental psychology section during the 1985-1997 period (Rijkschroeff, 2003).

Title	Investigator(s)	University
Early caretaker-child/child interaction	van Lieshout	
Person-specific expectations	Mönks	KUN/RU
Discriminability in infants	Smitsman	KUN/RU
Psychogeriatric assessment	Munnichs/Wollenberg	KUN/RU
Social status and social behavior	Ferguson	KUN/RU
Parenting dimensions: validity	Gerris	KUN/RU
Good continuation vs. proximity	Vos	RU
Memorize	van den Bos	RUG
Interaction in irritable babies	Kohnstamm	UL
Research in irritable babies	van den Boom/Kohnstamm	UL
Development dysfunctional speech	Elbers	UU
Development of attention	van der Molen/Keuss	UvA
Cardiovascular responsivity	van der Molen/Molenaar	UvA
Antecedents of dyslexia	Bakker/Bouma/Koops	VU
Orthographic memory	Reitsma	VU
Mood influences	Meerum Terwogt	VU

4. New beginnings

The 1st funding flow witnessed the decline of most inter-university research schools due to the growing number of local graduate schools. Typically, these graduate schools covered psychology in its entirety or even a wider, interdisciplinary research domain. The 2nd funding flow witnessed the rise and fall of a developmental psychology platform for the evaluation of grant proposals and collegial interaction. Consequently, Koops (1990) statement gained new validity:

“Whoever wants to encounter Dutch developmental psychologists would be well advised to go to an international conference on developmental psychology. On their home ground it is much more difficult to meet more than two of them at the same time” (Koops, 1990; p v).

Developmental psychology professors, affiliated with ISED, were invited by Marcel van Aken (RU) to discuss matters related to education. Within this context, there were attempts to arrive at a single introductory developmental psychology textbook for use at all Dutch universities. But this attractive idea never materialized. In addition, Dutch developmental psychology professors met under the auspice of the Dutch Institute for (professional) Psychology, primarily to discuss issues related to post-doctoral training. But these meetings were far and between and attended primarily by only those professors having a professional interest.

Michiel Westenberg (UL) and Maurits van der Molen (UvA) made an attempt at remedying this unhappy state of affairs. Their basic idea was establishing a new platform to advance collegial interaction among academics interested in the study of developmental psychology. Other branches in psychology had

already established such platforms (e.g., the Dutch Psychonomics Society, that emerged from the Dutch Psychonomics Foundation). More recent platforms refer to the Dutch Society for Social Psychology (ASPO) and the Dutch Society for Neuropsychology (NVN), whereas in other branches interuniversity research schools continued to exist (e.g., the Interuniversity Graduate School for Psycho- and Sociometrics, IOPS). Some research schools shifted their focus from graduate to post-graduate training (e.g., the Post-Graduate School for Experimental Psychopathology, EPP).

The idea of establishing a new society to provide a new platform for exchange in developmental psychology was submitted to the university chairs in developmental psychology. The idea was received well but one obvious obstacle referred to the question of how the new developmental psychology platform should relate to the ISED research school. A considerable number of Dutch developmental psychologists were ISED members. Moreover, in ISED developmental psychology had strong ties with pedagogy. However, it was clear that ISED did not flourish as before. In addition, the new society should provide a platform for exchange for all researchers interested in developmental psychology research, either developmental psychologists or pedagogists (and possibly others). Hence, it was decided that the mission statement should emphasize that the new society is established to provide a platform for all academics interested in the study of developmental psychology, irrespective of their educational background or current affiliation. In addition, it was decided that the Dutch society should be open for Flemish scholars interested in developmental psychology. The idea of a new platform for developmental psychology was supported by all university sections concerned with developmental psychology.

VNOP. The new society was founded in Amsterdam, in 2007. The new society was entitled 'Society for Dutch Developmental Psychology' (VNOP). The first board consisted of the university chairs in developmental psychology; Marcel van Aken (UU), Anneloes van Baar (TU), Toon Cillessen (RU), Paul van Geert (RUG), Hans Koot (VU), Maurits van der Molen (UvA; chair) and Michiel Westenberg (UL; secretary & treasurer).

