

Special Section Article

Antisocial Behaviour and Violent Delinquency Among Boys with a Migration Background: A German Panel Study

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Abstract

Immigrant boys show higher rates of antisocial behaviour. However, results of previous studies showed some contradictory findings in terms of intercultural differences in antisocial behaviour. In our study, we used an intercultural comparison of antisocial behaviour based on two different definitions of migration status (nationality vs. migration background). According to migration background, however not according to nationality, significant but small differences were found only in violent delinquency. A longitudinal mediator model based on the disintegration approach (Anhut & Heitmeyer, 2000) was examined in order to contribute to our understanding of the background of violent delinquency in immigrant boys. The data were from a German panel study conducted in the cities of Dortmund and Nuremberg. The results of the mediator model showed that perceived discrimination and negative parenting affect violent delinquency indirectly through violence attitudes, self-control, and peer delinquency. The findings suggest that preventive measures against violent delinquency should focus on these indirect effects and migrant-specific variables.

Keywords

Antisocial behaviour, violence, immigrant adolescents, social disintegration approach, longitudinal mediator analysis

In most societies, higher rates of antisocial behavior are attributed to immigration. According to the 2014 German General Social Survey (ALLBUS), nearly half of the respondents (49.7%) believed that immigration increases the crime rates (Naplava, 2018). Individual violent crimes of migrants have received great attention by media and society, thus strengthening the public image of “criminal foreigners” (Uysal, Link, & Weiss, 2016).

In contrast to subjective judgments about the antisocial behavior of foreigners, scientific research should contribute to an objective and more detailed

evaluation of this issue, taking into account causal mechanisms and differential effects.

Previous studies on antisocial behaviour which included ethnic comparisons have yielded contradictory results for German-speaking countries (Strohmeier, 2007). Some studies pointed to a higher level of violence among adolescents with migration background (Baier, Pfeiffer, & Windzio, 2006; Rabold & Baier, 2011), while others either showed completely opposite results or found no clear differences between local and foreign adolescents or adolescents with a migration background (Boers, Walburg, & Reinecke, 2006; Othold & Schumann, 2003). Strohmeier (2007) reported that the ethnic background is usually dealt with as a ‘secondary issue’ in studies of antisocial behavior in German-speaking countries and that the samples of these

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studies included a low proportion of migrant adolescents or adolescents with a migration background.

Furthermore, data on crime rates and immigration vary depending on the definition of 'migrant background'; e.g., German official data (Bundeskriminalamt, 2017) only take into account nationality, thus excluding all persons with a migration background who have acquired German citizenship. Up to date, there is a lack of detailed migrant-specific analyses in criminological research.

Disintegration Approach

The disintegration approach aims to explain antisocial behaviour and is based on the approach of Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000). It does not deal specifically with migrant criminal behaviour, but it can be effectively applied to this topic and provides the theoretical background for several criminological studies in Germany (Baier, 2005; Heitmeyer et al., 2012; Rippl, Baier, Kindervater, & Boehnke, 2005).

Heitmeyer, one of the two German sociologists who developed the social disintegration theory, worked with the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG)-Youth Panel data on the basis of this theory, and this group investigated the violent behaviour of Turkish, German, and German resettler adolescents. This research will be discussed in the following pages, but first, disintegration theory will be explained briefly.

According to the disintegration approach, experience or fear of disintegration increases conflicts and weakens the society's regulation capabilities. Thus, the disintegration approach explains violent behaviour as a result of deficient integrative capacities of modern societies. On the other hand, successful integration leads to positional, moral, and emotional recognition, resulting in a self-definition of being part of the social collective and willingness to accept social norms.

Well-functioning social integration requires coping with tasks on the structural, institutional, and social-emotional level. The social-structural level refers to ensuring participation in socially generated material and cultural goods (e.g. work and education). On the institutional level, the right of political participation, which means the determination of socially relevant procedures, is essential. The social-emotional level means self-actualization in emotional relationships, such as those involving family, friend groups, or the neighbourhood (Anhut

& Heitmeyer, 2000, 2009; Babka von Gostomski, 2003a).

