

# Fachbereichskolloquium des Instituts für Psychologie und des Instituts für Psychologie in Bildung und Erziehung

<http://www.uni-muenster.de/Psychologie/institute/fb-kolloq.html>

Thema: **Problematic Personality and  
(Anti)Social Networks:  
Why A Few Impact Many**

Referent/-in: **Maarten van Zalk**

Termin: 21.4.2015, 16-18h (c.t.)  
Ort: Hörsaal 39; Fliednerstraße 21, 48149 Münster

Kommentar: Dr. van Zalk ist seit dem 1.4. 2015 Gastprofessor  
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## A B S T R A C T

One of the most intriguing yet least understood observations concerning crime and violence is that these behaviours show a dramatic change during adolescence, temporarily increasing to nearly ten-fold in prevalence. There is mounting evidence for social processes that may explain this increase, and in particular antisocial peer influence has been proposed as a large risk factor for increases in antisocial behaviours. Another line of research has focused on individual propensities and stability in antisocial behaviours, such as problematic personality traits that may lead to high and stable violent and aggressive behaviours. Recent findings show that a small group of teenagers with these traits, of around 5% of the adolescent population, is responsible for the vast majority of crimes, bullying, violence, and aggression. How do we unify social process explanations of changes in antisocial behaviour with a personality approach focusing on stability in these behaviours? Recent developments in Structural Equation Modelling and longitudinal network studies offer new possibilities to unify these two lines of research, by allowing us to study how interactions between individual propensity toward antisocial behaviour and network dynamics interact to explain behavioural development. Two large, longitudinal network datasets are used from the European Collaborative Research Project "Social Influence in Dynamic Networks" to examine how network processes interact with individual characteristics to predict changes in individual behaviour. Findings from this project provide insight into interactions between social network processes and individual propensity toward antisocial behaviour. For example, friends' aggressive behaviour toward immigrants increases the likelihood of adolescents' increasing in this aggressive behaviour, particularly when adolescents have high problematic personality traits. Other results provide support for beneficial social network influences, suggesting that having indirect intergroup contact in peer networks facilitates tolerance toward ethnic minorities. Thus, novel methodological approaches offer an innovative perspective on prosocial and antisocial network influences.