

Institut für empirische Soziologie Nürnberg

Verbal aggression, physical violence, and vandalism in schools. Its determinants and future perspectives of research and prevention

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#### 1 Violence in schools as a social problem<sup>1</sup>

In recent years there have been increasing reports in the German media about increasing brutality and violence among school pupils. This media exposure has rapidly revealed short-comings in educational and sociological approaches to the issue of violence in schools, and has prompted calls for up-to-date empirical studies. However, this is not an entirely new issue. But until a few years ago, there were no up-to-date scientific data on the current scale of the problem, and in particular there were no data to support the repeated claims in the media that violence in schools is on the increase. The last major empirical findings in the mideighties did not lead to comparable follow-up studies which might have allowed scientifically substantiated conclusions to be drawn as to whether violence in schools is increasing or decreasing.

The topic of violence in schools returned to scientific discussion with the work of the German Independent Government Commission on the Prevention and Control of Violence, the so called "Violence Commission" (see Schwind et al. 1990). This Commission came to the conclusion "that there is no evidence of a continuous increase in aggressive behaviour among pupils in German schools" (Schwind et al. 1990: 71). However, the renewed focus on the issue of violence in the school setting has led to the widespread initiation of new research projects on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2 Description and analysis

To date there have been no quantitative studies representative of Germany as a whole on the issue of violence in schools. The topicality of this issue has admittedly led to a series of local and regional surveys on the subject among head teachers, teachers, pupils, parents, etc.<sup>3</sup> However, partly because classroom research of this kind is necessarily subject to ministerial approval at Land level, such surveys have always been limited to the Länder concerned and can therefore only provide evidence about individual Länder, or in some cases only about certain local authorities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the European meeting "Connect FR13", March 10-11, 2000 in Bordeaux, France.

For a current state-of-the-art-report of the German research on "violence in schools", see Funk 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For a list of these surveys, with an appraisal of the methodology, see Krumm (1997). The theoretical underpinning of the surveys is examined in Holtappels (1997).

#### 2.1 Definitions

While the key concepts in the literature in languages other than German are "bullying" and "anti-social behaviour", the debate in Germany has centred on the concept of "violence".<sup>4</sup> Innumerable diverse definitions of "aggression" and "violence" can be found in the literature.<sup>5</sup> Current German studies of violence in schools tend to use the definition provided by Hurrelmann in his special report to the Violence Commission:

"Violence in schools comprises the entire spectrum of activities and acts which result in physical and mental pain or injury to individuals operating in the school setting, or the aim of which is to damage objects on school premises" (Hurrelmann 1990: 365).

This broad definition covers acts of physical violence and verbal or psychological forms of violence - including threatening or sexist - that are committed by or directed at pupils, teachers or other individuals, as well as violence directed at property (vandalism). This relatively abstract definition has been made more specific operationally in empirical studies, i.e. by inquiring about specific acts occurring in the school setting.

#### 2.2 Nuremberg Pupils Survey 1994: Violence in Schools

This presentation draws on results from the "Nuremberg Pupils Survey 1994: Violence in Schools".<sup>6</sup> In this study 1.458 pupils from the 7th, 8th, and 9th classes out of lower secondary schools (Hauptschule), intermediate secondary schools (Realschule), and higher secondary schools (Gymnasium) were interviewed in spring 1994. The sample consists of 62 classes out of 38 schools and is representative of the city of Nuremberg (Nuremberg is located in the northern part of the Federal State of Bavaria and has approx. 500.000 inhabitants).

In the Nuremberg Pupil Survey 1994 on violence in schools, pupils were asked how often they themselves had committed 20 specific acts of aggression or violence during the previous half of the school year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In fact, in the current German version of Olweus the verb "to bully" is actually translated as "mobben" ("to victimise") and the noun "bully" as "Gewalttäter" ("perpetrator of violence") (see Olweus 1996: 11). For a short summary of the German research on "bullying" see Funk (1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Schubarth (1993: 31) has noted a broadening, differentiation and pluralisation of the concept of violence in recent years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For the theoretical introduction to this study and its methodology, see Funk (1995a).

