Researching Impact of Judicial Interventions: Methodological and Deontological Questions

International Seminar
May 22nd 2015 – Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium) – Room 4C306 – 9:30-16:30

For the last couple of years, researchers from the Crime & Society Research Group (CrSiS) have been conducting several pathway studies. These studies focus on different subgroups of young people who have had contacts with the Belgian youth protection system (e.g. delinquent girls, juveniles transferred to Adult Court, youngsters placed in care / in a Young Offender Institution). In these studies we investigate whether and how youth protection measures in general and youth detention in particular affect the life course and the delinquent pathway of youngsters. However, if we want to investigate the outcomes of youth protection interventions, it is important not to look solely into ‘objective’ outcomes such as subsequent youth protection / criminal justice contacts or recidivism rates. We also need to explore this question from a subjective viewpoint: How do youngsters experience the intervention? What did it mean to them? Did it, according to them, impact their later lives?

Research that focuses on the perspective of youngsters provides very interesting and rich data. However, these studies may be very complicated from a methodological and deontological point of view. In several studies we are confronted with methodological problems related to the privacy of participants. If we want to learn more about a youngster’s perspective, the most obvious and appealing option is to conduct interviews, because this allows researchers to obtain ‘firsthand’ information. This brings about several methodological and deontological questions. For example, the search for adults formerly involved in the youth protection system, but not involved in the (criminal justice) system (anymore), is not only complicated on a practical level (e.g. finding contact information), it is also very delicate from a deontological point of view (privacy). Above this, the person in question perhaps may not want to be reminded of that part of his/her life, and/or he or she may be living with someone who is not informed about the youth protection history.

In this international seminar we will discuss these questions with members of the Belgian Commission for the Protection of Privacy, and we will explore how researchers in other countries have tackled these problems.

Participation is free of charge, but as places are limited we kindly request participants to register by sending an email to: seminar.researchingimpact@vub.ac.be
Programme

Chair: Prof. Dr. Jenneke Christiaens

09:30 – 10:00  Welcome and Coffee (in room 4B302)

10:00 – 10:30  Introduction
Jenneke Christiaens
(Professor – Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

10:30 – 11:00  Researching Impact of Youth Protection Interventions
Yana Jaspers, Ilse Luyten & An Nuytiens
(PhD students and Postdoctoral Researcher – Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

11:00 – 11:30  Coffee break

11:30 – 12:00  Persistence or Pesterling? Reflections on Ethical Integrity in Qualitative Longitudinal Research with Criminalised Women
Sarah Goodwin & Gilly Sharpe
(Lecturer in Law and Criminology – Sheffield Hallam University; Lecturer – The University of Sheffield)

12:00 – 12:30  Questions and Discussion

12:30 – 13:30  Lunch (in room 4B302)

13:30 – 14:00  The 17 Up Study: Practical and Methodological Challenges When Interviewing Adults Who Have Been Institutionalised as Children
Chantal van den Berg
(Assistant Professor – Universiteit Leiden)

14:00 – 14:30  Questions and Discussion

14:30 – 15:00  Access to and Use of Judicial and Other Personal Data in Criminological Research: Privacy and Data Protection Perspectives
Gert Vermeulen
(Professor – Ghent University; President of the Statistical Supervisory Committee of the Belgian Commission for the Protection of Privacy)

15:00 – 15:30  Questions and Discussion

15:30 – 16:30  Closing Remarks and Reception (in room 4B302)