



**Youth deviance and youth violence:  
A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control  
(YouPrev)**

## **Results from the German School Survey**

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## 1 Introduction

Based upon the questionnaire of the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (ISRD), a school survey observing 8th to 10th grade students in one urban and one rural German region has been conducted in the frame of the YouPrev project. Question on students' lifestyles, social and familial backgrounds, leisure time activities, attitudes and behaviour have been posed to the boys and girls. Special focus was set on students' deviance and delinquency, as well as their experiences with and views of preventive measures directed at youth violence and substance abuse.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Structure of the regions selected

For the German school Survey, two neighbouring western-German regions in one of Germany's 16 federal states (Bundesländer) were chosen. According to the underlying question of the school survey, whether there are differences to be found between urban and rural areas in the characteristics surveyed, one of the regions was a city (Münster) and one was a small town/rural type of area (county of Warendorf). The urban area has around 290 000 inhabitants, the neighbouring rural region approximately 280 000. Both regions are characterized by an unemployment rate slightly lower than the German average of 6.5 % (urban: 6.0 %; rural: 5.4 %)<sup>1</sup>. The structure of the labour markets in the two regions differ significantly from each other: In the city it is mainly characterized by the tertiary sector (83 % of the employment pattern, primary sector 0.7 %, secondary approx. 16 %), namely services, administration and trade. In the rural region, the tertiary sector amounts to 52 % of the employment pattern, the secondary sector is also very important with 46 % (primary 2 %). Mechanical engineering and metal processing are the most important industries here<sup>2</sup>. The city can furthermore be described as a university town – 17.4 % of its inhabitants are studying at one of the universities (Wikipedia, 2012). The percentage of immigrants (without German nationality) is higher in the city (7.8 %) than in the rural area (6.7 %) but comparably low for the federal state of Northrhine Westphalia where the survey was conducted<sup>3</sup>.

### 2.2 German school system

The German school system is characterized by the sovereignty of the German Länder, this means the system varies slightly between the 16 federal states. Subsequently to elementary school which takes four (in some Länder six) years, the continuative school system is stratified and leading to three divergent qualification levels over five ("Hauptschule"), six ("Realschule") or eight years ("Gymnasium") of attendance. Additionally, there are schools that teach children in stratified courses

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<sup>1</sup> Reference point October 2012 (Münstersche Zeitung, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> cf. statistical encyclopaedia of URL: [www.meinestadt.de](http://www.meinestadt.de), based on data of INKAR URL: [http://www.bbsr.bund.de/cln\\_005/nn\\_21272/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/INKAR/Ausgaben/INKAR2007.html](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/cln_005/nn_21272/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/INKAR/Ausgaben/INKAR2007.html), edited by URL: [Bundesamtes für Bauwesen und Raumordnung Bonn \(BBR\)](#) and URL: [Statistischen Ämtern des Bundes und der Länder](#) [12.11.2012]

<sup>3</sup> Percentage for the Bundesland: 10.7 % (Statistisches Landesamt NRW, 2012), total percentage for Germany: 8.5 % (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012), Reference date 31.12.2011

or classes under one roof (“Gesamtschule”)<sup>4</sup>. The three degrees of graduation that can be achieved at the four types of schools described lead to different possibilities for further education. University education is generally only accessible for students who graduated from the “Gymnasium”; graduation from the lower types of schools enables students to attend vocational training.

### 2.3 Legal restrictions / approval requirements

The first step in accessing the sample was to ask headmasters/headmistresses of schools for their willingness to participate in the study. Schools received information on the study and the questionnaire. In case of approval of the headmaster/headmistress, each class teacher decided for his or her own class whether he or she agreed to participate. Afterwards, consent from parents needed to be obtained<sup>5</sup>. The parents were informed about the general idea of the study with an information letter. This letter contained a section in which parents were asked to sign in case they approved of their child’s participation. Signed letters of consent had to be returned to the class teacher before the survey was conducted. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous.

### 2.4 Conduction of the survey

The German school survey was conducted via paper and pencil method, trained interviewers (mainly students of social sciences) stayed in class for the 45 minutes which were scheduled to conduct the survey. The questionnaire was based on the new ISRD3<sup>6</sup> instrument which was made available by the ISRD Steering Committee. Due to the fact that chances of realization of the survey and positive response of schools were supposedly enhanced by downsizing the instrument to be applicable in one lesson in all countries, significant cutbacks were made to the original ISRD3, also minor changes were made to few items and questions. Additionally, a section on experiences with and attitudes towards preventive measures and preventive actors was included.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, one question was added to the common project questionnaire in the German survey: Students were asked to give information about the size of the city/town/village they live in.

In total, 19 out of 34 schools which were contacted participated, eleven in the city (seven refusals) and eight in the rural area (eight refusals). The overall response rate of students in the 19 schools was 65.9 %<sup>8</sup> (urban = 65.1, rural = 66.9 %). Data collection started on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and was finished on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Sample description

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<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there are schools that prepare for vocational training after grade 10 (“Fachoberschule”) as well as several types of special schools (“Foerderschule”) for children with learning disabilities or handicaps. Though the latter one would have matched the age/grade criteria for selection of schools to include in the survey these schools have not been included into the study, because conduction would have required more time, interviewer resources and an adapted questionnaire in most cases.

<sup>5</sup> This applies only to students under the age of 18.

<sup>6</sup> Special thanks to the ISRD Steering Committee and Dr. Dirk Enzmann

<sup>7</sup> Instruments are available on homepage:

- German version: [http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev\\_Instrument\\_SchoolSurvey\\_DE.pdf](http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev_Instrument_SchoolSurvey_DE.pdf)
- English version: [http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev\\_Instrument\\_SchoolSurvey\\_English.pdf](http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev_Instrument_SchoolSurvey_English.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Reasons for not participating were sickness, unwillingness of student or not having handed in parents’ consent.

Of 2.186 respondents of the survey, 52.8 % were attending school in the rural, and 47.2 % in the urban area. Nearly half of the students were female (47.5 %), mean age was approximately 15 years ( $M = 14.77$ ,  $Min = 12^9$ ,  $Max = 19$ ,  $SD = 1.110$ ,  $N = 2170$ ). Table 1 gives an overview on sample characteristics subdivided by the area in which the school was situated.

**Table 1: Sample characteristics by region (2138 < N < 2186)**

Characteristic	Urban % (N)	Rural % (N)	Total % (N)
Total sample	47.2 (1.031)	52.8 (1.155)	100 (2.180)
Sex: female	46.4 (478)	48.5 (559)	47.5 (1037)
Mean age (in y.)	14.79	14.75	14.77
<b>Students' place of residence</b>			
large city	69.9 (698)	1.6 (18)	33.5 (716)
small town	16.2 (162)	56.3 (642)	37.6 (804)
village	13.8 (138)	42.1 (480)	28.9 (618)
<b>School type</b>			
Gymnasium	45.9 (473)	29.0 (335)	37.0 (808)
Realschule	26.0 (268)	50.0 (578)	38.7 (846)
Hauptschule	28.1 (290)	21.0 (242)	532 (24.3)
<b>Grades</b>			
8 <sup>th</sup>	33.4 (344)	34.9 (403)	34.2 (747)
9 <sup>th</sup>	35.6 (367)	36.2 (418)	35.9 (785)
10 <sup>th</sup>	31.0 (320)	28.9 (334)	29.9 (654)
<b>Migration background</b>			
Migr. backgr. 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen.	31.2 (313)	20.3 (230)	25.4 (543)
among those: language spoken at home not German	39.0 (115)	21.5 (47)	31.5 (514)

Most of the students who attended school in Muenster also lived there (see Table 1); 30 % lived outside of the city in smaller towns or villages. The majority of the students who went to school in the rural area also lived in small towns or villages, only 18 persons lived in Muenster. Some minor differences can be found regarding the composition of the sample: in the urban and rural area In Muenster, nearly half of the sample consisted of students from the highest type of school; only a quarter attended the medium type school. In Warendorf, half of the students attended this medium type school and only 29 % went to the highest school form.

