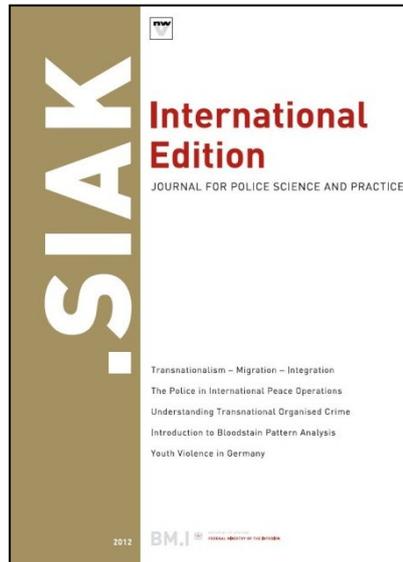


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# Youth Violence in Germany

## Key results and findings



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The present article surveys recent German research into adolescent violent delinquency. Significant correlates of violent delinquency are shown to include gender, ethnicity, peer group, social milieu and media consumption. Research efforts address both the possible causes and changes in youth delinquency over time. Studies differ regarding the data set considered (official and unofficial data) and the design (panel studies, trend studies). In addition to providing a general overview of German longitudinal research in the fields of criminal sociology and criminology, the article also describes in detail the Crime in the Modern City (CRIMOC) panel study supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Finally, some predictors identified from violence research are tested for their association with violence prevalence and violence incidence using two multi-variate analyses of the data from the CRIMOC study. The findings broadly substantiate those reported in the literature on the subject.



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### 1. STUDIES ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

The conditions conducive to youth violence and its causes have been considered from many different perspectives in German research to date. Since a great number of conceivable causes have been proposed as correlates of youth violence at least (on the distinction between correlate and cause, see Eisner/Ribeaud 2003, 187–188), for restrictions of length, here an overview shall be given primarily of the key findings of the past decade. Given the abundance of research work on the subject, only selected papers and topic areas are described here. In addition, attention has been given primarily to key findings, rather

than to the theoretical assumptions behind them (see, for example, Eifler 2010).

#### 1.1. CORRELATES AND POSSIBLE CAUSES

One well-established predictor of youth violence which is often referred to in empirical studies is gender. It is a constant finding of research based on both official and unofficial data that male adolescents demonstrate a significantly higher level of violence than female adolescents (cf. Mansel/Hurrelmann 1998, 98–99; Oberwittler 2003b, 275; Baier et al. 2010, 178–181). However, based on the rather lesser attention given to female violent delin-

quency, some authors question whether adolescent female violence is systematically underestimated (cf. Bruhns/Wittmann 2003, 52–58). Oberwittler, on the other hand, assumes stability of the gender difference in the context of violence (Oberwittler 2010a, 256). However, this assumption, which is supported by unofficial data, is set against an actual increase in readiness to report female offenders and therefore increased police recording of adolescent female violence (cf. Baier et al. 2010, 188–189).

A highly topical backdrop against which youth delinquency, and above all violence, are often discussed is the ethnicity of young offenders. The interaction between ethnicity and gender or various images of masculinity held among young migrants has also often been the subject of study (cf. Wilmers et al. 2002, 183–191; Enzmann et al. 2003, 265–266; Oberwittler 2003b, 280; Oberwittler 2003b, 290; Naplava 2005, 35–36; Baier/Pfeiffer 2007, 29–35).

Regardless of the causes, countless studies based on unofficial statistics show on a descriptive level that a somewhat higher level of violence can be assumed among non-German adolescents. Based on a survey conducted in 2005 of western German pupils in Year 9, adolescents from Turkey in particular stand out in terms of offences involving bodily injury, according to Baier and Pfeiffer (Baier/Pfeiffer 2007). This confirms the descriptive result of a previous study from 2000 (cf. Wilmers et al. 2002, 91–93 and Wilmers et al. 2002, 183–191 on the multivariate analyses). Adolescents from the former Yugoslavia, on the other hand, commit offences of robbery, armed threats and extortion to a greater extent (cf. Baier/Pfeiffer 2007, 18–26 and see also Baier et al. 2010, 77).