The Model of the Study

Our study was based on Babka von Gostomski's model (2003b). This model applies the disintegration approach to the question of migrant criminality, operationalizing its core concepts as follows: The social-structural dimension is represented by the type of school attended by the adolescent and the father's highest educational degree. The institutional level is represented by nationality, discrimination experiences, and (dis)trust in the justice system. The social-emotional dimension is represented by the adolescents' relationship with their parents and by experienced parental education.

Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000) emphasized that the result of disintegration experiences depends on additional influential factors, such as attribution styles or affiliations with specific milieus (Anhut, 2005). Therefore, Babka von Gostomski (2003b) added two factors that mediate the relationship between disintegration and violent delinquency: firstly, retribution-oriented conflict style; secondly, a highly cohesive peer network.

Babka von Gostomski (2003b) tested this model using IKG-Youth Panel data. This study was carried out with 11,000 pupils in the tenth grade of all school types in the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia. Babka von Gostomski (2003b) examined the violent behaviour of Turkish, German, and ethnic German resettler (German: 'Aussiedler') boys. According to the study, the type of school visited, as an indicator of the social-structural dimension, influenced the violence level of young people, as students of lower-track schools showed a higher risk of violent delinquency than students of higher-track schools. As indicators of the institutional dimension, citizenship had no influence on violent crime, whereas discrimination experiences and (dis)trust in law treatment increased the risk of violent action. Taking the indicators of the social-emotional dimension into account, lack of trust in parents and a harsh and inconsistent parenting style increase the risk of violence. The mediation factors *availability of retribution-oriented conflict resolution strategies* and *membership in highly cohesive cliques* enhanced the risk of violent behaviour.

In our study, we reassessed the model proposed by Babka von Gostomski (2003b), making adjustments as follows: as the disintegration approach stresses the

relevance of *social competence* as another mediating factor (Anhut & Heitmeyer, 2000), the present study aimed to include this factor in the operationalization of the disintegration approach. As *self-control* is considered a relevant aspect of social competence (Kanning, 2009), we focused on this aspect. The remaining mediating factors *violence attitudes* and *delinquency of friends* take a supplementary role in the *retribution-oriented conflict resolution strategy* and *membership in a highly cohesive clique*. Another difference in the operationalisation between the current study and Babka von Gostomski's (2003b) is that the variable *trust in the justice system* could not be examined as an indicator of the institutional level in our study. Moreover, the model of the current study is examined longitudinally using structural equation modelling (SEM) with two cohorts, whereas Babka von Gostomski tested his model cross-sectionally by using regression analyses in one cohort that was comparable with the older cohort of this study. Figure 1 presents an overview of all variables that were examined in this study.

In order to achieve comparability with bright field data, as well as to avoid the loss of the diversity of the ethnic origins, two categories (nationality and migration background) were examined separately in this work. Migrant background is defined according to Babka von Gostomski, considering the nationality of the respondents and their parents, as the country of birth of the respondents and their parents and also the language spoken at home.

Only male adolescents were included in the analyses because there is increasing evidence that female delinquency follows its own developmental processes

and should be addressed as a distinct phenomenon (Hoyt & Scherer, 1998; Oberwittler, 2007). Therefore, the model was tested only with boys with a migration background.

Research questions:

1. As a result of the indefinite state of research findings as stated above, the question whether crime rates are different for boys with German vs. other nationalities, or boys with vs. boys without migration background is to be examined.
2. In a second step, our revised version of the social disintegration model (Babka von Gostomski, 2003b) as shown in Figure 1 will be tested using mediator analyses. The model will be tested separately for the younger and older cohorts, because they supposedly follow different developmental trajectories of antisocial behaviour (Moffitt, 1993). We chose violent delinquency as the dependent variable of our mediator models as in the study of Babka von Gostomski. With our model, we aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the background of immigrant boys' violent and delinquent behavior.