Most of the students in Muenster (73.6 %) and Warendorf (79.8 %) lived together with both of their parents (or a stepparent) and their brothers and sisters (urban = 79.0 %, rural = 86.2 %). In the rural region, grandparent(s) of students lived a lot more often in the same household as well (12.4 % vs. 5.3 %). One person in the city and 9 persons in the rural region stated, they live in a foster family, but concerning living in a foster home or an assisted living apartment, figures were vice versa (urban: 9 students, rural: 2 students). Also, some of the youngsters already lived in shared apartments

<sup>9</sup> Relates to students who attended school at the age of 5 and have skipped another year

("Wohngemeinschaft"). In nearly all of the families, at least one of the parents had a steady job (urban = 97.7 %, rural = 99.6 %; N = 2182).

Over 30 % of the students attending school in the large city were first or second generation migrants – in the rural area this was only true for around 20 % of the sample. The average age of migration to Germany of the first generation migrants was six years (Min = 0, Max = 17, SD = 5.074, N = 132).

The countries of origin of the immigrants differed between the regions: Two thirds of migrants from the rural-area schools had their origins in states belonging to the former Soviet Union or in Poland; another large share came from other European countries, only around 15 % stemmed from the Middle East, South- and South-East-Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. The diversity of countries of origin was a lot higher in the large city: Around one third had origins from former Soviet-Union states, another quarter from other European states. Around one quarter of the students (or parents of the students) with migration background came to Germany from a country in the Middle East, very few stemmed from sub-Saharan Africa, Northern or Latin America, South- / South-East-Asia or Australia. Immigrants who came to Germany from former Soviet Union states as well as the ones, who stem from southern European countries in most cases, share a very specific migration history that is connected to particular problems they have to face in the German society. Migrants from the former Soviet Union are mostly so called German resettlers who immigrated after the transition in Eastern Europe. By law, they are categorized as "ethnic Germans" due to their ancestors' history of emigration from Germany to the Russian Empire. Large waves of immigration after the transition faced a problematic situation in terms of a successful integration, e.g. as the resettlers had to live segregated from the host society in transition housing for up to three years, parents very often would not be able to practice their professions in highly skilled areas but faced working as poorly paid unskilled labourers or even unemployment due to harsh restrictions in the recognition of qualifications. Some social problems are comparably prevalent among German resettlers: social marginalization, addiction to alcohol and heroin, violent parenting styles and a (thereby) increased crime rate are just a part of them to be named here (see e.g. Pfeiffer et al., 2005, Bannenberg, 2003).

Young migrants from Southern Europe and Turkey are nowadays mostly second or already third generation migrants; often they are the offspring of so called guest workers, who came to Germany between 1955 and 1973, when the German industry was in bloom and there was a high demand for foreign labourers. Lack of political efforts of integration was linked to the original idea that these immigrants were guests who would return to their countries of origins after a certain time. Nevertheless, many of them found a new home and settled down in Germany which led and still leads to chain migration of their families. This also caused unforeseen problems especially for Turkish families. As unskilled workers from rural areas in their countries of origin, in Germany they belong to the lower social class disproportionately often and therefore live marginalized; also parents sometimes lack language skills: These factors of social exclusion may contribute to their relatively higher crime rates.<sup>10</sup>

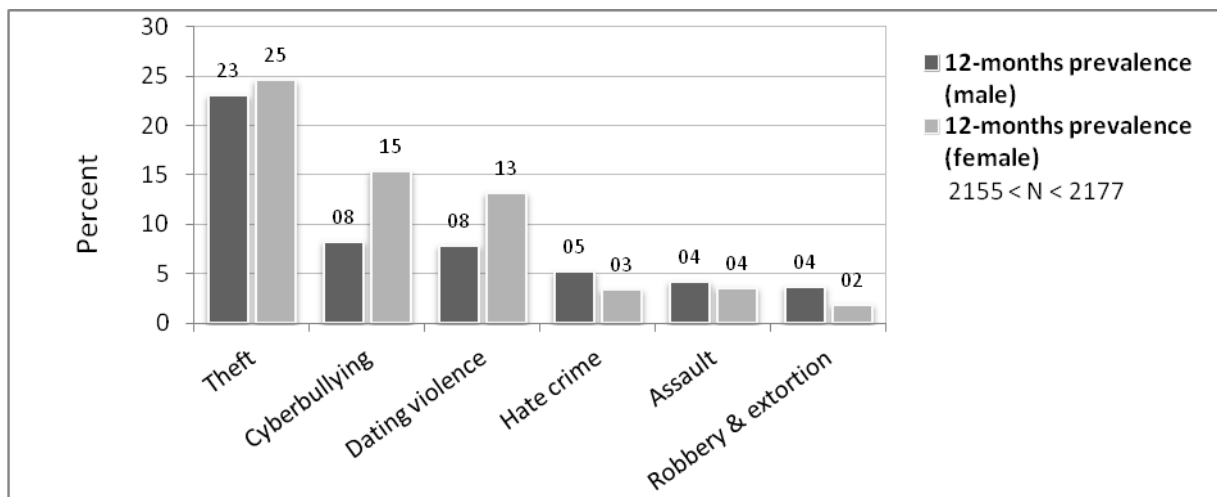
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<sup>10</sup> a) which is true for any group regardless of the construct of migration background  
b) for both groups described (and other migrants) it is also believed that there is a higher propensity in German

### 3 Descriptive Results

#### 3.1 Victimization

One of the main fields of interest of the school survey was to ask students about their deviant and delinquent behaviour. Asked for their own experiences with being a victim of offences, 43.1 % of all girls and boys answered, that they have already been victimized at least once in their lifetime (boys = 41.3 %, girls = 45.1 %;  $\chi^2 = 3.116$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .078$ ,  $N = 2.170$ ). The differences between victimization rates of boys and girls are more pronounced for the last twelve months. While 41.3 % of the girls reported they have been victimized during the last year, this was only true for 36.2 % of the boys ( $\chi^2 = 5.708$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 2.128$ ). Figure 1 gives an overview on the offence types experienced by boys and girls during the last twelve months: Nearly one fourth of the boys and girls had experienced being a victim of theft during the last twelve months. While girls were a lot likelier to become victims of cyberbullying or dating violence than boys, the male students had more often experienced hate crimes, assault or robbery/extortion.



**Figure 1: Types of victimization experienced by boys and girls during the last 12 months in per cent, 2155 < N < 2177**

Comparing the two regions, bigger differences can be found. The probability of experiencing victimization was significantly higher for students from the city concerning their life-time as well as their twelve months prevalence (cf. Table 2).

**Table 2: Overall victimization rates by region**

Victimization	Urban % (N)	Rural % (N)	$\chi^2$	df	p
Life-time prevalence	46.4 (470)	40.1 (454)	8.787	1	**
12-months prevalence	42.1 (421)	35.6 (402)	9.526	1	**

society as regards reporting offences committed by them, see e.g. Wilmers et al., 2002.

During the last 12 months, students from the urban area reported that they had more often been victims of theft (urban = 27.8 %, rural = 20.4 %,  $\chi^2 = 16.135$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and hate crimes (urban = 5.3 %, rural = 3.6 %,  $\chi^2 = 3.877$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ , no differences between the regions were found in the other types of offences given in the questionnaire.

### 3.2 Deviant Behaviour

Different types of students' deviant behaviour were addressed in the questionnaire. An overview on truancy as well as substance use is given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Deviant behaviour of students by region**

Deviant Behaviour	Urban % (N)	Rural % (N)	$\chi^2$	df	p
<b>Truancy</b>					
Truancy (last 12 months)	16.4 (168)	11.3 (129)	12.140	1	***
...3 or more times (for a whole day, last 12 months)	8.6 (87)	4.1 (47)	18.087	1	***
<b>Substance use</b>					
Being drunk - lifetime prev.	44.5 (438)	50.9 (573)	8.672	1	**
Being drunk - 12-months prev.	42.7 (398)	48.9 (531)	7.739	1	**
Being drunk - last month prev.	27.7 (255)	28.5 (305)	.164	1	.686
Cannabis use - lifetime prev.	13.0 (130)	12.7 (144)	.062	1	.803
Cannabis use - 12-months prev.	11.2 (105)	11.4 (122)	.027	1	.869
Cannabis use - last month prev.	6.1 (57)	7.2 (77)	1.031	1	.310
<b>Substance use – life time prev.</b>					
Inhalants	6.8 (68)	9.3 (106)	4.341	1	*
Alcohol & medical pills	3.7 (37)	5.9 (67)	5.345	1	*
Sedatives / Tranquilizers	2.0 (20)	3.7 (42)	5.323	1	*
Ecstasy / Amphetamines	3.2 (32)	2.3 (26)	1.763	1	.184
Heroin, Cocaine & Crack	2.0 (20)	2.0 (23)	.000	1	.987
Magic mushrooms	1.6 (16)	1.7 (20)	.071	1	.790
Hallucinogens	1.0 (10)	1.7 (19)	1.752	1	.186
Steroids	1.1 (11)	1.1 (13)	.008	1	.930
Relevin <sup>11</sup>	0.6 (6)	0.9 (10)	.544	1	.461
Ritalin	0.4 (4)	1.0 (11)	2.406	1	.121

