

# Press Reports about Causes of Juvenile Crime and Associated Claims in the German Press

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**Abstract:** This article examines the kinds of criminological knowledge and information that were considered in the press during the Hesse election campaign in 2007/2008, in which youth crime played a major role. The present study investigates the integration of information about the possible causes of youth crime into press articles, and examines to which extent information about these causes and motives for engaging in youth crime were considered by the press to be significant in the explanation of youth crime. The other aim of this study is to uncover which types of criminal policy and pedagogy had been reported about, and which of those measures had been regarded as meaningful. To this end, results of a content analysis of articles from two German daily newspapers—the *Bild* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*—are presented and compared. The differences between the two newspapers and their method of news construction are highlighted. The paper clarifies central concepts and discusses previous research in media crime and youth crime, as well as making methodological remarks. The results of the study indicate that only rarely was knowledge about the causes of juvenile crime published in the press; information about the individual itself was found to an even lesser extent. This was particularly true about the *Bild*. Claims for tougher methods of punishment dominated, whereas measures that aimed at crime prevention were seldom considered reasonable, and if so, were mainly included in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. These results in part reflect the importance of several news factors—notably consonance, personification, risk, and negativism—but also to a large extent reflect the political accentuation of the respective newspapers and their specific views of juvenile offenders.

**Keywords:** Media crime, juvenile delinquency, risk factors, crime prevention, press, news factors.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2007/2008, a hot-tempered election campaign was fought out in Hesse, Germany. In its political agenda, the so-called “Wiesbadener Erklärung” (January 1, 2008), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) preached a tough and rigid approach to handling youth crime (in the following, compare CDU 2008:6-9). Roland Koch, amongst others, was supposed to get backing during the Hesse election campaign in order to win the election, which took place in the end of January 2008. The CDU wanted to rely on three pillars: “prevention—look—intervention” (“Vorbeugen – Hinsehen – Eingreifen”). Besides the societal integration or assimilation of young immigrants, the first pillar included the strengthening of social work on integration at schools and the creation of educational and employment opportunities. The second pillar targeted deterrence (e.g., by video surveillance in public places) and individual moral courage. Eventually, the CDU claimed faster, more consequent, and more “perceptible” punishments. The third pillar was particularly extensive and included claims for so-called “warning-shot detention” (“Warnschussarrest”) or boot camps, as well as a universal application of adult criminal law to people aged 18 and older, longer

juvenile sentences, and lower thresholds for the deportation of non-German offenders.

These postulations were, however, highly controversial in the political arena. Thus, at that time in the winter of 2007/2008, not only was youth crime a top election issue, but it was also an important issue in the media. During the time between an incidence of juvenile crime in December, 2007, and the Hesse election in January, 2008, numerous press articles on youth crime were published. Be it because of the election or not, these articles were not simply press articles about singular crime events, but the newspapers published extended articles that depicted crime issues, and particularly juvenile delinquency. Although the publicly visible interest evaporated soon after it became apparent that this topic would cost the CDU votes instead of helping them win the election, it is nevertheless true that people mainly learn about crime through the mass media. The effect of mass media agenda setting on recipients is most significant when lengthy background reports on the causes and consequences of crime are offered (Feltes and Ostermann 1985:263). Thus, background reports regarding a special topic presumably have a stronger influence on people’s knowledge and attitudes about crime than do reports about singular criminal acts.

The public attention that youth crime attained during the aforementioned winter in Hesse and Germany in general offers an opportunity to add to the many

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existing studies on media presentations of individual cases of criminal youths. This issue study provides an account of the representations of that phenomenon in the German press. Thus it allows us to verify whether the press complied with their duty to inform the public with respect to the causes of crime, prevention methods, and intervention methods—while at the same time to a large extent maintaining neutrality. The present study investigates the integration of information about the possible causes of youth crime into press articles, and examines to which extent information about these causes and motives for engaging in youth crime were considered by the press to be significant in the explanation of youth crime. Furthermore, it uncovers which types of criminal policy and pedagogy had been reported about, and which of those measures had been regarded as meaningful in the press articles published during that time. Two German newspapers, the tabloid *Bild* and the broadsheet newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, seemed predestined for the intended analysis because of their high circulation and distribution in Germany (also see section 3.1).