Method

The sample was recruited via three survey waves (with yearly follow-ups) from the longitudinal sub-project A2 "Chances and Risks in the Life Course" of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) "From

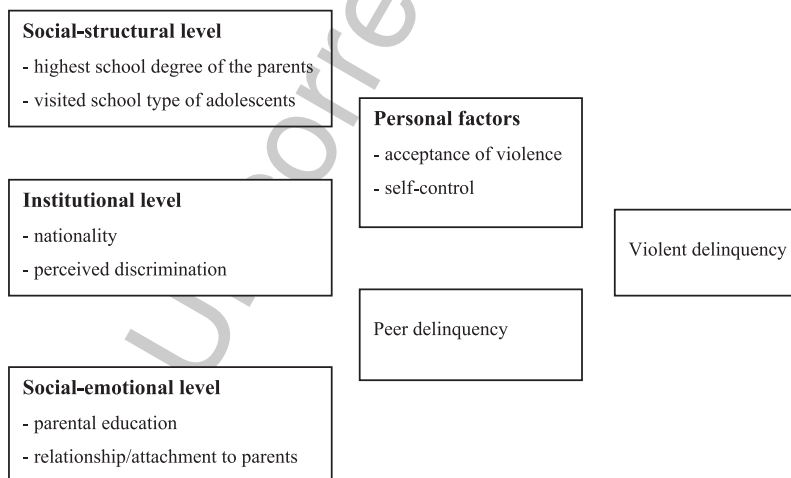


Figure 1. Operationalisation of current study.

Heterogeneities to Inequalities” at Bielefeld University, which was funded by the German Research Foundation. The study used a cohort-sequential design with two cohorts (5th and 9th grade) and data collection in two different German major cities (Nuremberg and Dortmund). Therefore, two cohorts of students in Nuremberg and Dortmund were assessed once a year in the 5th, 6th and 7th grades (cohort 1) and the 9th, 10th and 11th grades (cohort 2), respectively.

Sample

The initial sample of this subproject consisted of nearly 3,000 students from the 5th and 9th grade in Dortmund and Nuremberg in 2012. This article reports data from the second and third measurement points (2013 and 2014); at these measurement points, cohort 1 attended 6th and 7th grade, and cohort 2 attended 10th and 11th grade, respectively. Table 1 illustrates descriptive statistics for the cross-sectional and longitudinal samples. The cross-sectional samples are larger than the longitudinal sample for two reasons: 1. New participants could enter and leave the study at every wave; and 2. Especially in cohort 2, dropout was an issue as a significant number of students left school after 9th or 10th grade and could only be contacted by mail which led to lower response rates. However, students who dropped out of the study did not differ from those who continued in terms of violent delinquency ($t(290) = -0.831$, $p = 0.41$, $M = 0.26/0.32$, $SD = 0.69/0.65$). In general, delinquency was not a significant predictor of dropout in our study (for more information on drop-out analysis, see Weiss & Link, 2019). For more information on the sampling procedures, see Schepers and Uysal (2014), and Meinert and Uysal (2015).

The sample that was used for the mediator analyses – longitudinal data on boys with a migration background – was limited. This is partly due to the fact that the target sample of this study was very specific. Table 1 compares the sample sizes of the A2 sub-

project and the sample of the current study in order to make the numbers more comprehensible. Due to the limited number of longitudinal data on immigrant boys, further migrant-specific considerations were not possible.

Survey Instruments

Both cohorts filled in similar questionnaires at every measurement point with only minor differences in wording; furthermore, some constructs were assessed in more detail in cohort 2 in order to keep the questionnaire shorter for the younger cohort (Reinecke et al., 2013).

In regard to the social-structural level of the disintegration approach, the type of school attended by the adolescents and (in cohort 2) the highest level of education of their parents were taken into account. This item was adopted from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Gonzalez & Kennedy, 2001).