Based on the data of an attempted census of Years 8 to 10 in 1999/2000 in

Cologne and Freiburg, Naplava (Naplava 2005, 28) reports that prevalence of offences involving bodily injury and extortion was higher among the children of guest workers than children with German parents and ethnic German repatriate children, while such differences are not seen in the case of robbery (cf. Naplava 2005, 34; Naplava 2005, 43). In addition, Naplava reports of a significantly higher proportion of guest worker children who have come into contact with the police in the context of violent offences. This can be seen as a possible reason for the greater level of violence observed among such adolescents according to official statistics<sup>1</sup> (cf. Naplava 2005, 41–42 and in the same research context Oberwittler 2003b, 275–280).

Boers et al. (Boers et al. 2006, 79–83) observe no or negligible differences regarding the violent activity of German and non-German youths based on a study of Duisburg adolescents as part of the Crime in the Modern City study (see Section 2, page 73). The reasons for this finding are varied. Based on data from the same study, Walburg shows that youths of Turkish descent have a strong focus on traditional and religious values and that they consume less alcohol and fewer drugs (Walburg 2007b, 146). In Münster, on the other hand, a city with a relatively small proportion of migrants by western German standards, a higher level of violence among migrants is reported in the framework of the same study (cf. Walburg 2007a, 249–263). Kühnel and Strobl (Kühnel/Strobl 2001, 338) report only a slightly higher level of violence among young foreigners, while the results show that young repatriates do not differ from other German adolescents in terms of level of violence. Moreover, the higher level of violence among non-German adolescents observed in most studies does not seem to be unalterable: according to Baier

et al., the tendency towards violence among all migrant groups falls significantly when the extent to which they are socially integrated increases (cf. Baier et al. 2010, 77–80). Studies by Babka von Gostomski point in a similar direction: The initially observed higher probability of non-German adolescents becoming violent offenders (cf. Babka von Gostomski 2003, 264) is no longer shown when lack of recognition and disintegration disadvantages (for example, socio-structural background, school type attended) are kept constant (cf. Babka von Gostomski 2003, 267; Babka von Gostomski 2003, 272–273). Kühnel and Strobl show analogous results for young foreigners, repatriates and German adolescents (cf. Kühnel/Strobl 2001, 344–346; Kühnel/Strobl 2001, 351).

A further significant research question in the context of youth violence is membership of a peer group.<sup>2</sup> It is shown in numerous studies that belonging to a (delinquent) group seems to promote serious and violent delinquency and aggression in particular (cf. for example Wilmers et al. 2002, 281–285; Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 72–73). Baier et al. (Baier et al. 2010, 176–177) also establish that adolescents belonging to strongly delinquent groups tend to be male, live in cities and have a migrant background. The study of Duisburg adolescents referred to above shows that the influence of the dynamic of peer groups on violent delinquency exceeds that of adolescents' own violence-approving norms (cf. Boers et al. 2010b, 514).

The independent significance of the social environment for delinquent behaviour is particularly emphasised in some studies. Oberwittler shows that violent action is determined by the living environment of adolescents even in excess of personal factors (educational level of parents, family type, job prestige) (cf. Oberwittler 2003a, 163–164), whereby that finding

applies predominantly to German adolescents (cf. Oberwittler 2003b, 285; Oberwittler 2003b, 290–291). In general, however, the significance of such context effects, particularly in comparison with individual-related causes of youth delinquency can be classed as rather weak (cf. Oberwittler 2010b, 222), as is also indicated by the findings of Kunadt (Kunadt 2011b) based on data from the Crime in the Modern City study in Duisburg.

The excessive use of media and computer games, especially if they are violent in content, has been discussed for some time as a risk factor for adolescent violent crime. Although Löser and Bliesener observe a correlation between the consumption of violent media content and aggressive and dissocial behaviour, that finding remains without additional analyses of possible intermediary links (cf. Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 75–76; Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 176). Baier et al. (Baier et al. 2010, 27–30) also report links between the consumption of violent films and computer games and multiple violent offending. The independent effects of media consumption remain even when relevant third variables are kept constant (cf. Baier et al. 2010, 184–187). In the framework of the Crime in the Modern City study, only a very small direct effect of the consumption of violent media content could be demonstrated, although such consumption is frequent in Duisburg, especially among male adolescents (cf. Kanz 2007). However, significant indirect effects of media consumption on violence-approving attitudes, which in turn directly influence violent delinquency (Boers et al. 2010a, 63), should be emphasised.