Only 13.7 % reported they had skipped school for a whole day during the last 12 months. Students from the urban area were significantly more often truants than those from the rural area. This might have to do with a higher informal social control and fewer possibilities for leisure time activities during school time in smaller towns compared to the more anonymous city. To control for students, who only stayed away from school for one or two days, a new variable was computed from the open answers considering frequency of truancy. Still, the same tendencies were found as before: more students from the urban area (8.6 %) skipped school at least 3 times during the last 12 months than in the rural region (4.1 %). The difference found between boys (7.2 %) and girls (5.2 %) was worth mentioning, but still statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.673$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .055$ ). Experiences with heavily be-

<sup>11</sup> Control variable, substance does not exist

ing drunk seem to be more prevalent in the rural than in the urban region (cf. Table 3). But this is only true for life-time and twelve-month prevalence. Regarding the prevalence of heavy drunkenness during the last month, no significant differences between students from urban (27.7 %) and rural (28.5 %) region could be found. A deeper look into the data showed that even considering the frequency of being heavily drunk during the last month<sup>12</sup> there were no further differences to be found between the regions. Comparing the sexes, a lot more boys than girls had experiences with being heavily drunk, as well concerning their life-time prevalence (boys = 54.0 %, girls = 41.3 %,  $\chi^2 = 33.672$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 2108$ ) as regards the prevalence during the last month (boys = 34.0 %, girl = 21.5 %,  $\chi^2 = 38.361$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 1990$ ).

No differences between the regions could be found regarding students' experiences with cannabis use. Nearly 13 % said they have already tried it at least once in their life ( $N = 2135$ ), 11.3 % ( $N = 2012$ ) also had taken it during the last 12 months. Overall prevalence of use during the last month was 6.7 % ( $N = 2010$ ). The frequency of consumption, which was collected similarly to the consumption of alcohol, did not differ between the two regions. Comparing boys' and girls' cannabis use it shows that boys are far more experienced (life-time prevalence: boys = 17.1 %, girls = 8.2 %,  $\chi^2 = 38.203$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 2134$ ) and active (last-month prevalence: boys = 9.6 %, girls = 3.4 %,  $\chi^2 = 30.991$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 2009$ ) than girls.

The overall life-time prevalence of having tried at least one substance other than alcohol or cannabis<sup>13</sup> did not diverge significantly between the two regions (urban = 14.5 %, rural = 17.6 %,  $\chi^2 = 3.313$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .069$ ,  $N = 1957$ ). If cannabis is included, 21.8 % of the sample ( $N = 2117$ ) had tried at least one of intoxicant. Students from the rural area showed a higher prevalence for the use of nearly all substances, even though in most cases differences were not significant (cf. Table 3). The table shows that the most widespread substances are the ones that are not illegal and therefore easier to access. Inhalants, such as glue or nitrous oxide (8.0 %,  $N = 174$ ), medical pills in combination with alcohol (in order to get high, 4.8 %,  $N = 104$ ) and sedatives and tranquilizers (2.8 %,  $N = 62$ ) are the intoxicants most common among the juveniles – all three are significantly more prevalent in the rural region than in the urban area. While Ecstasy and (Meth-)Amphetamines were used by more than 2 % of the overall sample, consumption of all other substances has only been reported by a very small group of students. Significant gender differences (in terms of a higher prevalence of use among the boys) could be found for use of steroids (boys = 1.8 %, girls = 0.4 %,  $\chi^2 = 9.306$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 2137$ ), inhalants (boys = 10.9 %, girls = 5.1 %,  $\chi^2 = 23.807$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 2137$ ) and hallucinogenic intoxicants (boys = 1.9 %, girls = 0.8 %,  $\chi^2 = 4.707$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 2141$ ). Only one of the categories was ticked more often by girls (5.7 %) than boys (4.1 %): Use of medical pills in combination with alcohol in order to get high was slightly more prevalent – although differences were not significant – among female than male participants. The control category Relevin was ticked by twelve boys and four girls (n.s.). A close look into their questionnaires did not suggest their answers were to question in general. Their answers to substance use were rather differentiated; the questionnaires in total

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<sup>12</sup> Question: "On how many occasions (if any) have you had enough alcohol to make you drunk, for example staggering when walking, not being able to speak properly, throwing up or not remembering what happened?" Categorization of answers: "0 (never)", "1-2", "3-5", "6-9", "10-19", "20 or more".

<sup>13</sup> The variable was built excluding Relevin (= control category).



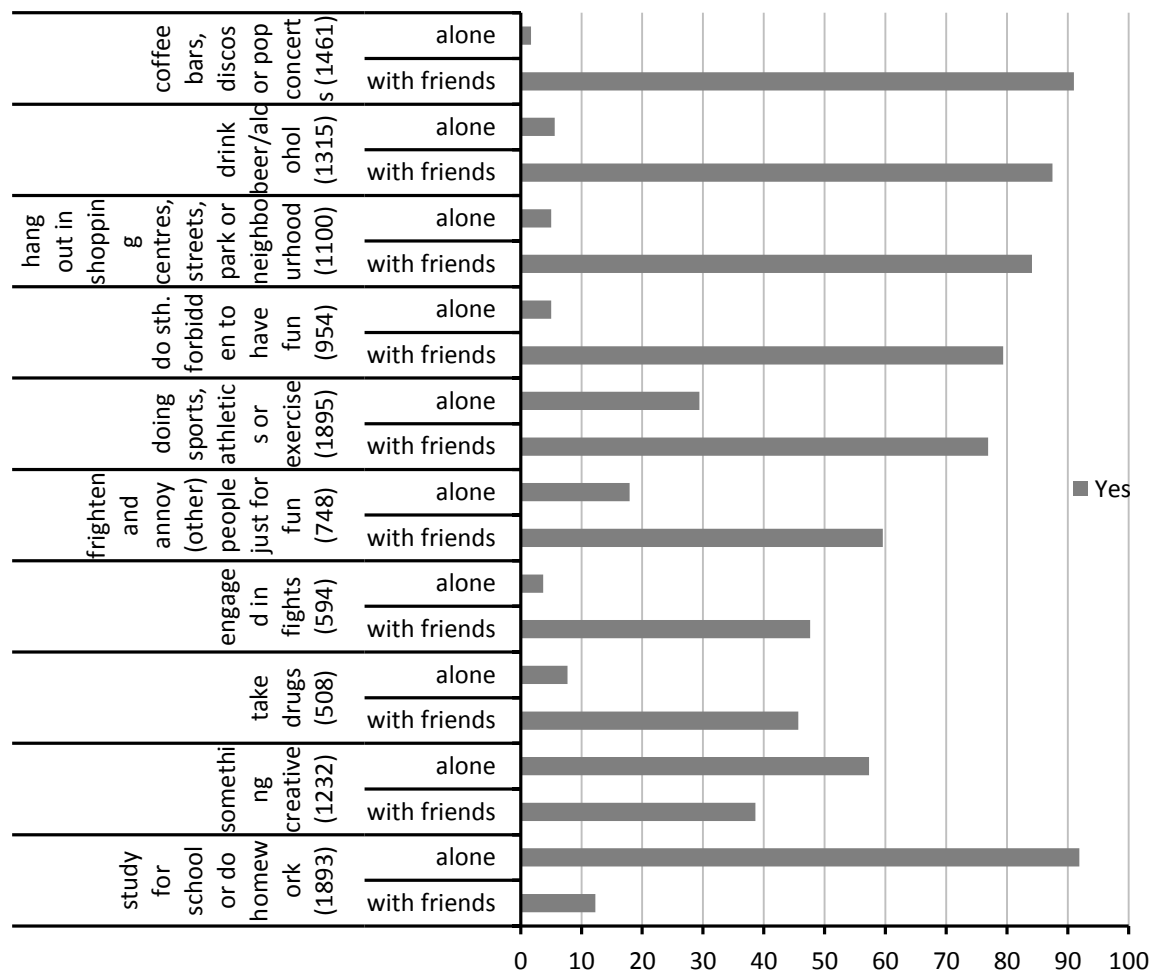
were filled in logically. There might be the possibility that some of the participants who ticked “yes” misunderstood the substance given for the very similarly sounding and existing Ritalin.