As indicators of the institutional level, the citizenship of the respondents and their experiences of discrimination were noted. Our modified version of the perceived discrimination scale (Dogan & Strohmeier, 2013; Skrobaneck, 2007) consisted of items on *perceived discrimination within school* (e.g. “I get the impression that teachers like me less than German students”; “In class, I got laughed at or insulted more often than German students”), and *perceived discrimination outside school* (e.g. “In public, I got laughed at or insulted more often than Germans”; “I feel discriminated by offices and authorities compared to Germans”). These items were assigned to subscales following exploratory factor analyses (see Table 2).

As indicators of the social-emotional level, parental education and attachment to parents were assessed. Parental education was measured by three subscales of the *Alabama Parenting Questionnaire* (Essau, Sasagawa, & Frick, 2006; Lösel et al., 2003). The subscale *corporal punishment* (4 items,

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Samples

	Cross-sectional samples			Longitudinal samples		
	6. G.	10. G.	7. G.	11. G.	6. & 7. G.	10. & 11. G.
Total	1609	1304	2180	1005	1252	795
Male	829	606	1070	423	607	315
♂ Mean age (SD)	11.95 (0.71)	16.32 (0.82)	13.12 (0.74)	17.27 (0.78)	12.61 (0.94)	16.73 (0.99)
♂ with migration background	504	309	682	203	348	147

Note. 1. (G): Grade; 2. due to missing data, the sum of male and female participants sometimes does not correspond to the total number; and 3. When determining the migration status, only those were included in the categories that gave the same information for two waves.

Table 2
Features of Perceived Discrimination Scale

Scale	Item number	Subscales	Reliability	Rating scale	References
Perceived discrimination (pd)	4 (y), 4 (o)	pd within the school (f)	α (y) = 0.78, α (o) = 0.83	5-point Likert	Dogan & Strohmeier (2013); Skrobaneck (2007)
	3 (y), 5 (o)	pd outside the school (f)	α (y) = 0.73, α (o) = 0.86		
	3 (y), 2 (o)	pd by teacher (s)	α (y) = 0.92, α (o) = 0.91		
	3 (y), 4 (o)	pd by classmates (s)	α (y) = 0.90, α (o) = 0.91		
	3 (y), 5 (o)	pd outside the school (s)	α (y) = 0.78, α (o) = 0.87		

Note. 1. (f) first survey wave, (s) second survey, (o) older cohort, (y) cohort; 2. the subscales are assigned according to retained factors after exploratory factor analyses; 3. Since older cohort respondents were expected to experience more discrimination outside the school, more items were surveyed in this group; 4. Since peers play a major role in adolescents and 11th graders are no longer in school at all times, four items for discrimination by classmates and only two items for discrimination by teachers were included in this group.

$\alpha = 0.88-0.91$) contained questions about experienced violent education practices, e.g. “My parents give me a slap in the face”. The subscale *inconsistent discipline* (3 items, $\alpha = 0.55-0.69$) assessed lack of consequence in perceived parental education, e.g. “My parents threaten to punish me and then do not do it”. The subscale *low supervision/control* (4/5 items, $\alpha = 0.59-0.78$) contained questions on lack of parental supervision, e.g. “My parents get so busy that they forget where I am and what I am doing”. For the mediation models, an aggregate latent construct was formed from the three subscales of parental education, *low control*, *inconsistent discipline*, and *corporal punishment*, which fulfilled the prerequisites of preliminary analyses. This construct was named *negative parenting*. Attachment to parents was assessed by two scales from the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Rollett, Werneck, & Hanfstingl, 2005): *trust* (4 items, $\alpha = 0.90-0.92$, e.g. “My parents trust me”) and *communication* (4 items, $\alpha = 0.55-0.69$, e.g. “My parents talk to me when they realize that something is depressing me”).