Approaches explaining violent action based on economic crime theories (for key works, cf. Lüdemann/Ohlemacher 2002, 17–24; Lüdemann/Ohlemacher 2002, 51–59 and Eifler 2002, 82–84) are also increasingly used. Neumann (Neumann 2001),

for example, applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TOPB; cf. Ajzen 1991) in the context of violent, far-right actions. Using the frame selection model, Pollich (Pollich 2010a) investigates whether the intensity of youth violence is determined by the degree of rationality in choices of action (for more detail on this model in the context of delinquent actions, cf. Kroneberg 2005 and Eifler 2008). Such studies, however, require significant theoretical background and presentation of them would go beyond the aim of the present survey article.

Based on the large number of possible explanatory factors as indicated above, researchers increasingly use complex theoretical models, which form a body of different directions of study and theoretical assumptions.

Examples of such are found in studies by Boers and Reinecke (Boers/Reinecke 2007, 41–49) and Fuchs et al. (Fuchs et al. 2009, 55–62).

## 1.2. CHANGES OVER TIME

In addition to considering the causes and correlates of youth violence, changes over time can also be analysed. Various data sets and survey methods can be used: the time series of official data and longitudinal studies based on self-reported delinquency are of key importance. If we look at the official data on adolescent suspects (between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, according to German law) and young adults (between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, according to German law) in the Police Crime Statistics (PKS, see also Diagram 1, page 72), it is clear that between 1987 and 2007 the total number of bodily injury offences recorded (criminal offence code 220000)<sup>3</sup> among persons aged under 21 increased between 1987 and 2007, but fell slightly in 2008 and 2009 (cf. Bundeskriminalamt 2010, 24–25).

Those changes are somewhat more marked for adolescent suspects than for those who are young adults. In addition, Diagram 1 (see page 72), shows a slight fall in the recorded incidence of both dangerous and serious bodily injury (offence code 222000, cf. Bundeskriminalamt 2010, 25) and of minor bodily injury (offence code 224000, Bundeskriminalamt 2010, 27; both are sub-categories of bodily injury) in the years 2008 and 2009.

However, upon closer study of both types of offences, it is noticeable that the lower total number of suspects aged under 21 is due in particular to the decreased proportion of adolescents suspected of these offences (and also of children in the case of dangerous and serious bodily injury. – This is not shown on the diagram.). In the case of young adults, a weak, but continuous increase can be observed with regard to bodily injury (cf. Bundeskriminalamt 2010, 27). If the total number of all robberies recorded (offence code 210000) by offenders aged under 21 is considered, a similar picture – on a considerably lower level – presents itself. Following a near stagnation between 2003 and 2007, here too the recorded total number of suspects falls slightly (cf. Bundeskriminalamt 2010, 17–18).

Officially recorded violent offences in the federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen are of particular importance in the present article: the survey based on self-reported data from the “Crime in the Modern City” project described in more detail in Section 2 was conducted there. Here too a slight decrease in the total number of bodily injury offences can be observed in 2009 among suspects aged under 21 in comparison to the previous year, while a slight increase in robberies can be seen. If the total number of bodily injury offences recorded in 2009 is compared with the total number from 2000, a marked increase of 50.9 % is seen within

that time period. An increase, albeit less dramatic, of 2.5 % can also be observed in the total number of robberies reported to the police since 2000 (cf. Bundeskriminalamt Nordrhein-Westfalen 2010, 2–3).

That overall considerable rise in adolescent violent crime according to official statistics is set against contrary results in research based on unofficial data. Changes in delinquency and youth violence can be investigated exclusively using longitudinal studies, which investigate the violence level of certain regions or populations at several points in time. If different persons (ideally randomly selected) are investigated at each time, we can speak of a trend study. Such a trend study was conducted by Mansel/Hurrelmann (Mansel/Hurrelmann 1998) based on representative data from the years 1988, 1990 and 1996 for the federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen and also for Saxony from 1990. The self-reported data from the pupils questioned concerning delinquent activity did not confirm the finding of a marked increase in violent activity according to the Police Crime Statistics: while according to the authors a slight increase can also be observed according to unofficial data as to violent delinquency in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the degree of that increase is far less than that recorded in the Police Crime Statistics (cf. Mansel/Hurrelmann 1998, 90–91; Mansel/Hurrelmann 1998, 105).