This also implicates that although there exist several criteria with which to categorize newspapers, this paper simply uses a binary classification into broadsheet newspapers that are distributed primarily via subscription (e.g., *Süddeutsche Zeitung*) and tabloid papers that attract their audience anew every day and, therefore, have a need for strong appeals with which to attract customers (e.g., *Bild*).<sup>1</sup> The latter are known for their reputation, which is polarizing and somewhat untrustworthy because of information content that is on average poor. Tabloids try to get the attention of their audience through a striking visual composition, particularly catchy headlines, high colorfulness, lots of pictures, and little text but visual highlighting of certain text parts. Tabloids also include a high percentage of “human interest” stories like gossip, sports, and stereotyping (“sex, crime and tragedy” [Dulinski 2006:23f]), and use haunting and plain linguistic and stylistic devices—a language close to everyday language, direct and colloquial terms, short phrases, familiarization, emotional accentuation of posts, and sometimes a mixture of opinion and news. Moreover, the use of narrative strategies (“stories”) is a typical feature of tabloid newspapers, i.e. news is told as a personalized story, craving for sensation. In

contrast to broadsheet newspapers that contain a quantitatively and qualitatively well above average political, economic, and feuilleton part, these parts are less extensive in tabloid newspapers. Finally, tabloids usually do not present such a wide range of opinions and sources as broadsheet papers do. (Hans-Bredow-Institut für Medienforschung 2006:60ff; Schneider and Raue 2006:139ff).

Since the German press is private property, however, both types of newspapers depend on advertisement, and in recent years have more and more to compete with online news media, resulting in lower newspaper circulation, in particular with respect to tabloids (Schütz 2012), and an increasing press concentration (Röper 2012; Schütz 2012). Among a small number of national newspapers that are available anywhere in Germany, each of the *Bild* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* represent one of the two different categories of newspapers. For both types of newspapers, however, several conditions are involved in the production of news, because all kinds of news media rely on news values, even though with different emphases. Therefore, the factors determining news, and in particular those that determine crime news, are an important starting point for the analysis.

Below this article continues with theoretical considerations concerning the conducted research. For this reason, the concept of news factors is introduced, ideas about media crime and youth crime are clarified, and the current state of research—with particular consideration of studies of the German press—is summarized. It follows a description of methodical procedures in which both media of interest are also briefly characterized, and a results section. A summary and some implications on the views of both newspapers complete this article.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. News Factors and Crime

News does not just exist; it develops in a multi-stage process of selection that also includes the recipient. At every stage, the existence of so-called *news factors* (or *news values*) can be assumed. These factors affect, often implicitly, the selection or non-selection of what is and is not newsworthy, thus determining what will be reported (Greer 2007:26; Schulz 1990:29f). Following Galtung and Ruge (1965; see also Schulz 1990:32ff), several such factors exist:

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<sup>1</sup>Free newspapers have so far not been able to establish themselves permanently in the German newspaper market.

- the greater the intensity of an event, the greater its impact and the higher its likelihood to be selected (*threshold*);
- if an event has already been defined as news (*continuity*), or if it is surprising or rare (*unexpectedness*), its likelihood of being selected increases;
- events of importance and higher cultural familiarity (*meaningfulness*), events that can be clearly understood and interpreted (*unambiguity*), and events that are consistent with beliefs and expectations (*consonance*) are more likely to be selected;
- events that fit within news cycles (*frequency*) or into the composition or balance of a newspaper (*composition*) are more likely to be reported;
- news that can be presented with reference to individual people and individual causes have a higher chance to be selected (*personification*), as is the case for news involving famous or high-ranking people or nations (*elite-centricity*);
- bad events are generally newsworthy (*negativism*).

These factors have been commented by numerous researchers while containing apparent similarities (e.g., Chibnall 1977; Jewkes 2011). Besides the fact that crime, by definition being deviant and negative, is generally newsworthy, Jewkes (2011) built on previous works giving an overview of key news values of crime news in the 21st century (see also Mawby 2010:1069f). The most important added factors include:

- a lasting danger (*risk*), i.e. the media rather pertains a picture of unpredictable crime than informing about crime prevention or avoidance;
- crimes of a sexual nature are overreported (*sex*)—in particular in the tabloid press;
- crime news are increasingly presented using visual aids and emotive language (*spectacle and graphic imagery*), and a hostility towards “unconventional” norms is represented by a “symbiotic relationship between the mass media and politicians” (Jewkes 2011:62), putting forward an agenda of deterrence and repression (*conservative ideology/political diversion*).

In addition, the involvement of young people makes any crime more newsworthy (*children*). Particularly newsworthy is, however, violence, because it represents a significant realization of negativism and is, thus, always considered an important news factor. As Hall *et al.* (1978:68) put it: “It is impossible to define ‘news values’ in ways which would not rank ‘violence’ at or near the summit of news attention.”