## Percentage of "violent" pupils by sex (in %)

74,1 Calling names / verbal abuse of pupils 82,9 15,8 Fighting with another 48,4 pupil 23,0 Spreading lies about pupils 40,9 27,7 **Damaging school** 40.1 property 32,4 Verbally abusing 35.6 teacher 31,6 Dirtying school property 32,0 10,2 **Smashing pupils** 22,0 property 5.5 **Trashing another** 18,5 pupil in groups 8,4 Blackmailing a pupil 17.3 Telling lies anout a 10,7 16.2 teacher 6,6 **Removing school** 15,5 property 4,9 Injuring another pupil 14,8 Taking away property of another pupil 11.6 13,0 4.2 Trashing other pupils 12,7 in groups 10,7 Spraying graffiti 10,7 3.6 **Smashing school** 9,2 property 1,6 Sexually harassing 6,2 another pupil 0,9 🔲 G irls Threatening pupils with weapons 3,9 Boys 0,9 Sexually harassing a 3,1 teacher 1,2 **Threatening a Teacher** 3,0 0 20 40 60 80 100

Nuremberg Pupils Survey 1994

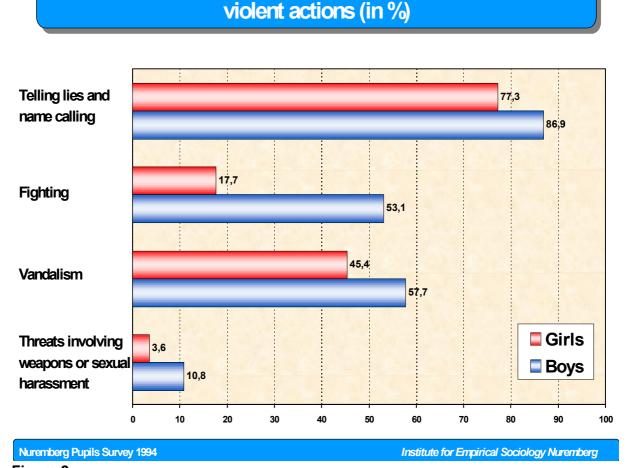
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Figure 1

Figure 1 summarizes the respective results: Calling other pupils names or subjecting them to verbal abuse was quite clearly the commonest act of violence or transgression (boys 82.9%, girls 74.1%). This finding, which confirms the predicted high frequency of verbally aggressive behaviour patterns, has also emerged in other studies. Fighting with another pupil (boys 48.4%, girls 15.8%), spreading lies about pupils (boys 40.9%, girls 23.0%), verbally abusing teachers, whether or not to their face (boys 35.6%, girls 32.4%), and damaging (boys 40.1%, girls 27.7%) or dirtying (boys 32.0%, girls 31.6%) school property were also common transgressions. The following transgressions, in contrast, were mentioned relatively rarely: sexually harassing other pupils (boys 6.2%, girls 1.6%), threatening them with weapons (boys 3.9%, girls 0.9%) and in particular sexually harassing teachers (boys 3.1%, girls 0.9%) or threatening them (boys 3.0%, girls 1.2%).

Using factor analysis, the reported transgressions and acts of violence are summarized under the following four headings (see figure 2):

Percentage of pupils admitting aggressive



- telling lies and name-calling / verbal aggression;
- fighting / physical violence;
- vandalism; and
- > threats involving weapons or sexual harassment.

Over three quarters of the girls in the Nuremberg study (77.3%) and nine out of ten of the boys (86.9%) admitted having lied to other pupils or called them names. More than half of the boys (53.1%), but only one girl in six (17.7%), admitted to having been involved in fights. Over half of the boys (57.7%) and nearly half of the girls (45.4%) admitted to having committed acts of vandalism, and as many as one boy in ten (10.8%) - but fewer than one girl in twenty (3.6%) - reported having threatened others with weapons or having sexually harassed other pupils (see Funk 1995b: 52).

#### "Victim experiences" in schools

On the basis of statements by pupils, the Nuremberg Pupils Survey distinguished between "victim experiences"

- > of a verbal kind (being verbally abused, lied about, called names or insulted) and those
- of a non-verbal kind (being beaten up, bullied, threatened with weapons or sexually harassed) (see figure 3).

