

Editorial

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When you search with Google for “Social Cosmos”, the first four of the over 24 million hits refer to the open access¹ electronic journal *Social Cosmos* published by the Utrecht University Library. This results shows that this relatively young journal has found successfully its way into the cloud. The journal is one of the many achievements of the von Humboldt College, the honours programme for undergraduate students at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University. In particular the central course “Dare to Compare” has not only led to this journal, but also to several conferences and films to be viewed at youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0J3U6874Ow>).

One of the aims of the faculty when founding this honours college was that its innovative activities might influence positively the quality and attractiveness of the education in the regular programs. Innovations from such a program were expected to spread out as an oil slick. This issue of *Social Cosmos* proves the validity of this expectation. Now for the first time, students from regular programs who

¹ I'm very happy that this journal is an open access journal. Products of scholarly work should not contribute to the profit of commercial publishers but be readily available for every reader. If at all has to be paid for publishing, then it is the author who should pay, thus making the publication of research results part of the scholarly enterprise. That is the best way to counter the commercial bias in the publication of research.

have not participated in the honours college publish in this journal. The articles are based on independent undergraduate research of the students. Such research is a required element of all undergraduate programs in the faculty. Theses of the different programs have been nominated by the coordinators of the undergraduate thesis courses and further selected for publication by Bernadette van de Rijt, Anne-Rigt Poortman, Jette Westerbeek and Jaap Bos. In a rigorous process of reviewing, revision and editing the articles gradually in their present form emerged. The publications come from the programs on Psychology, Special Education, Education, Interdisciplinary Social Science, and Sociology and thus cover a wide variety of topics. The articles show a breadth of research methods from advanced statistical analyses on large databases to in-depth interviewing of a small number of respondents. More importantly all contributions are embedded in theory and most of them offer insights useful for further theory development.

The supervisors of the theses (mentioned with every article) have to be congratulated with the high quality of the work of their students. When reading through the articles I really felt proud that undergraduate students at our faculty are able to execute such research projects and can report on this in such a mature way. It is first of all the merit of the students that they have delivered such good work but it is also the quality of the supervisors and the curriculum program that has made this possible.