Meetings. The board decided that a first meeting of the new society was a priority of the highest urgency. The first two-days meeting of the new society was held in Wageningen—not Dalfsen—in 2008. The goal of the founding conference, which was meant to grow into a biannual series, was to provide a sketch of current research in developmental psychology in the Netherlands. Principal investigators of local research programs in developmental psychology were invited to present guiding hypotheses and recent findings. For example, research at Tilburg University focused on pediatric psychology, the researchers at Utrecht University presented an array of ideas and findings relating social and personality development from a transactional view, and the presenters of the University of Amsterdam presented a cognitive development and aging palette with clinical and modelling features. The program included two keynote addresses. Jens Asendorf presented data from the Munich longitudinal study on the genesis of individual

competencies, with a special emphasis on the outcome of preschool inhibition and aggressiveness. Koops reviewed the recent history of developmental psychology in the Netherlands and expressed the hope that the new society would increase the visibility and competitiveness of Dutch developmental psychology within the 2nd funding flow. Secondly, he entrusted the new society the task of establishing a cordial relationship between developmental psychologist and pedagogists. All in all, the meeting was appreciated considerably by the members and a series of meetings at the Wageningen conference center followed. The organization of the meetings rotated among the participating university and was structured along familiar lines (keynote addresses, submitted symposia, and poster sessions). Evening ‘sessions’ were scheduled in local pubs and included free drinks and animated live music.

Lab-visits. In addition to the biannual conferences, the new society took up the task of organizing lab-visits that rotated among universities. The idea was to provide an inside view on why and how a particular research group performed its studies in developmental psychology. The members could, thus, be informed about recent developments within a specific research domain—guiding hypotheses, methodological issues, funding possibilities and publication outlets. Occasionally, such lab-visits were organized in connection with local scientific events. One example refers to the joint research days organized by VNOP and the Utrecht Centre for Child and Adolescent Studies (CAS). The VNOP-CAS research days provide junior and other interested researchers two days of interesting workshops, symposia, and poster sessions (e.g., VNOP-CAS Research Days, 2019).

Awards. The conferences, research days and lab-visits are stimulating and generally well-attended. Furthermore, VNOP organizes awards for the best dissertation written by a VNOP student member and supervised by a VNOP member and the Paul van Geert award for the best paper, written by a VNOP PhD or postdoc, presenting a dynamic systems approach to developmental psychology. Recently (June 15, 2020), the VNOP website has been refurbished to facilitate communication with the members and to facilitate collegial exchange.

5. Conclusion.

It is difficult to assess whether VNOP succeeded in increasing the visibility and competitiveness of developmental psychology. Nonetheless, it can be observed that researchers in the domain of developmental psychology have been successful in the NWO Talent program. During the 2008-2019 period, funding was acquired in the VENI (10 grants), VIDI (5 grants), and VICI (6 grants) scheme. One developmental psychologist (Eveline Crone) received the Dutch ‘Nobel’ prize (Spinoza award). Developmental research has also been supported with a multi-site, multi-million Gravity grant (i.e., the consortium on individual development). In addition, developmental psychology has been funded by grants from the European Research Council (ERC) and one developmental psychologist has been appointed into the ERC as vice-president. Finally, a crude web-of-science search with ‘child’ in ‘topics’, ‘Netherlands’ in

'address' and 'developmental psychology' in 'discipline' yielded a doubling of the number of hits from 2008 through 2019. A more systematic assessment could reveal whether developmental psychology in the Netherlands increased in competitiveness and visibility but the current, albeit cursory review, seems to indicate that Dutch developmental psychology is on the right track.

A conceptual note is in order before concluding. In 'Developmental Psychology behind the Dykes', Koops (1990) reflected upon the definition of the research domain of developmental psychology. Within this context, he cited the influential article of Duijker (1959) on the nomenclature of psychology as a scientific discipline. Duijker argued that 'psychology' includes five sub-disciplines, including developmental psychology. Psychology refers to the study of behavior and developmental psychology contributes by offering a lifespan perspective. In reviewing the Dutch research efforts in this domain, Koops (1990) arrived at the conclusion that not much of what was studied in the Netherlands deserves the label 'developmental psychology'. Therefore, he suggested that 'developmental psychology' should be considered a sub-area of 'child and adolescent psychology'. Approximately 20 years later, Koops (2008) presented an update of this research domain in his keynote at the first VNOP conference entitled 'From child psychology to developmental psychology (1970-2008)'. In his keynote address, Koops revised his 1990 stand on developmental psychology as a sub-area of child and adolescent psychology. He now indicated that 'child psychology' evolved into 'developmental psychology', a rigorous analytical and empirical discipline. This conclusion receives strong support from the current review. In addition, it should be added that much of the current research in this domain has a multi-disciplinary nature with strong ties to the neuro-, clinical-, and educational sciences. In view of the growing fragmentation in developmental psychology, it might be wise to paraphrase Duijker (1959) who pointed out that '*there is only one psychology or none*'. We should add '*there is only one developmental psychology or none*'. The various perspectives in developmental psychology should be integrated into a fundamental understanding of the developing individual. VNOP might provide a window of opportunity contributing to a shared understanding of fundamental issues encountered in the ever-challenging science of developmental psychology.

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