While girls (81.4%) claimed notably more often than boys (75.2%) that they had suffered verbal abuse and also sexual harassment (girls 5.8%, boys 3.7%), in the case of all other offences it was boys who reported "victim experiences" more often than girls (Funk 1995b: 54).<sup>7</sup>

Research on violence in schools knows that perpetrators of violence often report corresponding victim experiences of their own, and vice versa. This finding is backed up by the correlations between (a) lying about other pupils or calling them names and (b) being lied about or called names by other pupils (with a Pearson r = .39), and between (a) beating up other pupils and (b) being beaten up oneself (r = .31) in the Nuremberg Pupils Survey (Funk 1995b: 59).<sup>8</sup>

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Boys vs. girls: "Called names/verbally abused", 69.5% vs. 57.1 %; "Lies spread about me", 58.7% vs. 51.6%; "Beaten up", 19.2% vs. 5.5%; "Blackmailed", 8.9% vs. 6.6%; "Beaten up by a gang", 7.0% vs. 1.6%; "Threatened (with a weapon)", 4.8% vs. 1.4% (see Funk 1995b: 54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Since almost all empirical studies are designed as cross-sectional studies, i.e. the questions are only asked at a single moment in time, no conclusions can be drawn about the direction of causa-

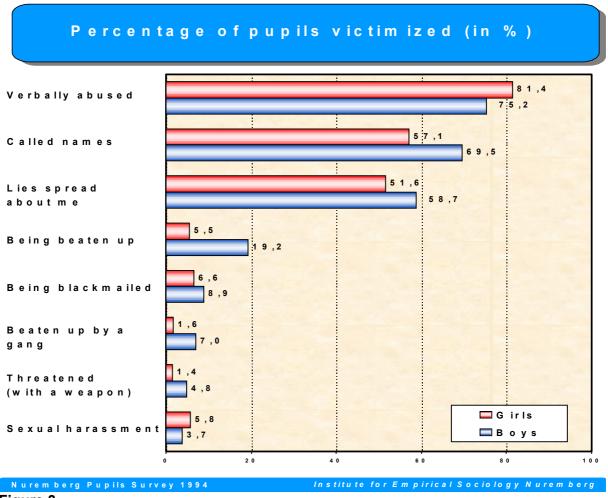
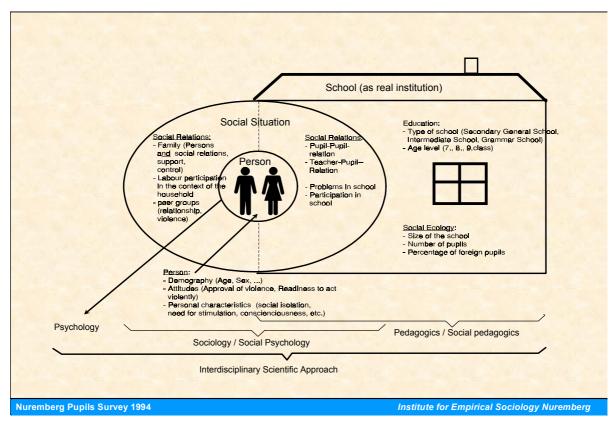


Figure 3

#### 2.3 Supposed causes of violence in schools

In a very broad view, Hurrelmann seeks the causes of violence among pupils wherever a "clear reduction in self-esteem and in opportunities for later personal development [is] perceived" (1990: 368).



#### Figure 4

In my own research I identify the following specific factors as influencing young people's readiness to use violence: individual personality traits, family background, peer group, school, and exposure to media (see Funk 1995a: 13ff.). The Nuremberg Pupils Survey 1994 follows a structural-individualistic approach, focusing theoretically on the acting person (that is the pupil) but also considering the structural aspects of the embeddedness of the pupil in relevant social relations (see Büschges et al. 1998).

As shown in figure 4 attention is drawn on the interdisciplinary view emphasising

- > the acting pupil (demography, attitudes, personal characteristics),
- it's social relation to others *outside* school (family<sup>9</sup>, labour participation in the context of the household, peers, etc.),
- > it's social relation to others *inside* school (fellow pupils, teachers),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Problem factors in the young person's family background include: poor family relationships ("lack of warmth"); parental separation and divorce; absence of siblings; poverty and deprivation; a change-able, aggressive, over-strict or over-permissive parental approach to upbringing; lack of supervision; the parents (or single parent) being away at work; etc. (see Funk 1995c, 1996a; BaySUKWK 1994: 17; Hurrelmann 1990: 367). Cramped living conditions are also mentioned in connection with the family situation (see BaySUKWK 1994: 17).

