

The Stockholm Life-Course Project

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Alternative title

The Stockholm Life Course Project: Life-Courses and Crime In the Swedish Welfare State Through Half a Century

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Description

Since February 2010, the longitudinal research study The Stockholm Life Course Project: Life-Courses and Crime In the Swedish Welfare State Through Half a Century is conducted at the Department of Criminology. The project consists of two research blocks, a quantitative and a qualitative, and is a follow-up study of three existing research populations. The Stockholm Life Course Project is a nearly unique project, conducted with the purpose of studying the life courses of individuals with and without delinquent background. The main purpose of the project is to explore and understand the life course processes surrounding onset, persistence, desistance and intermittency of offending.

Specifically, the project is focused around five themes:

- 1) The processes, factors, events and turning points through the life course, which are of importance for understanding the individual's criminal career.
- 2) The importance of different welfare structures for life courses processes of criminal offending and other norm-breaking behavior.
- 3) The relationship between physical/mental health and criminal offending, as well as other norm-breaking behavior across the life course.
- 4) The "Social Heritage", in the form of horizontal and vertical diffusion of criminal offending and other norm-breaking behavior.
- 5) The possibilities and limitations in predicting future offending and other norm-breaking behavior.

The populations in The Stockholm Life Course Project will here be called the Clientele Boys, the Skå Boys and the SiS Youth.

The Clientele Boys (b. 1943-1951)

The population consists of four groups: 1) 192 delinquent boys with registered delinquent background prior to age 15 2) 95 matched controls (corresponding to every second delinquent boy), without registered delinquency prior to age 15 3) 96 "shadows" to the matched delinquent boys, and 4) 96 "shadows" to the matched controls. The 287 boys that make up group 1 and 2 went through extensive examinations during the 1960s, within the frame of the 1956 Clientele Study of Juvenile Law-breakers. The study included psychological tests, a medical examination, psychiatric interviews, sociological interviews, interviews with the boy's parents and teachers, and also the collection of official data on the boy and his family. This group was followed-up at age 18, and also during the 1980s. During the 1980s follow-up, extensive official data were collected on the men. 199 of the original 287 boys were also interviewed. The project have access to the audio recordings of these interviews. The boys in group 3 and 4, the "shadows", are matched on the same variables as the

controls in group 2. The two “shadow” groups, however, are only followed through official data. The original reason for this, was the wish to account for any “treatment effects” in the original study design.

The Skå Boys (b. 1941-1954)

This population consists of 322 boys - 100 of them were admitted to treatment due to “antisocial problems” at the Skå institution. The remaining 222 boys make up a representative sample of boys born in Stockholm, around the same time as the Skå boys.

The SiS Youth (b. 1969-1974)

The SiS Youth consists of 420 individuals (298 boys, 122 girls). During their teens, 267 of these individuals were admitted to special youth care homes in Stockholm, due to delinquency, drug use and/or other social problems. The remaining 153 individuals, also with a history of offending, drug-use, etc., were used as a control group. All 420 individuals were followed-up with the help of official data in the middle of the 1990s, roughly at the age of 25. Eighty individuals in the treatment group and 53 in the control group were interviewed during this follow-up.

In the present follow-up, we use both quantitative and qualitative research methods (official register data, and life history interviews). For the quantitative branch of the project, data has been collected from Statistics Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare, The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, The Military Archives of Sweden, and The Swedish Prison and Probation Service. To study the possible importance of the social heritage, we have also collected data on the individuals’ parents, children, grandchildren, siblings, siblings’ children, and siblings’ grandchildren. The qualitative branch of the project consists of life history interviews with the individuals who have been interviewed in earlier follow-ups (the Clientele boys and the SiS Youth).

The interviews conducted during 2010/11 have the form of life history interviews. This means that we, with the help of an interview guide, ask questions and explore different areas of the individuals’ life courses, where we are interested in understanding how the interview participants relate the past to the present and the future. The interviews cover a range of topics including living arrangements, education and school experiences, employment history, health, social relations, experiences of crime, drug-use, victimization and the criminal justice system. Up until November 2011, we have conducted roughly 80 interviews, 27 with the Clientele boys and 57 with the SiS Youth. The interviews have lasted around 90 minutes. The main bulk of the interviews have been conducted with two interviewers, some with only one. The interviews have been conducted at the university, the interview participants’ work places, libraries, coffee houses or in the interview participant’s home.

Purpose:

The main purpose of the project is to explore and understand the life course processes surrounding onset, persistence, desistance and intermittency of offending.

Data contains personal data

No

Unit of analysis

[Individual](#)

Time Method

[Longitudinal: Cohort/Event-based](#)

Time period(s) investigated

2010 – 2012

Geographic spread

Geographic location: [Stockholm County](#)

Responsible department/unit

Kriminologiska institutionen

Funding

- Funding agency: Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation

Research area

[Crime and law enforcement](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

[Social sciences](#) (Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen 2011)

Keywords

[Criminals](#), [Lifestyles](#)

Publications

Carlsson, Christoffer and Beckley, Amber L., Combining Register Data and Life History Interviews in Life Course Studies: Insights from the Stockholm Life Course Project (November 10, 2012). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2178581> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2178581>
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