Further, the mediators *acceptance of violence*, *self-control*, and *delinquency of friends* were assessed (see Fig. 1). *Acceptance of violence* (Boers & Reinecke, 2007; Dünkler & Geng, 2003) was measured by 5 (cohort 1) and 9 (cohort 2) items, e.g. “A little bit of violence is just part of having fun” ($\alpha = 0.69-0.73$). The *Grasmick Scale* (Eifler & Seipel, 2001; Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993) was used to measure different aspects of self-control: *risky behaviour*, *impulsivity*, *irritability*, and a preference for *simple tasks*. In this study, overall self-control was assessed by 10 (cohort 1) and 12 (cohort 2) items, e.g. “Others should rather leave me alone when I’m in a temper” ($\alpha = 0.74-0.78$). Lastly, peer delinquency was measured by seven items that were derived from the *Peterborough Adolescent and Young*

Adult Development Study (PADS+) (Wikström, Oberwittler, Treiber, & Hardie, 2012) and the *Crime in the Modern City Study* (CRIMOC) (Boers & Reinecke, 2007), e.g. “What do you think, how often do your friends commit the following deed: Steal a bicycle?” ($\alpha = 0.84-0.86$).

As a dependent variable, participants were asked if they had committed one or more offenses in the last 12 months. The delinquency items of this survey were adapted from established German delinquency surveys (Boers & Reinecke, 2007; Lösel, 1975). We assessed 16 different offenses in cohort 1 and 19 different offenses in cohort 2.

For research question 1, we calculated 1-year offender rates for *overall delinquency* and its subscales *violent delinquency* (e.g., assault, robbery), *property crime* (e.g., theft from classmates, burglary), and *vandalism* (e.g., graffiti, scratching) for boys with German and other nationalities and boys with and without migration background, respectively.

In order to test our model of the disintegration approach, we used the accumulated 1-year prevalences (versatility) of violent delinquency, since the examination of the mediator model required continuous manifest variables (Hayes, 2017).

Statistical Analyses

In order to analyse the model in the study, preliminary analyses were necessary. First, crime prevalence rates of male youths with and without migration background, and with and without German nationality, were compared using χ^2 tests. As preparation of model testing, we used the often-cited four steps of Baron and Kenney (1986), although there are several limitations to this approach (see MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007).

The mediator analyses of migrant male respondents were performed longitudinally in both cohorts

with the dependent variable *violent delinquency*. The independent variables and mediator variables were from the second survey wave, and the dependent variable was from the third survey wave.

Due to the violation of the normal distribution assumption of the dependent variable violent delinquency, weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted (WLSMV) was used as estimation method in Mplus, which enables robust parameter estimates (Flora & Curran, 2004, Reinecke, 2014). The analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software (IBM, Armonk, NY, USA), and the models were estimated with Mplus (Version 7.1) (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012).

Results

Prevalence Rates

First of all, we examined whether German and non-German adolescents differed in terms of their perpetration in the various areas of crime. The one year prevalence rates of overall delinquency for all male respondents were 32 % (6th grade), 30 % (7th grade), 34 % (10th grade), and 24 % (11th grade). There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in delinquency in terms of nationality (data not shown). Differences were seen only on the basis of migration background, and they were limited to the 6th and 10th graders ($p < 0.05$) and only to violent crimes. However, these effect sizes were extremely small ($ES < 0.10$). The percentages of perpetrator rates of adolescents with and without migration background are demonstrated in Table 3.

Examination of the Models

Following the procedure by Baron and Kenny (1986), the variables *highest education level of parents, attended school type, attachment to parents, and citizenship of the respondents* did not meet the requirements of the causal conditions for the models,

which is why they were eliminated from the models. The mediator analyses of migrant male respondents were performed longitudinally in both cohorts with the dependent variable '*violent delinquency*'.