The impact of peer groups on (deviant) behaviour is well-known in criminology. Some questions in the survey address the students’ leisure time activities – positive as well as deviant ones, and activities that enhance opportunities for delinquent behaviour – and whether or not they are carried out with friends. Participants were asked, how often a week they go out in the evening<sup>14</sup>. No differences between rural and urban area could be found, given their rather young age most of the students stated they go out either once (28.5 %) or twice (21.3 %) in the evenings. 14.0 % reported they never go out in the evenings. These students were interestingly only a bit younger than the average (14.45 years, min = 12, max = 19, SD = 1.141), neither significantly more often migrants (27.1 %) or female (47.4 %), nor overachievers at school. Only a third of the students reported they go out three (15.4 %) or more times a week (four times: 7.9 %, five: 5.0 %, six: 2.0 %, every day: 4.0 %, N = 2 158). When asked how important it is to them what their friends think about themselves, a vast majority of nearly 90 % of students stated their friends’ opinion is important (42.6 %) or rather important (42.5 %). Only a minority considered their friends’ opinion to be rather unimportant (10.6 %) or unimportant (2.5 %).

Asked for their leisure time activities and whether they carry them out with their friends or alone (see Figure 2) it became clear that nearly all of the activities given were carried out with friends considerably more often than alone – only the per se less social activities, studying for school and doing something creative, are also done alone more often than with friends.

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<sup>14</sup> Wording of question: “How many times a week do you usually go out in the evening, such as going to a party or a disco, go to somebody’s house or hanging out on the street?”.



**Figure 2: Students' leisure time activities, multiple answers possible; in brackets: Number of persons who responded that they engage in this activity**

Additionally, students were questioned about their friends' perceived delinquent involvement<sup>15</sup>. For further analysis, the block of questions was subdivided: Two questions addressing friends' substance use were combined with two questions on friends committing property offences to the index "deviant peers"; two questions asking for friends who have committed violent offences are summed up to the index "violent peers". Comparisons between the perceived deviance and violent involvement of friends in urban and rural region as well as between boys and girls are shown in Table 4.

<sup>15</sup> Wording of questions e.g.: "I have friends who used hard drugs like ecstasy, speed, heroin or coke.", answer categories "yes" and "no"

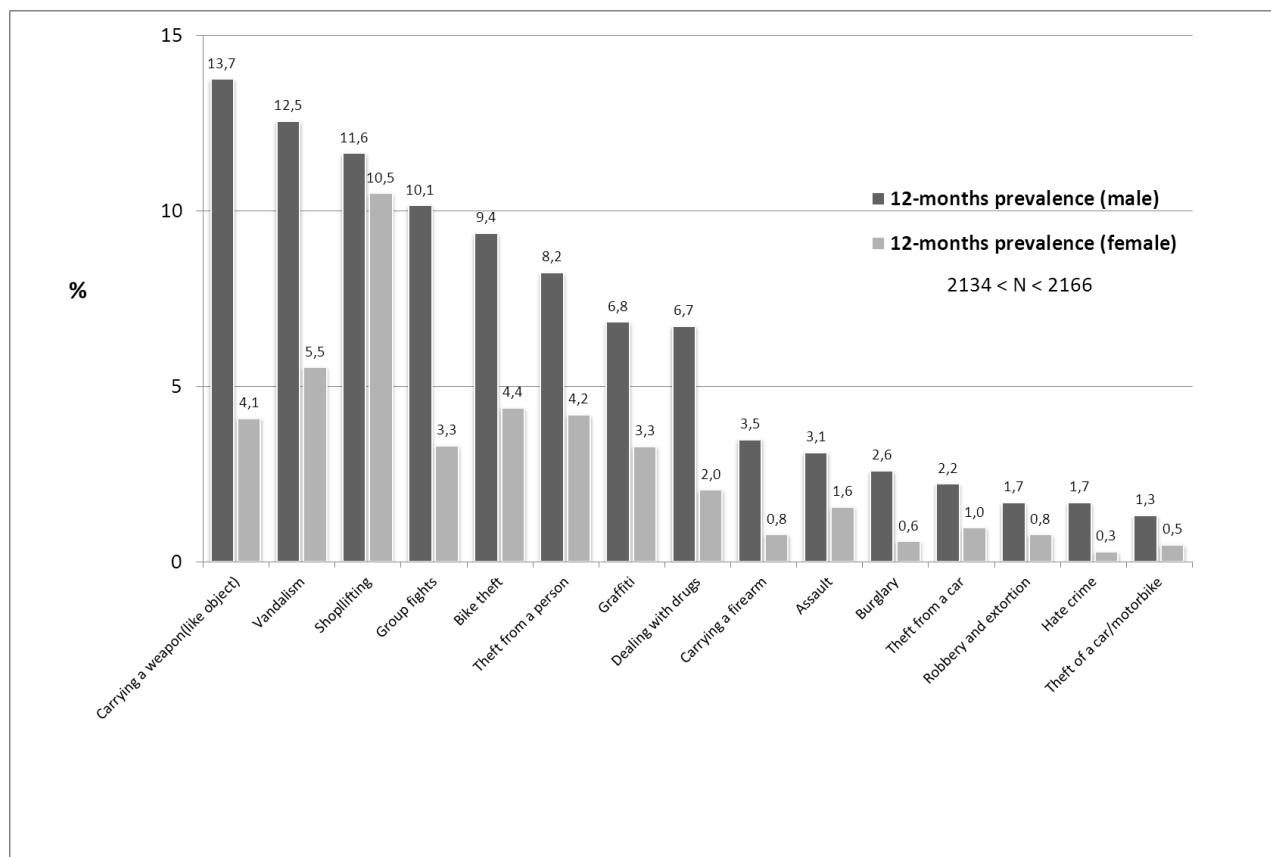
**Table 4: Percentage of students who responded to have deviant or violent peers by sex and region**

Characteristic	Urban % (N)	Rural % (N)	$\chi^2$	df	p
Deviant peers	58.5 (600)	60.1 (690)	.555	1	.456
Violent Peers	20.5 (210)	15.8 (182)	8.033	1	**
Characteristic	Boys % (N)	Girls % (N)	$\chi^2$	df	p
Deviant peers	62.7 (715)	55.6 (574)	11.917	1	**
Violent Peers	20.5 (234)	15.3 (158)	10.030	1	**

While having deviant friends was comparably prevalent among the students in both regions, having contact with violent offenders was significantly more spread in the city than in the countryside. Sex differences are not big, but nevertheless significant (cf. Table 4) – boys’ friends are more often engaged in deviant and violent activities than the girls’.

### 3.3 Delinquency

Delinquent behaviour of students was measured via 16 questions addressing different forms of offending<sup>16</sup>, asking for life-time and 12-months prevalence.



**Figure 3: Twelve-months prevalence of boys' and girls' self-reported delinquency**

<sup>16</sup> Two items – carrying a firearm and carrying a weapon like object or a weapon – do not exclusively address behaviour that is defined as illegal in Germany.

The most prevalent types of offences that have been committed during the last twelve months are the less severe ones (cf. Figure 3): Vandalism as the most prevalent offence<sup>17</sup> has been committed by 9.2 % of the students during the last twelve months. Among the property offences shoplifting and bike theft are most prevalent (in total: 11.1 %, 7.0 %). Participating in a group fight is the most prevalent violent offence (6.9 %), only small numbers of students reported they committed assault (2.4 %) or robbery and extortion (1.3 %). Apart from shoplifting, all offence types shown in Figure 3 have been committed considerably more often by boys than by girls. In total, 19.1 % of all students reported they had committed a property offence during the last twelve months and 8.5 % reported having committed a violent act<sup>18</sup>.