- it's membership in the institution "school" (possibilities of participation),<sup>10</sup>
- > it's embeddedness in the social ecology of the neighbourhood,
- $\succ$  it's nationality<sup>11</sup> and
- > it's media consumption (television, video).

# 3 Determinants of Verbal Aggression, Physical Violence, and Vandalism in Schools

Let's now ask for the determinants of verbal aggression, physical violence, and vandalism in schools and consider them as dependent variables in multiple linear regression analyses.<sup>12</sup> The independent variables I consider are located on the "levels" or in the "spheres" I already introduced: that is

- $\succ$  the person itself,
- the social context of his family,
- his peer group,
- the housing conditions,
- the school situation,
- the media consumption, and
- $\succ$  the nationality.

For reasons of simplicity I will not present all of the actual regression coefficients. Figure 5 displays the significant results in a coloured way with a black cell indicating that this variable is intensifying a certain aspect of pupil aggression or violence and a grey cell indicating that this variable has a lowering influence on a certain aspect of pupil aggression or violence. Please note, that this kind of analysis explicitly assumes a certain direction of influence, that is: independent variables influencing dependent variables. As you may see, this assumption is not always clear and without doubt.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Environmental or organisational factors in the school, a poor working atmosphere among the teaching staff, the quality of the teacher-pupil relationship, alienation from, or lack of commitment to, school norms and values, and poor school performance are also identified as predictors of violence (see Hurrelmann 1990: 367ff., 1991: 106ff.; BaySUKWK 1994: 17, 18ff.; Funk 1995a: 13ff.).

 <sup>(</sup>see Hurrelmann 1990: 367ff., 1991: 106ff.; BaySUKWK 1994: 17, 18ff.; Funk 1995a: 13ff.).
 <sup>11</sup> Among pupils from ethnic minorities, "living in two different worlds" is seen as an additional problem. That is living by the prevailing German norms outside the family, and inhabiting a world of "traditional structures, frequently with an authoritarian pattern, in the family home, the extended family and the religious community" (BaySUKWK 1994: 18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Since the fourth factor reported, that is "threats involving weapons or sexual harassment" is not distributed like a bell curve, no multivariate analyses may be computed with this factor.

Predictor variables		Indices of different aspects of violenc		
		Lying / Name calling	Fighting	Vandalisr
Person	Approval of violence	intensifying	intensifying	intensifyin
	Readiness to act violently		intensifying	intensifyin
	Age of the pupil	100 B	lowering	Intensifyin
	Sex of the pupil	intensifying	intensifving	
	Social isolation	10 m 10 m		
	Need for stimulation	intensifying	intensifying	intensifyir
	Conscientiousness			lowering
Family	Controlling upbringing			
	Assisting upbringing			
	Good relationship to parents	lowering	Sector Sector	lowering
	Single parent household	<ul> <li>A sumplify the</li> </ul>		
Peer group	Peers most important		lowering	
	Single friends most important		lowering	
	Relationship to peers			
	Violence of peers	intensifying	intensifying	intensifyir
Hou- sing	Quality of flat / house	intensifying		
	Quality of town / suburb	. A. 348	28	and a series
School	Pupil-pupil-relation		- Theorem	
	Teacher-pupil-relation	lowering	lowering	
	School problems	allo.		1
	School participation		Sector Control of	lowering
	Lower secondary school		intensifvina	lowering
	Intermediate secondary school	a series and a series		lowering
Media	Media: action films			
	Media: horror films			intensifyir
Foreign nationality		lowering		lowering

Nuremberg Pupils Survey 1994

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Figure 5

#### 3.1 Determinants of Lying and Name Calling

First let's have a look at the column explaining the verbal aggression of pupils, or in other words the lying and name calling. Obviously on the level of the pupil itself, his approval of violence, his sex (that is being male) and his need for stimulation significantly intensify his verbal aggression. Good relations to the parents on the other hand have a lowering influence

on lying and name calling. The more violent his peer group the more a pupil is lying and calling names on others. Good relations between teachers and pupils again have a lowering influence on lying and name calling. The same is true for being a foreigner. Speaking statistically, 26.6% of the variation of the factor "lying / name calling" on the level of the individual pupils can be explained by the combination of the independent variables introduced.