The model fit of the mediator model was good in the older cohort. The model of violent delinquency in the older cohort explained 36.1% of variance. The direct effect of the independent variables *discrimination* ($\beta = 0.18$) and *negative education* ($\beta = -.29$) were not significant. They both correlated positively and significantly with each other ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). Peer delinquency ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) and self-control ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$) had the strongest influence on violent delinquency in the older cohort. Peer delinquency mediated a significant influence of negative education ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$), and perceived discrimination ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$) did so for violent delinquency. Self-control also mediated the effect of negative education ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$) on violent delinquency. Violence acceptance was influenced by self-control ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$) and had a significant effect on peer delinquency ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) and on violent delinquency ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$). Negative education ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived discrimination ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$) were both significantly predictive of violence acceptance. Figure 2 presents these results. In the models shown in the figures, the values given are all standardized coefficients. However, coefficients that are under .10 are not mentioned.

The model of violent delinquency in the younger cohort had poor model fits and explained lower variance (14.2%). In contrast to the model in the older cohort, negative parenting had a marginally significant direct influence on violent delinquency ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.10$). Moreover, there was no mediation effect of peer delinquency. The influence of self-control on violent delinquency was not significant ($\beta = -.02$). The acceptance of violence mediated significant influences of discrimination ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) and negative parenting ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) on violent delinquency ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$). The models in the younger and older cohorts differed

Table 3
Percentages of Perpetrator Rates of Male Respondents with and Without a Migration Background in Various Offenses

Delinquency form	6 Grade		10 Grade		7 Grade		11 Grade	
	Native	WMB	Native	WMB	Native	WMB	Native	WMB
Vandalism	14	16	17	18	16	13	8	10
Property crime	21	22	27	25	23	24	15	20
Violent delinquency	11	18	14	20	13	17	9	12
Overall delinquency	31	35	36	37	32	36	24	27

Note. WMB: with migration background.

447 in terms of influences of coefficients of variables,
 448 explained variances, and model fits. For more details
 449 about the model of the younger cohort see Fig. 3.

450 **Discussion**

451 The present study deals with two research questions:
 452 First, we examined differences in crime rates depend-
 453 ing on nationality and migration background. Second,
 our main aim was to test a revised version of the

disintegration model as a theoretical framework of
 violent criminality in adolescents with a migration
 background.

In order to eliminate a probable reason for con-
 flicting results of previous research (Baier, Pfeiffer, &
 Windzio, 2006; Boers, Walburg, & Reinecke, 2006),
 the differentiation of native and non-native groups
 was provided in two ways: via nationality and via
 an expanded definition of migration background. On
 the basis of nationality, the comparison of German
 and non-German adolescents revealed no significant

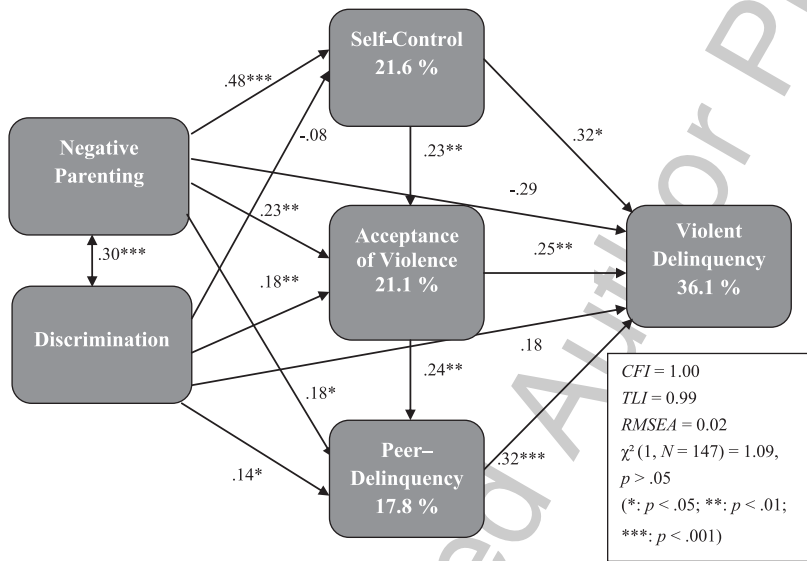


Figure 2. Longitudinal mediator model of violent delinquency in boys with migration background in the older cohort.