The most widespread offence is of course illegal downloading of e.g. music, movies or games. 47.3 % of the boys and 33.2 % of the girls stated they had done this during the last twelve months (life-time prevalence: boys = 55.3 %, girls = 39.0 %). 21.9 % of the sample had been engaged in illegal downloading but reported they had not committed any other offence during the last twelve months. When all categories of delinquent behaviour are summed up, 67.9 % of the boys and 49.4 % of the girls ( $\chi^2 = 76.346$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 2142$ ) reported they had committed at least one of them at least once in their life. Prevalence for the last year is 59.2 % for the boys and 40.8 % for the girls ( $\chi^2 = 57.891$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 1907$ ), if illegal downloading and carrying of a weapon (or weapon-like object) is also accounted for.<sup>19</sup>

Prevalence rates of all offence types and characteristics described above did not differ significantly between urban and rural area apart from spraying graffiti (urban = 6.1 %, rural = 4.3 %,  $\chi^2 = 3.865$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and carrying a weapon(like object) (urban = 11.0 %, rural = 7.5 %,  $\chi^2 = 7.872$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which both occurred more often in Muenster than in Warendorf county.

Students were also asked whether they ever had contact with the police because they did something illegal. 19.6 % of all respondents reported they already had contact to the police at least once in their life – boys (24.9 %) experienced this significantly more often than girls (13.9 %,  $\chi^2 = 40.933$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but differences between rural and urban area were not significant. 83.1 % of those who already got into contact with the police because of doing something forbidden (also) had an encounter during the last twelve months before participating in the survey. 392 of the students indicated why they had been in contact with the police. Table 5 gives an overview on the most frequent reasons given by the respondents. In nearly one third of the cases (31.4 %) police contact was linked to minor traffic offences, committed by riding the bicycle on the wrong side of the road or without a light, for example. This is a finding that may not be representative for other regions, because the regions where the survey was conducted are known for their intense cycling culture – and police is known for controlling bicycles often.

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<sup>17</sup> „Carrying a weapon or a weaponlike object“ does not necessarily have to be an offence. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that a considerable number of boys and girls reported having carried weapons or similar objects during the last twelve months.

<sup>18</sup> No significant differences between urban and rural area.

<sup>19</sup> Percentages can vary due to changing Ns.

**Table 5: Most frequent reasons for students' last contact with police, N = 392**

Offence	%
Minor traffic offence (bicycle)	31.4
Theft	18.6
Violent offence	11.0
Offence against the law for the protection of the youth	6.6
Vandalism	6.4
Possession of drugs	2.8
Trespassing / breaking and entering	2.3
Shooting with softair weapons	2.3

Theft – in many cases shoplifting – was the reason for 18.6 % of the police contacts. 11 % of the students stated they had been in contact with the police over a violent offence. Another considerable group of students were in contact with the police because of violations of youth protection statutes (6.6 %). In most cases this meant they were caught because of underage drinking or being in public spaces past the general curfew for juveniles. Vandalism was the reason for 6.4 % of the contacts with police officers, only a small amount of youngsters were caught possessing drugs (2.8 %), trespassing / breaking and entering (2.3 %) or shooting with softair weapons. The 18.6 % which are missing in Table 5 contain offences which were only named seldom, such as arson, harassment, cyberbullying, fare evasion or driving without a license. In the vast majority, offences committed by the juveniles did not seem very severe, also from the consequences which followed the police contact (multiple answers possible): In 67.1 % of the cases, the parents were informed and above that, 33.2 % stated, that “nothing happened”. Only 16.0 % of the students who had contact with police during the last twelve months because they did something forbidden had to go to court or a public prosecutor; 11.0 % were sentenced by the court.

### **3.4 Frequent violent offending**

While juvenile delinquency is generally widespread and characterized by a low severity, it is known that a small number of repeat or frequent offenders, who are – from the perspective of developmental and life-course criminology – called chronic or persistent offenders, account for a large amount of all offences committed by juveniles (Wolfgang, Figlio & Sellin, 1972). In the analyses at hand, a category of frequent violent offenders was generated by summing up the self-reported violent acts of the last twelve months. The 2.8 % (N = 59) of all students who reported they had committed five or more violent offences<sup>20</sup> during the last twelve months, hence were categorized as frequent violent offenders (FVO). Summing up the absolute number of all self-reported offences which were committed during the last twelve months, this small group of offenders is responsible for 69.0 % of all offences<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Four offence types from the questionnaire were used for the construction of the variable: Robbery and extortion, participation in a group fight, assault and hate crimes.

<sup>21</sup> All offences = All offences listed in question 7.2 of the questionnaire except illegal downloading, carrying a firearm and carrying a weapon(like object). This means: vandalism, shoplifting, group fights, bike theft, theft of personal belongings of somebody, spraying Graffiti, dealing with drugs, assault, burglary, theft from a car, theft of a car or motorbike, robbery and extortion, hate crime.

and 95.0 % of all violent offences<sup>22</sup>. From the current state of research (see e.g. Farrington, 2008), it can be assumed that these frequent violent offenders are a group which is characterized by the presence of a multitude of risk factors that can serve as causes of an early onset and a high frequency of offending; and that delinquency is only one facet of a general deviant lifestyle. Table 6 gives an overview on some (mainly familial) risk factors and facets of deviance, subdivided by offender types. Some of the factors shown do not necessarily have to be regarded as strong predictors causing deviance or delinquency, but may be seen as indicators or as constructs for the presence of social problems.

**Table 6: Characteristics and risk factors of self-reported non-offenders, offenders, and or frequent violent offenders (last twelve months)**

Characteristic	≥ 5 violent offences (FVO) (N = 59)	all offenders (except FVO) (N = 566)	no offence (N = 1561)
Male	74.6 %	63.4 %	47.7 %
Age	15.2 y.	14.9 y.	14.7 y.
Attending "Hauptschule" (lower level secondary school)	57.6 %	29.9 %	21.1 %
Mother does not live at home	23.2 %	10.0 %	9.3 %
Father does not live at home	28.6 %	23.7 %	19.0 %
Father has a steady job/is self-employed	80 %	91.7 %	93.4 %
Migration background	44.6 %	31.2 %	22.6 %
Language spoken at home not German	22.4 %	9.4 %	6.7 %
> 2x heavily drunk during last 30 days	62.5 %	21.4 %	4.9 %
Consumption of cannabis during last 30 days	40.8 %	15.6 %	2.3 %
Drug experience (life-time prev., w/o cannabis)	61.9 %	35.1 %	8.8 %
Deviant Peers	91.5 %	86.6 %	47.8 %
Violent Peers	74.9 %	35.0 %	9.6 %

Comparing the three groups and the presence of risk factors and deviant behaviour among them (see Table 6) it is evident that offenders are more strained than non-offenders and frequent violent offenders are more strained than the other offenders. "Being male" is one of the main risk factors for violent offending. Not having mother or father around in one's everyday life may be an indicator for "broken homes"; having an unemployed father could be an indicator for a low socio-economic status. Attending the lowest school type and having a migration background cannot be regarded as risk factors per se, but should be seen as constructs which may contain multiple other problematic factors: Both characteristics in the German society<sup>23</sup> disproportionally often come along with social marginalization and exclusion, disadvantaged conditions for socialization (among other things: violent parenting styles), a family with a low social status and a higher possibility of precarious job situation or unemployment, comparably worse education and career opportunities (see e.g. Baier et al.,

<sup>22</sup> all violent offences = robbery & extortion, participation in group fights, assault, hate crime

<sup>23</sup> which is known for its impenetrable school system, see e.g. Oberwittler et al., 2001; der Paritätische Gesamtverband, 2010.

2009, Oberwittler et. al, 2001, Pfeiffer et al., 2005, der Paritätische Gesamtverband, 2010). Deviant behaviour such as consumption of alcohol and drugs has a much higher prevalence among the two groups of offenders, as well as prevalence of deviant and violent peers, who are also known to be main risk factors for delinquency (see e.g. Farrington, 2008).