#### 3.2 Determinants of Fighting / Physical Violence

A look at the column explaining the fighting or physical violence of pupils reveals the following significant causal relations: On the level of the pupil itself, again his approval of violence, and also his readiness to act violently significantly intensify his involvement in fighting. While older pupils seem to be less involved in fights, boys again significantly act more violently. Also, the need for stimulation again significantly intensifies the fighting of a pupil. Since no significant determinants can be found on the family level, naming peers or single friends as being most important both lowers the score on the index of fighting or physical violence.<sup>13</sup> Again, the more violent his peer group the more a pupil is involved in fights. Also again the good relations between teachers and pupils have a lowering influence on physical violence. And, last but not least, visiting a lower secondary school is intensifying the pupil's involvement in fights. With the independent variables introduced, about 39.3% of the variation of the index "fighting" can be explained.

#### 3.3 Determinants of Vandalism in Schools

Finally, vandalism in schools shall be explained. As you can see, again both a pupil's approval of violence and his readiness to act violently significantly intensify his violent actions against school equipment. The older a pupil the more he commits acts of vandalism. As already known from both of the aspects of violence against persons, the need for stimulation again intensifies the extent of vandalism. But as a new significant predictor, conscientiousness is significantly lowering it. The same is true for a good relationship to the parents. Also already well known is the intensifying effect of violent peers on committing acts of vandalism. The more a pupil sees possibilities for participation (or co-determination) in school, the less he commits acts of vandalism. This surely gives school experts a convenient instrument for the prevention of violence in schools. Quite an interesting aspect is displayed by the effect of

the school level: Visiting a lower secondary school or an intermediate secondary school both lowers the acts of vandalism at schools. With grammar schools being the residual category, this means that pupils visiting grammar schools are significantly more vandalizing the school premises.<sup>14</sup> A new significant predictor intensifying vandalism in schools is the consumption of films and videos with horror elements. Finally, foreign students seem to vandalize less than their German counterparts.

#### 4 Summary of the results and conclusions

#### 4.1 Summary of the regression results

As a result of this regression analyses the following aspects should be emphasized:

- There is a strong link between attitudes, that is "approval of violence" and "readiness to act violently", and overt aggressive or violent behaviour of pupils.
- Clearly, the quality of the social relations has an impact on the three factors of aggressive or violent behaviour in school: The better the social relations towards the parents or the teachers, the less violent actions are reported by the pupils.
- This influence is hardly transferable to the peer group relations since aggressive pupils can have good relations to violent gangs as well as less aggressive pupils can have good relations to non-violent peer groups. However, what can be said without doubt is, that the more violent the peer group is, the more violent the single pupils behaves in school. But even though this is the strongest predictor for "lying / name calling" and "fighting", the direction of influence in this case is not at all clear. We do not really know whether a violent peer group influences a pupil to commit more violent actions or if a violent pupil is just looking for like-minded violent peers!
- The influence of age towards aggression or violence is not the same for all aspects of aggression or violence.
- > Clearly, boys are more aggressive and violent than girls.
- It is really hard to proof the influence of the media on aggressive or violent behaviour of pupils, since regression analyses report so called isolated or partialized coefficients,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The residual category of the original variable was "friends in clubs [Vereinen]". This means, that the characteristic "friends in clubs" is supposed to intensify the pupil's involvement in fights.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> There are some ad hoc explanations possible for this surprising finding: One might assume a stronger shyness among pupils at grammar schools to act violently against other pupils. Or one might assume that in grammar school there is just a better opportunity structure, this means there

holding all other influences constant. Researchers expect media influences in social situations where there is a cumulation of problematic aspects in social relations or the embeddedness of a pupil. These cumulations would have to be modelled via so called interaction terms.

#### 4.2 Which conclusions can be drawn from this results?

In my opinion only interventions or prevention activities on multiple levels are likely to succeed in tackling the different aspects of aggression and violence in the school setting. Other research I have not presented today, clearly refers on the class and the school context of a pupil (see Funk and Passenberger 1997 or Mooij 1996). Violence in school is not an isolated problem of the schools. School life is just a part of a pupils life. Boys and girls also are embedded in other social contexts of which influences of different quality must be considered in action plans to tackle violence in schools. Obviously the social relations and the improvement of school participation are a most promising point of departure for adequate prevention activities since they are most easily to influence.