According to a further trend study carried out in four German cities (Hannover,

Munich, Stuttgart and Schwäbisch Gmünd), for which schoolchildren in Year 9 were questioned in the years 1998, 2000 and 2005/2006 (see Baier 2008, 15–17 for more detail), an increase in youth violence cannot be observed. The violent crimes studied (robbery, extortion, armed threats and bodily harm) overwhelmingly decline with regard to both lifetime prevalence and previous-year prevalence between 1998 and 2005/2006; stagnation during the study period is only observed in Munich (cf. Baier 2008, 25–29). Changes over time in violence at schools were also studied in the years 2000 and 2005/2006 for the cities of Munich and Hannover. Here too it can be seen that the degree of physical violence, verbal bullying and property damage in schools largely remained stable during the period under investigation. This finding applies equally to all school types (cf. Baier 2008, 29–31).

In roughly the same time period, a further trend study was performed by Fuchs et al., specifically to investigate violence in schools.

The study involved a random sample of Bavarian schoolchildren from Year 5 at various types of school, “Hauptschule” (secondary modern school), “Berufsschule” (vocational school) and “Gymnasium” (secondary grammar school)<sup>4</sup> (for more detail, cf. Fuchs et al. 2009, 63–82).

A general decrease in violence at schools over the years studied, 1994, 1999 and 2004, can be observed. Considerable differences can be seen between pupils of the different school types when it comes to their violent activity: all analysed forms of violence occur most rarely in “Gymnasium”. (grammar secondary schools). However, the general decline in violent activity can be observed almost to the same extent at all school types (cf. Fuchs et al. 2009, 92–95 and see also Mansel/Hurrelmann 1998, 94).

Source: Bundeskriminalamt 2010

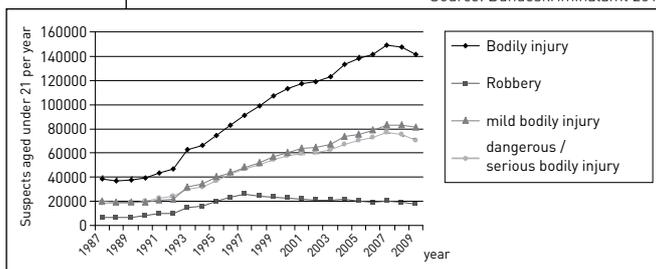


Diagram 1: Trend of violent crimes in the PKS 1987 to 2009

Unlike trend studies, panel studies involve repeat surveys of the same persons in each data collection wave. It is therefore less about gaining a repeated picture of the status quo of juvenile delinquency, but rather about being able to trace the individual development of a young person over a particular time period. This makes it possible to trace developments on the individual level for each sampling unit, instead of merely being able to make statements on the aggregate level (for more detailed remarks in longitudinal designs, see Engel/Reinecke 1994, 3–10 or Reinecke et al. 2011). Such a panel study, looking at drug consumption as well as youth violence, was performed by Engel and Hurrelmann (Engel/Hurrelmann 1993). The study shows that the violence prevalence of both sexes between Year 8 and Year 10 decreases very significantly, possibly because of the pupils learning additional courses of action (cf. Engel/Hurrelmann 1993, 235–240). The psychologically oriented panel study by Lösel and Bliesener is also of relevance here. A representative survey of Year 7 and Year 8 schoolchildren carried out in the mid-1990s at Bavarian schools was followed 20 months later by a repeat survey of a smaller subsample (for further detail, cf. Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 33–34; Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 100–101).

A key finding of the study is the high stability of aggressive forms of behaviour, especially of physical aggression and violence, during the time period of the survey (cf. Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 115–118). Risk factors of aggressive behaviour identified in the first data collection wave proved overall to be predictive of aggressive behaviour patterns in the second wave (cf. Lösel/Bliesener 2003, 136–139).