Biographical experiences of victimization can be one of the causes of own violent behaviour, in addition, the roles of victims and perpetrators often change among juveniles (Hosser & Raddatz, 2005). Thus, it can be assumed, that FVO may have higher victimization rates than non-offenders or the group of other offenders.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show that victimization rates of offenders are considerably higher among the two groups of offenders compared to the non-offenders for all types of offences reported. Dating violence – which was reported considerably more often by girls than by boys – occurred more often in the group of other offenders than of frequent violent offenders. Three quarters (74.1 %) of the FVO stated they had become a victim of one the offences during the last 12 months, half (52.8 %) of the group of other offenders and only one third (32.1 %) of the non-offenders.

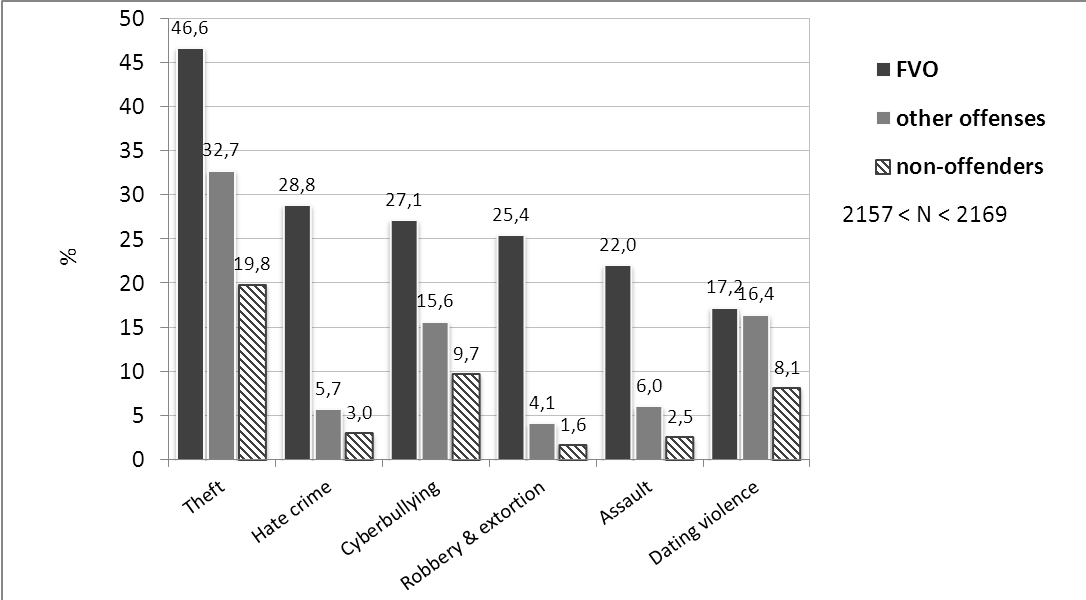
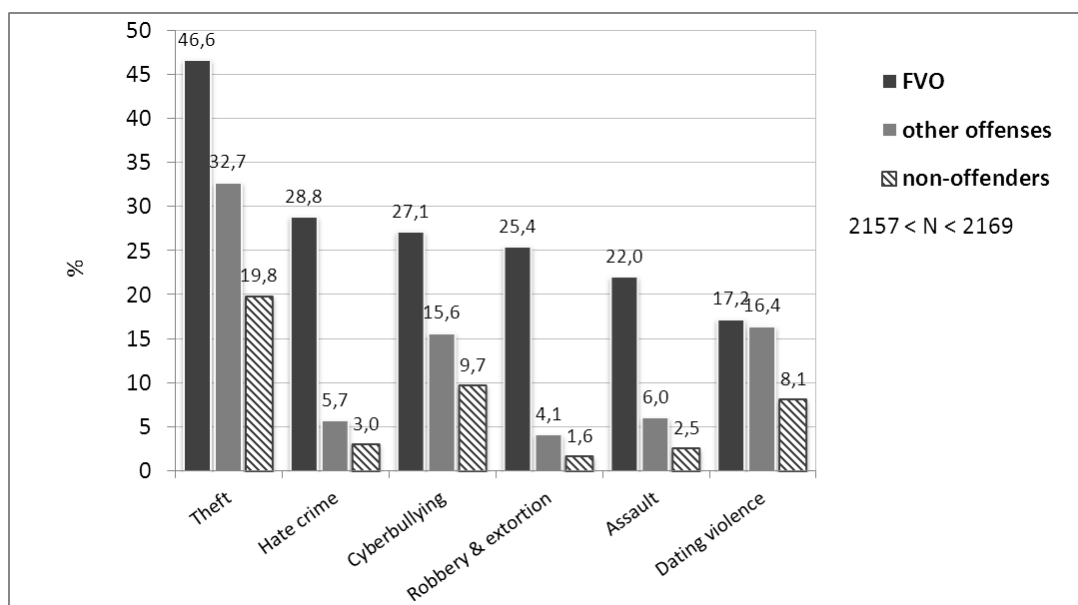


Figure 4: Life-time prevalence of victimization by offender type (FVO = frequent violent offender)



**Figure 5: Twelve-month prevalence of victimization by offender type (FVO = frequent violent offender)**

Life-time and twelve-month prevalence rates do not differ strongly within the groups; especially, rates of the highly burdened FVO are very similar.

As risk factors for deviance, some attitudes and external characteristics have been included in the ISRD questionnaire (cf. Table 7). Social disorganization of the neighbourhood, parental supervision, morality, adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity and self-control can be connected to violence and delinquency. Mean values for the three types of offenders are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Offender subgroups' mean values on person, family, and neighbourhood risk factors**

Characteristic	≥ 5 violent offences (FVO) (N = 59)	all offenders (except FVO) (N = 566)	no offence (N = 1561)
Violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity (1 = rejection 4 = consent)	2.63	2.22	1.92
Morality / acceptance of norms (1 = low, 4 = high)	2.80	3.21	3.50
Self-control (1 = high 4 = low)	2.72	2.48	2.49
Social disorganization of the neighbourhood (1 = low 4 = high)	2.12	1.82	1.73
Parental supervision (1 = high 5 = low)	2.87	2.53	2.08

Again, mean values for both offenders and FVO differ from those of the non-offending group, and the FVO are the most salient group. Offenders show less acceptance of norms / morality, lower self-control, higher adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity, lower parental supervision and they live in neighbourhoods which are more often characterized by social disorganization.



Overall, it becomes clear that in accordance with results from current research, in the German school survey both offending and frequent violent offending clearly seem to be linked to certain characteristics and risk factors. In the next step of the analysis, predictors of offending will be examined systematically by multivariate analysis.

#### **4 Multivariate Analysis – Delinquency and its predictors**

Descriptive analyses have shown that some types of deviant and delinquent behaviour are wide spread among youngsters and that boys are – in general, with the exception of shoplifting – more prone to deviance and delinquency than girls. Also, there were only few differences to be found between the rural and urban regions observed – juveniles from the small towns and villages have a higher life-time prevalence of being drunk, and of the consumption of inhalants, sedatives and pills in combination with alcohol. Persons with different degrees of involvement in delinquency clearly show different patterns of known risk factors.

In order to determine the significance and effects of predictors of offending, binary logistic regression models were applied. Since the two main types of offending – property and violent offences – could be influenced by divergent predictors, two separate explanatory models were conducted. Twelve predictors have been chosen to be included in the analysis; assumptions for logistic regression are satisfied. The predictors chosen are known as classical explanatory variables for delinquency, apart from the “region” variable, which will be included in order to answer the underlying research question of the school survey, whether there are differences between rural and urban areas.

Five scales on personality, family and neighbourhood risk factors were included in the analyses. The self-control scale was introduced by Grasmick et al. (1993, shortened version) in order to test Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), it has a high reliability ( $\alpha = .833$ ). The morality scale features “pro-social values” and “shaming” (Wikström & Butterworth, 2006; Wikström & Svensson, 2010) which are central aspects of Wikström’s Situational Action Theory of Crime Causation (SAT). Reliability is high with  $\alpha = .778$ . The adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity scale was developed by Enzmann & Wetzels (2002) on the basis of culture of honor theory (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Reliability is high with  $\alpha = .792$ . Parental supervision and perception of neighbourhood (“social disorganization”) scale were scales which have been constructed by ISRD. Parental supervision scale consists of twelve items that address parental knowledge, child disclosure, parental supervision and whether parents set a time. Reliability of the scale is high with  $\alpha = .848$ . Regarding the social disorganization of the neighbourhood scale, three additional items were added compared to the scale of ISRD 3; they address perceived security of the neighbourhood, presence of police and possibilities for leisure time activities for youngsters. Still, reliability was high with  $\alpha = .760$ . For the analysis, items have been turned (whenever necessary). For calculation of descriptive and regression analysis, scales were summed up to a mean value for each person.