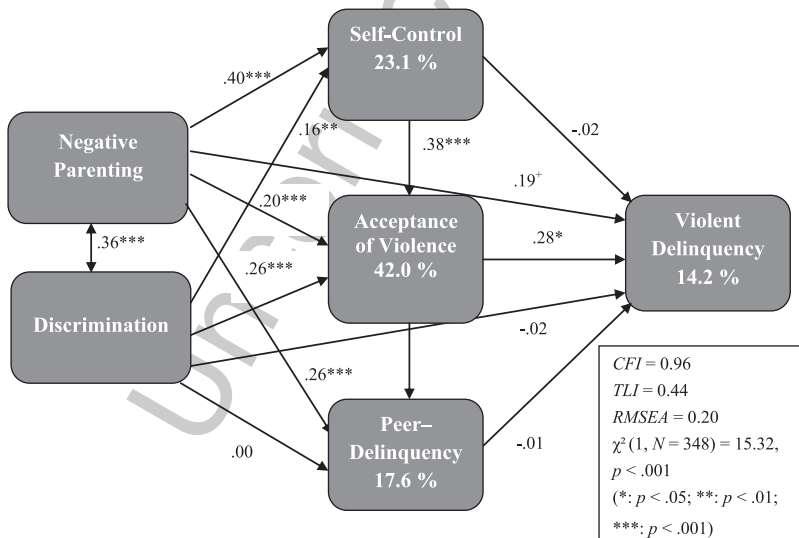


Figure 3. The longitudinal mediator model of violent delinquency in boys with migration background in the younger cohort.

differences in any of the areas of delinquency, regardless of the age of the subjects. Similar results were found by Othold and Schumann (2003) who reported identical violent perpetrator rates. However, this result contradicts the Police Crime Statistics of Germany (PCS). According to the latest PCS data, the proportion of non-German suspects is 30.4%, even if the foreign-specific offenses such as unauthorized entry are excluded (Bundeskriminalamt, 2017).

As no differences were found on the basis of nationality, this variable was not considered as an identifying feature of the groups in further analyses. However, the categorization based on the migration background resulted in significant differences in violent delinquency in the 6th and 10th grades. The results confirmed the findings of the Second International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (ISRD-2) for Germany (Enzmann, 2010). At this point, it should be noted that the effect sizes were very small ($<.10$) for violent delinquency. This means that there were significant but small differences between immigrant and non-immigrant boys in violent delinquency. This is consistent with the results of Boers et al. (2006).

Considering our mediation models, the fit with the data of the causal model was not good in the younger cohort, while the model fit was very good in the older one. The proportion of explained total variance in the dependent variable was also higher in the older cohort (36.1% vs. 14.2%). The mediator analyses showed that the explanation of violent delinquency was determined by the indirect effect of perceived discrimination and negative parenting via the mediator variables. Simons and colleagues (2003) examined the cross-sectional and longitudinal effects of perceived ethnic discrimination on delinquency in the USA using SEM. Their results, however, do not support our results. However, it should be considered that their model tested fewer variables, and their sample consisted of different migrant groups in different countries. However, Babka von Gostomski (2003b) found that discrimination experiences increased violence risk in his cross-sectional study in Germany.

In the tested model independent variables showed almost non-direct effects. However, the independent variables showed their effects through mediator variables. Anhut and Heitmeyer's (2000) study confirmed that not every disintegration experience links with antisocial behaviour, depending on further influencing factors. Our results support their assumption that other mechanisms, such as social competence or active coping strategies of the person, play a determinant role in the effect of the indicators of three

disintegration levels. In the mediation model (in the older cohort), the institutional level (perceived discrimination) and the social-emotional level (negative education) have no direct influence on the antisocial behaviour, but they have significant effects via the mediator variables.