Beyond that, there are few further panel studies in Germany that deal explicitly with youth violence. Although the studies described below only provide results of re-

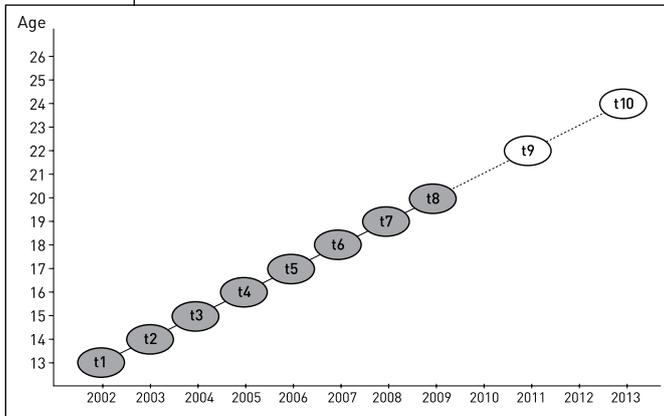
levance to our main purpose of forming a picture of youth violence to a limited extent, they deserve to be briefly described because of their general significance. First, the comparative study of young offenders in Tübingen should be mentioned, which was conducted very early, in the mid-1960s. The reoffending and delinquent careers of formerly detained young adults and a comparison group were studied (cf. Göppinger 1983; Stelly/Thomas 2005, 115–116; a similar study was performed by Hermann and Kerner [Hermann/Kerner 1988]). A further German panel study worth noting here is the longitudinal study conducted by Karl F. Schumann et al. in Bremen, which dealt primarily with the transition to working life based on a quantitative and qualitative survey of young people in “Hauptschule”<sup>5</sup> and in special needs schools (cf. in more detail Böttger et al. 2003, 35–39). The trajectories of juvenile delinquency and effects of criminal sanctions on further (delinquent) development were studied (see summary in Schumann 2003) in this context, for example.

One panel study on the relevant topic area that is not yet completed is a study of group-focused hostility (cf. Heitmeyer/Zick 2008), which, however, deals strongly with constructs on the attitude level and is based on a representative population sample. A further still ongoing longitudinal study that deals with countless facets of and possible explanations for youth delinquency, including violent actions, is the Crime in the Modern City study, which will be presented in more detail in the following section.

## **2. CRIME IN THE MODERN CITY STUDY**

Conducted since 2000 and backed by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Crime in the Modern City (CRIMOC) study

Source: Pollich/Daniel



**Diagram 2: Study design "Crime in the Modern City" Duisburg. Survey points in time 2002 to 2013.**

aims to monitor and explain the emergence and development of deviant and delinquent styles of behaviour during the phase of adolescence and beyond.<sup>6</sup> In addition to structural conditions and processes on the macro level, the study also focuses on individual processes which are embedded in various theories of action and emotion.

Beyond the findings presented in Section 1.1 regarding violent delinquency, further analyses look at the classification of delinquent behaviour (Pöge 2007a), the effect of social milieu (Pöge 2007b) and living environment (Kunadt 2011a) on delinquency, as well as the examination of various action theories such as the theory of planned actions (Wittenberg 2009). For a comprehensive overview of the findings to date, see Boers et al. (Boers et al. 2007; Boers et al. 2010a).

In order to monitor the delinquency-specific developments of adolescents satis-

factorily, a panel cohort design was chosen. Surveys were conducted in Münster<sup>7</sup> from 2000 to 2003 using the methodology described. Surveys have taken place in Duisburg<sup>8</sup> since 2002 and were conducted yearly until 2009 and from then on have been conducted twice yearly. At the time of the first data collection, the average age of those surveyed was 13 years in both cities. The Duisburg survey was first performed in all participating classes as a written survey in the respective school classes, and then continued as a postal survey following the end of the school phase. At the most recent data collection wave in Duisburg in 2011, the average age was 20. The survey will be continued in Duisburg until at least 2013 (see Diagram 1, page 65).<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the repeated survey of self-reported delinquency, the delinquent behaviour of the surveyed adolescents based on official statistics was also tracked. The results presented below refer exclusively to the self-reported data.

**2.1 CHANGES OVER TIME**

This section describes the changes in youth delinquency over time according to the Duisburg data set in the CRIMOC study. The descriptions are based on individual cross-sectional data sets of the years 2002 to 2008. The description here is therefore given in terms of a trend design (cf. Section 1.2.)

