



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR SOCIALT ARBETE

Teenage Kicks – The Differential Development of Drug Use, Drunkenness, and  
Criminal Behaviour in Early to Mid-Adolescence

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by

Russell Turner

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som med tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid Göteborgs universitet för  
avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentlig granskning

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Fakultetsopponent är Dr. Paul Gray, Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan  
University

This thesis is based on the following studies:

Study I – Turner, R., Daneback, K. & Skårner, A. (2018). Assessing reciprocal association between  
drunkenness, drug-use, and delinquency during adolescence: separating within- and  
between-person effects. *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*, 191, 286-293.

Study II – Turner, R. (forthcoming). Personality, parents or peers? The differential development of  
teenage drunkenness, drug use, and criminal behaviour: a multi-level exploration using  
socio-ecological covariates. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Study III – Turner, R., Daneback, K. & Skårner, A. (2020). Explaining different trajectories of  
adolescent substance use and criminality: a latent transition analysis with socio-ecological  
explanatory models. *Addictive Behaviors*, 102, 106-145.

Study IV – Turner, R. (forthcoming). Getting real about youth substance use and crime: how 'realistic'  
theories can improve knowledge and understanding for practice. Manuscript submitted  
for publication.

## ABSTRACT

Title: Teenage Kicks – The Differential Development of Drug Use, Drunkenness, and Criminal Behaviour in Early to Mid-Adolescence

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Keywords: Drug use, drunkenness, alcohol intoxication, criminal behaviour, delinquency, adolescence, adolescent development, risk behaviour, risk factor, prevention, Critical Realism, realist methodology, person-oriented methods

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This thesis studies the development of drug use, drunkenness, and criminal behaviour in early to mid-adolescence. Its main aims are to improve knowledge about how and why these three behaviours develop and to contribute towards the development of theory that can have applications in prevention policy and practice.

The thesis comprises four studies. Three of these are empirical studies using data from the Longitudinal Research on Development in Adolescence (LoRDIA) project. A general population, prospective sample of over 1500 adolescents was followed annually from age 13 to 15 (grades 7 to 9). Longitudinal within-person and person-oriented statistical analyses were applied. A fourth, theoretical study, applied principles from Critical Realism both to theories of the development of these behaviours, and also to existing empirical studies, including two from this thesis.

The results of this thesis found greater complexity and heterogeneity than previously known both in how drug use, drunkenness, and criminal behaviour develop, but also in how they relate to each other. For example, drug use and drunkenness showed less stable patterns over time, compared to criminal behaviour. Criminal behaviour also showed greater statistical risk of being followed by later drug use and drunkenness, but not vice versa. The behaviours were found to cluster together in specific ways with a larger group (80%) who abstained, two smaller groups who infrequently engaged either in crime (9%) or mainly in drunkenness and drug use (9%), and a 'severe' 2% who regularly engaged in all three behaviours. This differential development was also shown to be related to different combinations of explanatory factors.

This thesis challenges and extends existing knowledge concerning the development of drug use, drunkenness, and criminal behaviour in early to mid-adolescence. Drawing on sociological, criminological and psychological theory, a new formulation of the differential development of these behaviours is outlined. The results and conclusions presented in this thesis have implications for the design of prevention policy and practice and for social work with young people.