In the present study, the strongest effect of negative education was on self-control in both cohorts. This result corroborated the assumptions by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) that parenting affects the self-control of children. Hay and Forrest (2006) found that parents influence the self-control of their children during puberty. Another important indirect effect of negative parenting is mediated through the acceptance of violence. Inconsistent education (Uslucan, 2009) and violence in the family (Baier et al., 2006) promote the acceptance of violence. Negative education also significantly influenced peer delinquency in both cohorts. Past studies have confirmed this result that parental violence (Baier et al., 2006; Pfeiffer, Wetzels, & Enzmann, 1999) and poor parental control (Baier, 2005) promote joining delinquent peers. While considering the indirect effect of discrimination, the strongest effect is mediated by the acceptance of violence on violent delinquency in both cohorts. Also Möller (2010) emphasized that ethnic discrimination can cause marginalized masculinity.

The mediator variables had some direct effects on the dependent variable, which has been supported in the literature. Several studies reported that acceptance of violence is related with higher rates of violence (Babka von Gostomski, 2003b; Baier et al., 2009). When considering the effect of self-control on delinquency, the General Theory of Crime of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) should be mentioned. This theory views the lack of self-control as the main source of crime, and this has been supported in several studies (e.g. McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Schulz, Eifler, & Baier, 2011). Furthermore, in the older cohort, there was a highly significant direct effect of peer delinquency on violent delinquency. Many studies have also documented the effect of peer delinquency on violent delinquency in the literature (Lösel & Bliesener, 2003; Rabold, Baier, & Pfeiffer, 2008). This path, which was only significant in the older cohort, may indicate that the importance of peers is enhanced in older adolescence. The third mediator variable, peer delinquency, also had a highly significant effect on violent delinquency, which has also been confirmed many times in the literature (Baier & Pfeiffer, 2007; Lösel & Bliesener, 2003; Rabold et al., 2008).

Methodological Strengths and Weaknesses of the Present Study

The sample of the present study assessed two cohorts at two different locations. Thanks to the cohort sequence design, individual development could be observed over time, as well as a comparison of the younger and older cohorts. The combination of sociological and psychological aspects regarding antisocial behavior is another unique feature of this present study. Since previous analyses were almost exclusively performed using cross-sectional data, the present study contributed significantly to research of antisocial behavior in Germany.

One methodological limitation concerns the operationalisation of the theoretical model. Because of the variables measured in the study, the disintegration approach could not be operationalised to its full potential. For instance, consideration of the lack of fairness or equal opportunity (Endrikat, Schaefer, Mansel, & Heitmeyer, 2002), (dis)trust in law treatment (Babka von Gostomski, 2003b) at the institutional level or future prospects for the economic situation (Rippl & Baier, 2005) for the social-structural dimension had to be omitted from our analyses. There was a particular concern about not grasping the social-structural dimension appropriately, so that this dimension could not be represented in the statistical model after preliminary analysis. Nevertheless, important parts of the theory could be tested and confirmed.

Some further methodological limitations are concerned with sampling. First, our sampling procedure did not ensure representativeness with the German population. Therefore, the prevalence rates are to be interpreted with caution. Second, although we analysed only two measurement points, we had to deal with significant dropout, especially in the older cohort. This was due to a change in assessment modes: in the 10th and 11th grades, some of our subjects had already left school and therefore received the questionnaires via mail instead of during school lessons, which led to higher dropout rates in this study (Weiss & Link, 2019); however as mentioned before the dropout did not lead to a biased sample.

Conclusion

Our data support those studies that reported no differences in the delinquency rates of adolescents with or without migration background except for vio-

lent delinquency, however, the differences in violent delinquency were not high ($ES < 0.10$). The application of the disintegration model on migrant violence showed good model fit in late adolescents, whereas different factors seem relevant for younger adolescents.

Author Note

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Bio Sketches

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