The age progression of violent delinquency according to the self-reported data

Source: Pollich/Daniel

	Violent offences 2002 (n = 3,378)	Violent offences 2003 (n = 3,247)	Violent offences 2004 (n = 3,256)	Violent offences 2005 (n = 3,263)	Violent offences 2006 (n = 4,339)	Violent offences 2007 (n = 3,279)	Violent offences 2008 (n = 3,027)
Male	19.63	24.58	20.67	19.31	16.36	9.77	7.43
Female	10.56	14.36	10.45	7.21	4.89	2.77	1.75
Total	15.16	19.43	15.42	13.24	10.58	6.07	4.43
Significance (X <sup>2</sup> )	p < .001						

**Table 1: Percentages of violent crime offenders by gender between the ages of 13 and 19**

is characterised by an early peak and ubiquitous nature. The following offences are included under violent delinquency: Armed or unarmed bodily injury, robbery and mugging. As can be seen in Table 1 (see page 74), the delinquency level in the dark field reaches its peak in the early years of adolescence, between the ages of 13 and 15 (19.43 % of all those surveyed said that they had committed at least one violent offence in 2003) and then declines. Here we see the phenomenon of spontaneous desistance from delinquency familiar to criminological trajectory research (cf. Boers 2007, 11). By the end of adolescence at the age of 19, only a small proportion of those surveyed reported committing violent offences. Over the entire period observed, it can be seen that male adolescents and young men commit significantly more violent offences than female adolescents and young women. The figures also show that violent actions punishable under criminal law are widespread during adolescence. At the peak of delinquency in 2003, a quarter of the male adolescents and 14 % of the female adolescents committed violent offences. The ubiquitous nature of violent actions is even clearer when considering the total prevalence rates for the survey period 2002 to 2008.<sup>10</sup> A total of 6 % of the male respondents and 37 % of the female respondents reported having committed a violent offence at least once between the ages of 13 and 19.

Having presented changes in violence on a descriptive level, we shall now move on to a multivariate analysis of the possible causes of violent delinquency. Various predictors are used for this purpose that have been empirically established in other research work.

## 2.2. ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF YOUTH VIOLENCE IN DUISBURG

Below, two multivariate analyses are performed with reference to the empirical findings described in Section 1.1. For this purpose, the cross-sectional data from the CRIMOC study from 2003<sup>11</sup> are analysed with regard to predictors shown as significant in various research contexts. These are gender, migrant background, membership in a violent group of friends, playing violent video games and school type attended.

The analysis is divided into two parts. First, we shall look at the influence of the named predictors on the violent prevalence of 2003. The focus is on which influence factors are responsible for a person committing one or more violent offences, i.e. for a person becoming an offender in the first place. In the second stage of the analysis, the influence of the predictors on the incidence of violence in 2003, i.e. the frequency of the offences committed, is considered. Here, the primary question is not what distinguishes offenders from non-offenders, but which factors influence the extent of violent delinquency. The prevalence analysis is performed by using a logistic regression model. This is because prevalence is a categorical dependent variable of a dichotomous nature (offender yes/no). Using this model, it is possible to make a statement about the extent to which the various predictors increase or decrease the likelihood of becoming an offender. The incidence of violence is a discrete variable, for which particular statistical distribution assumptions apply, making the use of a classic linear regression model seem unsuitable.<sup>12</sup> We therefore perform a Poisson regression (Long 1997, 221–230; Hilbe 2008, 39–49) in the following analyses, which takes into account those particular distribution assumptions.

Source: Pollich/Daniel

	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	Sig
Gender: male	0.41	0.11	1.51	.000
Migrant background	-0.32	0.13	0.73	.011
Violent group of friends	0.74	0.06	2.09	.000
Violent video games	0.08	0.10	1.09	.416
School (Reference: "Gymnasium")		0.17		
"Gesamtschule"	0.53	0.18	1.69	.003
"Realschule"	0.75	0.18	2.11	.000
"Hauptschule"	0.58	0.17	1.78	.001
Constants	-3.49	0.17		.000