Table 8 gives an overview on results of the analysis of predictors of violent offending. The regression model on twelve-month prevalence of violent offending has a very good model fit with an  $R^2$ -value of 42.3 %.

**Table 8: Binary logistic regression on twelve-month prevalence of violent offending, N = 1891, R<sup>2</sup>(Nagelkerke) = 42.3 %**

Predictor	p	Exp(B)
region	.878	.967
<b>sex (ref. = male)</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>.411</b>
age	.613	.950
<b>violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>1.706</b>
<b>morality / acceptance of norms</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>.476</b>
<b>low self-control</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>1.501</b>
social disorganization of neighbourhood	.361	1.263
low parental supervision	.624	1.087
<b>drunk (last month)</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>1.526</b>
<b>cannabis (last month)</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>1.411</b>
<b>deviant peers (drugs, property offences)</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>2.266</b>
<b>violent peers</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>5.412</b>
<i>constant</i>	.079	.032

The strongest predictor for violent offending is the contact with violent peers (cf. Table 8). High impact of peers who are engaged in violent activities themselves may have a special meaning in this sample, as it was shown (cf. Figure 3) that the main violent offence being committed by the students observed is participation in group fights – thereby, the outstandingly high influence of a group of friends may be explained, partially. “Being male” and the frequency of getting drunk also show to be very strong predictors explaining violent offending in this model. Adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity, morality, cannabis consumption, self-control and deviant peers are further significant predictors. By this model, offending is not predicted by living in an urban or rural area. Age, social disorganization of the neighbourhood and parental supervision do not have a significant impact on the question whether a student belongs to the group of self-reported violent offenders or not.

The model which explains students’ self-reported property offending during the last twelve months (cf. Table 9) also has a very good model fit with R<sup>2</sup> = 35.8 %.

**Table 9: Binary logistic regression on twelve-month prevalence of property offending, N = 1819, R<sup>2</sup>(Nagelkerke) = 35.8 %**

Predictor	p	Exp(B)
region	.169	1.224
sex (ref. = male)	.656	1.070
age	.814	1.016
violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity	.297	1.146
<b>morality / acceptance of norms</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>.282</b>
low self-control	.183	1.192
social disorganization of neighbourhood	.281	1.192
<b>low parental supervision</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>1.497</b>
<b>drunk (last month)</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>1.387</b>
<b>cannabis (last month)</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>1.224</b>
<b>deviant peers (drugs, property offences)</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>3.434</b>
<b>violent peers</b>	<b>***</b>	<b>2.254</b>
<i>constant</i>	.392	.309

Predictors of property offences are morality, contact with violent peers, contact with peers who consume substances or commit property offences, low parental supervision and consumption of alcohol and drugs. Compared to the model explaining violent offending, sex and adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity lose their influence, which is not as surprising since there were only minor differences between property offending of boys and girls to be found, and the adherence to VLNM is conceptually linked to violent offending but not to committing property offences. Self-control, which may be an important concept for explaining violent offences that more often occur in the spur of the moment than property offences, is not significant in this model. Again, region, social disorganization of the neighbourhood and age do not have an influence on the dependent variable. Comparing the two models, it becomes clear that property offending seems to be merely connected to the acceptance of norms as well as the parental enforcement of the norms set. Alcohol and drugs use, as well as belonging to a deviant and delinquent peer group are key predictors in both models – this once more shows, that the fact of youngsters being engaged in a delinquent lifestyle might be something coming along as a “developmental side-effect” of growing up and pushing boundaries, but also that when children grow up and grow out of the phase in which the peer group is the most important instance of socialization, delinquency might age out itself – not only because as shown before, in general students commit most of deviant and delinquent acts with their friends.

## **5 Students’ views on preventive measures and approaches**

In addition to the questions adapted from ISRD, the study included a section addressing students’ experiences with and views on preventive measures, especially regarding those which they were confronted with in school.

At the beginning of this section, students were asked for their opinion on what approaches would work in preventing juvenile delinquency and on who is important as a preventive actor. Results are

displayed in Table 10 and Table 11. Data are presented for four groups which are differentiated by their involvement in offending: The right-hand column contains mean values for the entire sample; the left-hand column shows mean values of those students, who did not report any offence for the last twelve months. The two remaining columns display mean values of those students who stated they committed at least one property offence (middle-left) or at least one violent offence (middle-right) during the last twelve months. Both groups are not mutually exclusive; they overlap by 111 students who committed both types of offences.

All of the approaches given are ranked rather positively with a mean value of < 2.21 (general sample, cf. Table 10). While students do not completely oppose punitive approaches, they prefer those approaches, which are directed at the improvement of individual problems and reduction of societal marginalization which can be causes for delinquency.

**Table 10: Students' perceived efficacy view of preventive approaches (4-point scale from 1 = works very good to 4 = is rather harmful, items sorted by means in the general sample)**

Approach	M (SD): no offence (1322<N<1375)	M (SD): prop- erty offence (347<N<369)	M (SD): vio- lent offence (158<N<163)	M (SD): 2118< N<2132
Improve their prospects to get a job.	1.74 (.741)	1.83 (.800)	1.80 (.824)	1.75 (.756)
Listen to their sorrows and problems.	1.75 (.767)	1.95 (.875)	1.99 (.929)	1.79 (.794)
Provide good opportunities for leisure time activities.	1.81 (.758)	1.98 (.880)	1.99 (.882)	1.85 (.792)
Provide training for better social behaviour.	1.92 (.786)	2.14 (.885)	2.12 (.945)	1.97 (.824)
Give them a good general education.	1.97 (.791)	2.19 (.909)	2.21 (.924)	2.02 (.827)
Give information on possible consequences.	2.01 (.858)	2.26 (.897)	2.26 (.944)	2.06 (.878)
Provide counselling to their parents.	2.11 (.851)	2.52 (.978)	2.49 (1.046)	2.20 (.930)
Punish them severely when caught.	2.13 (.876)	2.42 (1.010)	2.54 (1.077)	2.22 (.925)

In general, all preventive approaches given are evaluated more positively by non-offenders than by offenders. Property offenders and violent offenders differ only slightly in their views.

In accordance with criminological findings, students perceive friends and parents to be the most important agents of preventing youngsters from doing forbidden things (cf. Table 11). Again, tendencies are similar between groups, but in most of the cases, offenders' perceptions of possibilities to influence young people's behaviour are considerably lower than in the non-offending group. Youngsters attribute relatively much influence to the police; however, the group of violent offenders is much more reluctant in this respect. Apart from the police, all groups of professionals given are not perceived as very important. Concerning teachers, the reason might lie either in an age-related general rejection of the group themselves or in the fact that teachers are simply not seen as agents of prevention but as educational personal, or even that the ones who are engaging in criminal activities

know that teachers were not able to prevent them from their actions. Sports coaches may also simply not be associated with prevention of deviant behaviour, and maybe this is also one of the reasons for the mediocre values of social workers' perceived influence.

**Table 11: Students' views on the importance of preventive agents (4-point scale from 1 = very important to 4 = unimportant, items sorted by means in the general sample)**

Agent	M (SD): no offence (1322<N<1375)	M (SD): proper- ty offence (347<N<369)	M (SD): violent offence (158<N<163)	M (SD): 2019< N<2107
friends	1.34 (.647)	1.45 (.776)	1.41 (.788)	1.37 (.698)
parents	1.42 (.680)	1.68 (.904)	1.70 (.962)	1.48 (.749)
police	1.96 (.900)	2.20 (1.090)	2.44 (1.176)	2.03 (.961)
social workers	2.38 (.922)	2.66 (.976)	2.84 (1.046)	2.46 (.944)
sports coaches	2.71 (.982)	2.87 (1.045)	2.76 (1.333)	2.75 (1.009)
teachers	2.67 (.898)	3.17 (.907)	3.16 (1.002)	2.79 (.930)

Asked for the overall influence school can have on keeping students away from substance use and violent behaviour, it shows that students in general only assign limited influence to school, which is especially true for the ones who are already experienced with committing crimes. Offenders and non-offenders are somewhat more positive in their views of school's potential influence on violence than on use and abuse of alcohol and drugs.

