

## Project A1

### **Social Closure and Hierarchization: Contextual Conditions of Unequal Developmental Opportunities in Early Phases of Life**

Martin Diewald, Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University

Jürgen Schupp, German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)

This project extends research on the genesis and effects of individual heterogeneity to cover psychological characteristics and their interplay with socioeconomic characteristics. It looks at cognitive and non-cognitive competencies on the one hand, and various dimensions of cultural and social capital on the other, asking how far these overlap, how far each determines the genesis of the other, and how far each impacts upon academic success and a successful life. Do they contribute particularly strongly to the early and largely irreversible reduction of opportunities, to the accumulation of advantage and disadvantage? For the first time, two established but previously unconnected research traditions are being integrated into one research design. Although this means a certain degree of competition between them, it simultaneously creates the possibility of integrating the two bodies of existing knowledge.

The studies are conducted not only on the level of the individual life course, but also taking into consideration the contextual conditions of different family constellations, social networks and neighborhoods, and educational organizations and institutions. All these contextual levels may harbor social exclusion mechanisms. The particular significance of the family of origin for the genesis of social inequalities is taken into account by considering both the stratification features of families of origin and the increasing diversity of family structures, with the resulting hierarchization of family positions and roles. In addition, the project goes beyond differences between families to study differences in the significance of one and the same family for its various members—particularly for siblings in terms of gender, age difference, and birth order.

The project focuses on the early phases of life. Empirically, it will pay special attention to developing and implementing innovative operationalizations of life-course cohort analyses, based on the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) and comparable panel studies in other countries, primarily the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID).

Contact:

Martin Diewald ([martin.diewald@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:martin.diewald@uni-bielefeld.de); +49 521 106 4309)

Jürgen Schupp ([jschupp@diw.de](mailto:jschupp@diw.de); +49 30 89789 238)