**Table 2: Logistic regression of violence prevalence in 2003 on various predictors (n=2466)**

Table 2 shows the results from a logistic regression of violence prevalence. It also indicates the effect coefficient Exp(B), which provides information on the relative likelihood of the event under investigation occurring (offender yes/no), taking into account the given independent variables (on this procedure, cf. Andreß et al. 1997, 183–187). It is shown that almost all predictors contained in the model increase the likelihood of becoming a violent offender. The only exceptions are migrant background, which slightly decreases the likelihood, and the playing of violent video games, which shows no significant effect. If the results are considered in detail,

it can be seen that males have a 1.51 (Exp[B]) higher likelihood over females of becoming a violent offender. Migrant background has the opposite effect.<sup>13</sup> In comparison to persons without a migrant background, such persons have a lower likelihood of committing a violent offence in 2003 by a factor of 0.73. The fact of belonging to a violence-prone group of friends<sup>14</sup> also has an increasing effect on violence prevalence. If a unit increase is made on a five-point scale, which expresses the proneness to violence of a group of friends, the probability of acting violently increases by a factor of 2.09. By contrast, playing violent video games has no significant effect on violence prevalence. Regarding the type of school attended, it can be established that, compared to "Gymnasium", attending the three other school types increases the probability of becoming a violent offender.<sup>15</sup>

While the analysis described above looked at the likelihood of becoming an offender at all, the incidence analysis focuses on the frequency of violent acts.<sup>16</sup> The results shown in Table 3 generally paint a rather similar picture to the analysis of prevalence rates: All predictors except for migrant background significantly increase the expected number of violent offences. The sole fact of being male increases the expected average number of violent offences by a factor of 1.48, while migrant background reduces that rate slightly (IRR=0.86).

However, interesting differences are also observed between the models. Violent video games have no effect regarding on whether a person is an offender or not (see Table 2), but the results of the Poisson model (Table 3) show that they do have an influence on the frequency of violent offences. The more intensively violent video games<sup>17</sup> are played, the higher the expected average number of violent offences

Source: Pollich/Daniel

	B	S.E.	IRR	Sig
Gender: male	0.39	0.04	1.48	.000
Migrant background	-0.15	0.04	0.86	.000
Violent group of friends	0.28	0.02	1.32	.000
Violent video games	0.18	0.03	1.20	.000
School (Reference: "Gymnasium")				
"Gesamtschule"	0.31	0.06	1.37	.000
"Realschule"	0.09	0.06	1.09	.137
"Hauptschule"	0.39	0.06	1.47	.000
Constants	-1.82	0.06		.00

**Table 3: Poisson regression of violence incidence in 2003 on various predictors (n=2408)**

(IRR=1.20). Violent friends, on the other hand, seem to influence positively both whether somebody is an offender or not (see Table 2, page 76) and the incidence of violent offences (Table 3, page 76), i.e. they increase the likelihood of violence.

Observation of the school variable also reveals a different picture between the two models. While the “Gymnasium” differs from the other three school types with regard to prevalence in the logistic regression model, no significant difference is observed between the “Realschule” and “Gymnasium” in terms of the expected average frequency of violent offences. The “Gesamtschule” (IRR=1.37) and “Hauptschule” (IRR=1.47), on the other hand, also have a positive effect in this respect, indicating that attendance at those school types slightly increases the expected average number of violent offences compared to attendance at a “Gymnasium”. It can be established in conclusion that attendance at a “Realschule” in comparison to a “Gymnasium” clearly increases the risk of becoming an offender, but not the frequency of offences. For the „Gesamtschule“ and „Hauptschule“, the later statement does not apply: attendance of those school types, compared to “Gymnasium” attendance, attendance at those school types influences both prevalence and incidence.

### 3. SYNOPSIS

The results from the analysis of the CRIMOC data show some consistency with the research results presented in Section 1. In the comparative observation of the cross-sections over time, the phenomena of ubiquity and spontaneous desistance from delinquency could be clearly observed. In addition, it was demonstrated that the proportion of male respondents among the offenders was significantly higher at each point in time than that of female respondents. The multivariate analysis also