**Table 12: Students' perceptions of school's potential influence on substance use and violence (5-point scale from 1 = very strong influence to 5 = no influence at all)**

Influence of school on...	no offence M (N)	property offence M (N)	violent offence M (N)
substance consumption	3.25 (1385)	3.74 (376)	3.74 (171)
violent behaviour	2.92 (1377)	3.44 (368)	3.43 (169)

By asking for students' experiences with preventive approaches and measures in and outside school, it showed that a majority of students (72 %) had been given information on alcohol, drugs and other harmful substances (cf. Table 13), mainly in school or by parents. Also, some students stated they received information on the internet or by social workers.

**Table 13: Students' experiences with provision of information on substance use during the last 12 months (multiple answers possible)**

Information on substance use provided?	% (2069<N<2096)
No	28.0
Yes, in school by a teacher	43.2
Yes, in school by another person	26.2
Yes, by parents	30.3
Yes, on the internet	19.9
Yes, in a youth centre	3.9

Participation in activities aiming at avoiding or reducing violence by young people or against young people was less widespread (cf. Table 14): Still, one fourth of the students took part in such an activity during the last 12 months, which was mostly taking place in school.

**Table 14: Students' participation in violence prevention measures during the last 12 months (multiple answers possible)**

Participation in violence prevention measures	% (1886 < N < 2042)
Yes	25.6
No	74.4
Yes, outside of school	4.6
<b>Yes in school...</b>	
training against bullying at school	10.2
training on how to settle conflicts without violence	18.7
other activities	4.9

Those students who were given information on substance abuse were asked for their views on the information provided and on the effects these information had on them. Table 15 gives an overview of students' evaluations of substance abuse prevention measures.

**Table 15: Students' views on information provided on substance use/abuse during the last twelve months (multiple answers possible)**

Answer categories	% yes (1443<N<1481)
I learned new facts about alcohol and drugs.	62,3
I learned new facts about the health effects of alcohol and drugs.	66,4
It made me curious about some drugs.	15,2
It was nothing new to me.	40,1
I learned new facts about how to keep away from alcohol and drugs.	43,2
I learned new facts on how to help my friends staying / getting away from drugs.	38,4

While the majority of stated they learned new facts about substances and their health effects, a considerable number of students (40.1 %) said, it was nothing new to them. Possibly, they have referred their statements to several information they received. Around 40 % agreed to the statement that

they learned how to keep themselves or friends away from drugs, but a small group of 15.2 % said, the information provided even made them more curious about substances. Among those who reported having been more curious after the intervention male students and those from the rural region were somewhat overrepresented. In this group, the involvement in deviant is elevated: The majority of these students report violent or property offences for the last 12 months, there are more than twice as many frequent violent offenders than in the general sample and there is a very high share of persons who report having used multiple substances. Given the question formats used and the cross-sectional nature of the data, it cannot be determined whether the information on substance abuse provided to them really had stimulating effects on substance use. However, it appears that for a minority of students substance abuse prevention via provision of information (i.e. using a mainly cognitive approach) may either be ineffective or rather have detrimental effects. What makes this finding worrying is the fact that this 15% minority is characterized by a relatively high level of deviant behaviour both in the fields of substance use and violence.

When asked about their opinion on the violence prevention measures they participated in (cf. Table 16), the majority of students rated the activities they experienced as helpful, useful and instructive as regards supporting themselves and others not to become victims or offenders. Most of the students also agreed to the fact that it made them more aware of the consequences violence can have on others and on their own lives, and half of the students said, activities made them feel more secure. But again, there was a minority of 16.5 % which stated they felt more insecure after participating in preventive activities. There are more boys than girls among those feeling more insecure, and they more often attend the lower types of schools. Students with migration background are overrepresented in this group as well. There is a group among them, which has already become victimized during the last year without being an offender themselves, but there are also many offenders, especially frequent violent offenders among those who feel more insecure for maybe completely different reasons than victims do. While for one adolescent “feeling more insecure” many be the expression of a heightened sense of risk of victimization, others may feel less secure because they become more aware of the risks of continuing a delinquent and violent lifestyle.

**Table 16: Students’ views on effects of violence prevention measures they participated in during the last twelve months (multiple answers possible)**

answer categories	% (486<N<497)
Helpful to protect myself from attacks by others.	68,6
Taught me how to intervene when I see violence against others.	65,9
Changed my way of thinking about violence.	41,2
Taught me how to resolve problems without violence.	72,0
Taught me what to do if somebody tries to attack me.	60,6
Provided information on where to turn to when I am under threat by others.	69,8
Made me feel more secure.	49,8
Made me feel more insecure.	16,5
Made me more aware of how violence harms people.	67,8
Made me more aware of possible punishments and other consequences.	65,6

Finally, all students were asked for their own ideas on how to prevent substance use and violence if they were teachers themselves. Especially with regard to the prevention of violence, bandwidth and heterogeneity of suggested measures were great: Students suggested providing information on effects on the victim's side and consequences on the offenders' side of violent offending, as well as providing information on alternative modes of conflict resolution. Lots of students also suggested encouraging talks, communication and mediation between persons involved in violent incidents. A smaller number of students stated, they would clarify norms, rules, and collectively ban violence. Strengthening relevant skills and resources via training, e.g. anger control training for offenders, self-defence classes for victims or conflict mediation courses were concrete approaches named by some students. Some boys and girls wrote down that in case of violence there should be strict sanctions (judicial ones as well as sanctions in the school context). Other students pleaded for involving the parents of offenders and some pointed out, that teachers should talk to students involved in violent incidents, in order to understand the causes and the problems underlying their behaviour and provide support. Furthermore, some students recommended improving the atmosphere in class and build trust between students and teachers, but some also suggested non-intervention, as teachers can do nothing against violent offending of students, anyway. Interestingly, answers of students who have been categorized as frequent violent offenders show the same variety; their ideas on how to prevent violence coincide with the approaches non-offenders suggest.

Versatility of suggested approaches to reduce substance use was somewhat smaller: The main measures suggested were to provide information on substances and the possible consequences of substance use for health and social development, to deter students via negative examples (e.g. by inviting former substance abusers) and to talk with substance abusing students in order to understand the underlying causes and problems and to be able to provide support. Furthermore, students suggested sanctions and drug and alcohol controls in schools if rules are broken, again they recommended involving the parents but also to provide leisure time and sports activities offered by the school. Some students had different ideas; they pointed out that school should refrain from prevention and intervention in this field – either because these school measures are regarded as inefficient anyway and drug abuse prevention is not the teachers' business, or because students claim a right to self-harm.

## **6 Conclusions**

Limitations of the study mainly relate to the problems all school surveys have to face: Even though they reach a large number of participants they may miss information from students who skip school or of those whose parents did not allow their participation. Also, special schools have been excluded from the sample. The sample is not a nationally representative one but was recruited in two neighbouring regions in the Northwest of Germany. The similarity of urban and rural data must be interpreted with regard to closeness and similarity of the urban and the rural region and the fact that a considerable number of students regularly commute between both spaces.

Most findings of the German school survey are in accordance with what is known from other recent self-report studies: Juvenile delinquency is widespread and mostly of low severity. Overall, offences are in general most frequently committed by male youngsters, but girls are highly engaged in proper-



ty offences, especially theft. There is a small group of violent offenders which feature many risk factors for persistent offending and they are accountable for the majority of all offences reported. Victimization rates of students are quite high; especially theft, cyberbullying and dating violence have often been experienced.

The YouPrev school survey showed that self-report studies can be extended to include young people's views of and experiences with prevention. Students' views on preventive measures are in accordance with evaluation research on prevention: Punitive perspectives are not strongly endorsed by juveniles, they favour prevention via person-centred communication and improving educational and labour market perspectives. Young persons attribute preventive potential to parents and peers, but less to professional agents outside the Criminal Justice System.

Juveniles hold relatively elaborated concepts of preventive approaches to be initiated by school. These concepts partially mirror approaches endorsed and taken in prevention practice. Although delinquent juveniles generally think there is less influence on their behaviour all students agree that parents and friends have a substantial impact.

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