#### 5 Community Policing as basis for the prevention of violence at schools

The presented results can be summarized shortly as follows (cf. Tillmann et al. 1999: 300):

- Firstly: There is no single main causal cause of problematic pupil behaviour in schools, there is rather a complex structure of causes, therefore comprising many participants. Any mono-causal explanation would be misleading.
- Secondly: There is a considerable amount of determinants of aggressive pupil-behaviour coming from outside school, so called imported violence. But, there explicitly are also inner-school factors that provoke or facilitate aggressive or violent behaviour of school children.

So why do we emphasize and concentrate on the social context of schools, when we deal with the scientific research on juvenile aggression and anti-social behaviour? My hypothesis is, that this context is not chosen by chance. Rather this highly institutionalized social context presents itself as an excellent field, because our children and youth compulsory visit this in-

are just more things (computers, overheads, etc.) to damage or vandalize. After all, I have to admit that this are just vague assumptions.

stitution day in day out several hours a day and, in the sum of the years, a considerably period of their lives. Besides this, the organisation of schools in age-classes also offers the empirical orientated scientist solid benefits concerning the access to the field and the coverage of a sample.

Despite this advantages I have a suspicion that the point of view on violence at schools expresses an inadmissible contraction of the real problem. My hypothesis is that children and youth who make a bad impression in schools by acting aggressively, violently or vandalistically will, with some probability, behave quite the same outside school. Anti-social behaviour, aggression and violence of children and youth is not the sole problem of our schools. Therefore not our educational institutions alone have to take responsibility for appropriate prevention and intervention. Rather this ought to be defined as a task for the wide range of many societal institutions, like clubs, parishes, political parties, unions, local or city institutions, or the police.

A current study of the U. S: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention comes to the conclusion: "The real problem area is not the school itself but the world our children return to after the dismissal bell rings" (Bilchik 1999: 1). In the U. S. "... serious violent crime committed by juveniles peak() in the hours immediately after the close of school" (Bilchik 1999: 1). Also this is the time when "... youth are more vulnerable and more likely to be exploited, injured, and even killed" (Bilchik 1999: 1). So there is a strong need for schools and communities to cooperate, to develop strategies to tackle youth violence. The report cited demands schools and communities "... to consider initiating or expanding recreational sports, employment, mentoring, tutoring, arts, and homework programs as positive alternatives to unsupervised time in a child's day" (Bilchik 1999: 1).

Besides the documented engagement of children and youth in aggressive or violent action at schools, police crime records show significantly increasing crime rates for this age groups. However, criminologists have a big argument about the pitfalls of official crime records and their consequences for the measurement of juvenile delinquency (cf. Pfeiffer & Wetzels 1999; Heinz 1997a; Kiehl 1996; Pfeiffer 1996; Walter 1996a; 1996b).<sup>i15</sup>

On the other hand, community surveys on safety or criminality issues show the precarious situation of our young people living in an atmosphere of fear of criminality or being frightened of becoming a victim of crime. For example, we can prove, that because of the high mobility

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> For a European perspective see Pfeiffer (1997).

of the youth, they are highly exposed to criminality, become a victim of crimes more often, show a definite behaviour of avoiding certain places, so called "spots of fear", and also show a marked cognitive risk assessment (cf. Funk 1999). In the literature young people are therefore suggested as a prime target group of crime-preventive measures (cf. Heinz 1997b: 431).

Crime prevention nowadays is understood as the business of the whole of the society. In practise however, crime prevention is explicitly assigned as a task to the institution Police (cf. BKA 2000). Besides this it is most promising practised people-orientated at the level of the community. Practising crime prevention schemes both, the Police and the municipality, today act more offensive in the area of crime prevention and the improvement of the subjective feeling of safety within the scope of a so called "security networks" or "partnerships for safety".

Against this background I call for two main consequences in the scope of the research and prevention of "violence at schools":

- Firstly: Since aggressive or violent behaviour of children and youth in the school setting is definitely not caused by school influences alone, prevention and intervention of violence in schools should be embedded in youth orientated crime prevention schemes of a broader approach of the community based "partnerships for savety"
- Secondly: The circle of persons and institutions involved in such a community based crime prevention should be extended far beyond the schools to as many as possible of the relevant societal groups, like clubs, parishes, political parties, unions, local or city institutions, or the police. Schools have to open themselves to other institutions, that are all embedded in a local setting.