News factors are, however, also culturally specific (e.g., Galtung and Ruge 1965; Kheirabadi and Aghagolzadeh 2012; Naylor 2001). Although news factors are not universally valid but depend on the socio-economic and historical conditions, their explanatory power at least seems to be of moderate extent (Unz and Schwab 2004:500). Therefore, it is important to keep them in mind when analyzing media crime, and particularly when examining juvenile crime because of the increased newsworthiness of offences that are committed by young people. Therefore, before introducing the hypotheses and presenting results, two central concepts—media crime and youth crime—must be explicated in more detail.

## 2.2. What is *Media Crime*?

“Media crime” is crime, real or fictional, that is presented in the (mass) media and is received by the public. However, the depiction of true crime in the media is by no means the reality, but a specific, genuine picture of criminal events, and thus a criminal reality *sui generis* (Frehsee 2000).

In the German-speaking world, several studies on media crime in the press have been undertaken. The main research findings are mostly similar and will be summarized in brief here (for a complete summary see, e.g., Reichert 2008, ch. 3; Reiner 2002:392f; Schneider 1987:323f; Walter 2001:288ff; compare also Ferguson 2013, ch. 4, for the news media in general). Multiple studies have shown that crime news coverage draws a distorted picture of official crime scenes because the media reports disproportionately about violent and spectacular criminal acts. Central themes in news coverage are the violent offences of young men, which are usually portrayed as happening in a distant place and amidst strangers.

Furthermore, the media is fixated on the offence and the offender. The victims seldom appear in the news coverage, and the motives, causes, and consequences of the criminal act with regard to the further development of all accomplices are nearly

completely neglected. The influence of drugs and alcohol on crime commission is particularly neglected, and it is often the broadsheet newspapers that do not consider these influences (e.g., Derwein 1995; Scharf, Mühlenfeld, and Stockmann 1999). The prevention of crime and resocialization/reintegration as problems of criminal policy are scarcely covered in the press—the significance and efficiency of punishment and the current penal system are not challenged (Derwein 1995:197; Lamnek 1990; Ostermann 1985; Schwacke 1983). Although it is well known that tabloids tend to simplify connections, Schwacke (1983:241) found that German broadsheet newspapers do not address the social and psychological framework of crimes either.

In his pioneering study, Fishman (1978) found that the media does not act in isolation. Instead, after beginning with scandalous individual events, the media begins to report more frequently about similar events. Follow-up discussions then sometimes detach from the event and an issue arises that the media exaggerates. This often happens in collaboration with politicians and other authorities, thereby causing *crime waves* to emerge and creating pressure for political action (cf. Brosius and Eps 1995; Reuband 1978; Roshier 1973; Vasterman 2005). Today we can assume that the media not only determines the public's images of crime, but that the media is also an actor engaged in the production of crime policies (cf. Reichertz, Bidlo, and Englert 2012).

Related to the concepts of “crime waves” and “media hypes” is that of *moral panic* (Cohen 1972). According to Goode and Ben Yehuda (1994), the key indicators in determining moral panic are a heightened *concern* and anxiety about a new form of deviance, *hostility* toward an identifiable group of individuals that can be blamed, collective *consensus* that this new deviance threatens society, *disproportionality* in that the perceived danger exaggerates the potential harm, and *volatility*, i.e. “media attention and the associated panic emerge suddenly and with intensity, but can dissipate quickly too” (Greer 2010:18).

For example, Sela-Shayovitz (2011) could find such a moral panic in Israel, where the emergence of neo-Nazi youth gangs raised concerns about immigration. This study showed that “the media have served the governing agents by constructing risk through sensationalist coverage, which has highlighted the sociohistorical context of the Holocaust trauma and provoked a collective ‘emotional effervescence’. [...]the moral panic was deliberately manipulated by politicians

who sought to abolish the right of non-Jewish relatives of Israeli residents to be granted automatic Israeli citizenship. Ultimately, however, these attempts failed.”

In a study on youth crime and moral panic in Canada, Schissel (1997:176) found that negative images of minority-group youth in print media particularly appear for those already being disadvantaged, and often media accounts of youth gangs have a racial referent. The news, however, “fail to discuss the social and economic reasons why kids congregate in rebellious groups and why affiliation is so important to young people” (Schissel 1997:176). In contrast, crime is seen as a problem emerging in single mothers’ and immigrants’ families (Schissel 1997:179). Articles being concerned with the latter are “blatant and generic” and commonly use photographs, whereas discourses on poverty and youth crime are more sympathetic and rarely contain photographs of the individuals (Schissel 1997:183).

