

Project A2

The Emergence and Development of Deviant and Delinquent Behavior over the Life Course and its Significance for Processes of Social Inequality

The Development of Deviant and Delinquent Behavior Over the Life Course in the Context of Processes of Social Inequalities

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Background. Although deviant and delinquent behavior peaks in adolescence, it is not limited to this period of life. Deviant and delinquent behavior can be understood as a feature of heterogeneity, which can result in social inequalities. Heterogeneities and social inequalities are important in its onset, continuation and change. The life course approach and the interdisciplinary cooperation of sociology and psychology make it possible to get new insights in the field of criminological research and investigation of the development of social inequalities.

Objectives. This longitudinal study examines the development of deviant and delinquent behavior from a sociological and psychological point of view. The study focuses on the relationship between the development of deviant and delinquent behavior on the one hand and the consolidation of social inequalities and social exclusion on the other hand. Over the life course, this project examines factors and processes which foster the onset and persistence of a deviant and delinquent life course and turning points leading to a normative biography.

Method. The study design is a cohort sequence design with three cohorts at two settings. Students from the fifth and ninth grade filled in a questionnaire at schools in Dortmund and Nuremberg from February to July 2012 with a focus on low-track students. There will be yearly follow-up measurements. A cohort of students from the third grade will be included in 2014. The data basis is self-report in form of a questionnaire, which includes data about the self-reported delinquency (dark figure). Data from the teacher and parent report, biological data and official statistics will be included in the next waves. The instruments are established scales with psychometric indices as well as revised or new developed scales.

Results. The whole sample consists of about 1283 students from the fifth grade and about 1054 students from the ninth grade, altogether more than 2300 students.

Conclusions. Contrary to the original conception, students from elementary school will be integrated from the third grade on in the third wave 2014. Reasons were the extension on two settings, the recommendation of experts, and unexpected financial limitations.