



Psychology Department Seminar Presents:

Prof. Ariel Knafo-Noam

Hebrew University

“Do Children have Values, and where do they come from? Developmental Evidence from a Twin Study”

Surprisingly little is known about how values develop. Research typically assumes, with little direct evidence, that values are mainly formed in adolescence, and that they result from familial socialization processes during childhood. In recent years, however, the developmental literature has begun exploring the emergence of values in childhood. In this talk I will present evidence from my work and that of my colleagues, that children at the age of 7 years and even earlier, display a value structure similar to that of adults (Doring et al., 2015; Uzefovsky, Doring, & Knafo-Noam, 2016), which supports the notion that children know what is important to them and that their values are meaningful. I will present behavioral evidence for the functional importance of these values. Finally, I will present data from a longitudinal twin study of children's values, testing the hypothesis that within-culture individual differences in value priorities are in part due to genetic variation across individuals. These findings support the recent view that values are formed at earlier ages than had been assumed previously, and they further our understanding of the genetic and environmental factors involved in value formation at young ages.

Ariel Knafo-Noam is professor of developmental psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has written extensively on the development of altruism, empathy and other aspects of prosociality (as compared to self-focus). He studies the genetic, environmental and combined contributions to prosocial behavior, using diverse methodologies, and has demonstrated in his work how genetics and the environment work together in forming an empathic and prosocial disposition. He also investigates how values develop across contexts, cultures, and families, looking also at genetic influence on values. Another line of research studies concerns parent-child as well as child-parent influences, and in particular how children's genetics affect their own temperament and how parents react to them. The complex pattern of parent-child and genetic-environmental reciprocal or circular influences is studied with a twin study as well as with a study following families from pregnancy to middle childhood. Recently he has co-edited three special sections, on prosocial development (Child Development), on value development (Social Development), and on children's influence (Development and Psychopathology).

You can find more details of Prof. Knafo-Noam's work at : <https://en.psychology.huji.ac.il/Knafo-NoamAriel>

Sunday, November 17, 2019

12:00-13:30, Room 301

Anna & Max Webb and Family Psychology Building