I shortly want to present two examples of how police action is involved in the tackling of youth violence in Nuremberg. The respective activities are part of the so called "pact for security" ("Sicherheitspakt"), our local community based crime prevention scheme, like it was institutionalized in Nuremberg on March 1, 1998 by the Nuremberg police department, the municipality of the City of Nuremberg, and justice representatives. This pact of security tries to achieve better safety and order and to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Nuremberg. One of the action plans of the Nuremberg police department is directed to tackle truancy ("Schulschwänzerprogramm"), the other one is a programme of the police inspection Nuremberg West that introduces police officers in on-site school prevention.

#### 5.1 Truancy program

To secure the compulsory school attendance plain-clothed police officers of the Nuremberg Police department roam the computer departments of inner-city department stores in the morning, during school hours to look for pupils playing truant. Suspicious children and youth will be contacted. Phone calls with the school and the parent help to clear the situation. In very extreme cases picked up pupils playing truant have to face the consequence of being brought to school by police officers in uniform. Besides this a written report will be passed by the police to the city's social service ("Allgemeiner Sozialdienst" [ASD]). This service has the opportunity to contact the responsible supervisory school authority as well as the parents, to offer concrete help.

The aim of this program is to prevent the tendency of neglect. Persistent truancy is understood as being the potential entrance in a threatening criminal career.

The number of picked up children and youth is more than 100 now. The sketched procedure is not undisputed, of course. But the positive attitude of the supervisory school authority, the social workers of the city's social services and, last but not least, the decline of shoplifting (which the police interprets as a causal consequence of this action plan) encourages the police to keep on working in this direction. Of course this action is not isolated. Rather it is embedded in extensive other measures for young people ("Jugendhilfe") (cf. Stadt Nürnberg 1998) as well as a project to improve the cooperation between the police, the youth welfare organisation [Jugendhilfe] and the social workers (cf. Stadt Nürnberg and PD Nürnberg 1998) like it is always being propagated in the literature (cf. for example Grimm 1996; Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für Fortbildung und Weiterbildung im Schulwesen und Medienpädagogik 1997, 1998).

#### 5.2 School prevention program of the police inspection Nuremberg West

Already in their expert opinion for the German (anti-)violence-commission in 1990, the committee on "police practice" suggested the police to visit schools, and teach there in a new subject called something like "pedagogics/legal norms" about youth relevant aspects of public security (cf. Stümper et al. 1990: 700). This suggestion was taken up by the police inspection Nuremberg West for their youth and school prevention programme (cf. Mehringer 1999). An extended elementary school with approximately 70% foreign pupils out of 51 nations in the catchment area of the police inspection Nuremberg West was chosen and together with the teaching staff a curriculum for the classes 5 to 9 was developed. In a so called "snooping lesson" the police officers got a picture of the situation in the classes, they learned about the achievement level, the course of the lessons, or the adequate jargon to use. In a period of three months two police officers of the police inspection Nuremberg West taught five school hours (that is 45 minutes per school hour) in the respective classes. The contents taught were

- > The tasks of the police (repulse of threat and criminal prosecution),
- > Typical authorities of the police (for example an arrest),
- Exemplary youth offences (like bodily harm, damage to property, robbery or violent offences),
- > The sense of certain rules in the criminal law and the social harmfulness of offences,
- The treatment of charges, the further way of the preliminary proceedings and the real penal consequences,
- Consequences of offences under civil law (like compensation for damages or compensation for personal suffering) as well as
- Causes and consequences of violence from the point of view of the police (cf. Mehringer 1999: 1f).

This model project is judged by the police inspection Nuremberg West as being very successful. The expansion of the curriculum is as well discussed as the inclusion of other schools in the programme. The model school was granted a prize for "good practice" in diverse pupil actions for tolerance and sympathy. The intensive contact between police and pupils seems to be reflected in an up-to-date survey on the perceived safety in this district or neighbourhood: Above all it is the youngest respondents (14 to 24 years of age) that answer most often to having appealed to a police officer in the year 1998.

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