showed that gender has a significant influence both on becoming an offender or not and on the frequency of offences committed. The multivariate analyses also confirm the general finding that belonging to a peer group is a significant predictor of violent delinquency. Regarding migrant background, results from Boers et al. (Boers et al. 2006) and Walburg (Walburg 2007a; Walburg 2007b) could be confirmed. Migrant background in our models has a slightly negative, i.e. inhibitive, effect on both the prevalence and incidence of violence. The findings regarding the influence of violent video games on delinquency are also interesting: a direct influence was observed on incidence of violence, but not on prevalence. This essentially corresponds to findings from Baier et al. (Baier et al. 2010), who likewise observed positive effects of violent media on multiple violent offending. Regarding the influence of school types, our findings indicate that attendance at “Hauptschule” and “Gesamtschule” differ from “Gymnasium” and “Realschule” attendance with regard to the frequency of violent crime in particular. With respect to prevalence, all other school types have clear positive effects, i.e. make violence more likely, compared to the “Gymnasium”. Our results therefore support findings from Fuchs et al. (Fuchs et al. 2009), according to which attendance at a “Gymnasium” reduces the risk of violent delinquency.

Overall, it can be established that research in the field of violent delinquency is very diverse. Panel studies in particular, such as the CRIMOC project, allow criminologists and criminal sociologists to look deeper into the causes of violent delinquency with the aid of complex analyses. Interesting avenues of research show promise for the future, in particular with regard to comparisons between official and unofficial statistics.

<sup>1</sup> A detailed discussion of official statistics on crime committed by foreigners is provided by Steffen (Steffen 2001).

<sup>2</sup> A theoretical discussion of the subject area Fuchs and Luedtke provide a theoretical discussion of the subject area (Fuchs/Luedtke 2008).

<sup>3</sup> It should be borne in mind here that officially recorded offences involving bodily injury include severe forms of violence. These are of lesser relevance in the studies based on self-reporting described. The same applies to the robbery offences recorded in the Police Crime Statistics.

<sup>4</sup> The German school system is divided into three main school types following primary school (Years 1 to 4). The “Hauptschule” is ranked lowest, followed by the “Realschule” and then the “Gymnasium” for the most academically inclined, where it is possible to earn the Abitur, which provides access to higher education.

In addition, there is the “Gesamtschule”, which combines all three school types and the “Berufsschule”, which is a vocational school normally attended part-time during an apprenticeship after having graduated from one of the general schools. All school types include the secondary level I (Years 5 to 10), while the “Gymnasium” also includes the secondary level II (Years 11 to 13). Pupils are generally aged 11 in Year 5 and aged 19 in Year 13.

<sup>5</sup> Secondary school aiming to provide least academically inclined pupils with a general grounding.

<sup>6</sup> The website for the project is <http://www.krimstadt.de>.

<sup>7</sup> 1,949 respondents at the start of the study.

<sup>8</sup> 3,411 respondents at the start of the study.

<sup>9</sup> A more detailed description of the data collection procedures and the representative nature of individual cross-sectional data sets can be found in the relevant method documentation (cf. Motzke/Brondies

2004; Brondies 2004; Hilfert 2005; Kunadt 2006; Bentrup 2007; Bentrup 2009; Bentrup 2010). The panel data sets so far available are described in detail by Pöge (Pöge 2007c) and Pollich (Pollich 2007; Pollich 2010b).

<sup>10</sup> Not shown in the table.

<sup>11</sup> The year 2003 was selected because the highest level of youth crime was recorded at that point in time (see Table 1, page 74).

<sup>12</sup> Those variables are described as discrete variables that count the occurrence of an event, in this case violent offences committed. Counter variables generally follow a Poisson distribution (Long 1997, 218–221).

<sup>13</sup> Persons with a migrant background were defined as all those persons who were either not born in Germany themselves or reported that one or both of their parents were not born in Germany.

<sup>14</sup> The proneness to violence of the group of friends was recorded on a five-point scale, with the higher the value on the scale, the more violence-prone the group of friends.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the cross-sectional results presented here may provide indications of interdependence at most. For statements that allow causal conclusions, longitudinal analyses are required (for this context, cf. Boers et al. 2010b).

<sup>16</sup> The B-coefficients are the regression coefficients of the Poisson regression and in this case indicate the change in the expected number of violent offences expressed as a logarithm. Since an intuitively understandable interpretation is difficult here as well, the Incident Rate Ratio (IRR) is also indicated. This describes the factor by which the expected average number of violent offences falls or rises on consideration of independent variables.

<sup>17</sup> The degree of violence of the video games played was recorded using a five-point scale. The higher the value on the scale, the more violent in content the video

games played are.

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