Another example of a moral panic was examined by Welch, Price, and Yankey (2002). They showed that, after an attack on a New York Central Park jogger, “wilding” was greatly exaggerated in the media and “emerged as a symbolic expression of anxiety over youth violence resulting in young men of color being scapegoated as villains, folk devils, and other representations of evil” (22).

Even “law-and-order” campaigns interact with the media, as politicians try to instrumentalize crime issues with their “images of stern ‘crime fighters’ intent to clean up the streets into victories at the polls” (Wacquant 2010:207; cf. Shea 2009). However, it has already been mentioned that these campaigns are not always successful, and as well the incidents that led to the “media hype” in German newspapers in 2007/2008 (cf. Reichert 2010) could not be successfully instrumentalized in the Hesse election campaign by the CDU (cf. Funke 2008). In order to explain interactions between the media and politics, one has, therefore, to take into consideration cultural conditions (e.g., Green 2009). Thus, expressive-political punitivity is authentic only under special circumstances (Dollinger 2011:43).

It is moreover astonishing that there seem to be significant differences between German broadsheet and tabloid newspapers only with respect to the manner of presentation of crime stories, but not with regard to content, and that despite considerable shortcomings the news coverage is said to be to a large extent objective (e.g., Ionescu 1996; Scharf,

Mühlenfeld, and Stockmann 1999). It bears mentioning that for the most part, only articles about individual criminal events have been investigated so far. Nevertheless, according to Kepplinger (2000), there was a significant politicization of crime reporting in Germany between 1951 and 1995.

As the already presented international studies suggest, most of the reported findings are also true at an international level. Adorjan (2011) stressed, however, that the ideological position of a paper may be helpful in the prediction of emotive discourses (cf. Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991)—therefore, the way newspapers address crime and criminals cannot be examined independently of the type of newspaper. In particular, tabloids “may feel institutional pressures to take ‘popular’ positions regarding social problems such as youth crime” (Adorjan 2011:191) and as well define and use emotive language. In contrast to broadsheet newspapers that often provide more extensive discussions and explanations for deviant behavior—in a neutral and reflexive style, including the views of experts—tabloids obviously sensationalize crime, take on “law-and-order” positions, explain crime by individual causes while ignoring social contextual factors, and promote fear (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991; Machado and Santos 2009; Schlesinger, Tumber, and Murdock 1991).

In this connection, a study of British newspapers (and television) found that broadsheet papers also focus upon parliament and government, whereas “tabloid newspapers give far greater play to the opinions and perspectives offered by the victims of crime and their relatives and by those suspected or convicted of crimes. They are more oriented, that is, to ‘common sense’ thinking and discourse, and less to professionalized debate and the evaluation of policy.” (Schlesinger, Tumber, and Murdock 1991:412) Violent crimes, sexual offences, and crimes involving drugs were particularly overrepresented in the tabloid press—almost twice as much compared to the quality press (Schlesinger, Tumber, and Murdock 1991:414).

Although sensationalism and public opinion were more pronounced in tabloids in another study, it was not exclusive for the tabloids, because “the English broadsheets have to some extent ‘gone tabloid’” (Green 2008:208). Nevertheless did the latter feature expert views instead of public views, and did the English politicians try to legitimize the tabloid conceptions of juvenile homicide. Naylor (2001:183) also argued that broadsheets pick up police and court

information in order to distinguish themselves from the tabloid press.

Similar to the findings on the German press, in their meta-analysis of 77 studies (53 of these studies analyzed newspapers), Dorfman and Schiraldi (2001:7) pointed out that “depictions of crime in the news are not reflective of either the rate of crime generally, the proportion of crime which is violent, the proportion of crime committed by people of color, or the proportion of crime committed by youth. [...] Furthermore, the studies show that crime is depicted as a series of distinct events unrelated to any broader context.” Especially unusual and violent crimes as well as people of color as perpetrators are overrepresented in the media, but black victims are underreported. This also holds for young people: “For decades, black youth have been demonized in media discourses as the ‘criminal other’.” (Greer 2007:36).

Whereas colorful offenders are overrepresented in the news media, white criminals are disproportionately criminalized and dehumanized (Collins 2013). Such a pattern was observed by Cavaglioni (2008) for the Israeli press, too, where Jewish married mothers who killed experienced more sympathy compared to marginalized women who killed. Thus, the media concentrates on deviant activities of people belonging to a societal minority or/and from the lower socio-economic strata (e.g., Humphries 1981; Jewkes 2004:69; Schissel 1997:176). Moreover does this also relate to the finding that violence of women was often reported as an irrational and emotional behavior compared to men’s violence being “normal” in the British press (Naylor 2001).

Moreover, a study by Saleth (2004) was, for example, able to show that in the German local paper *Schwäbisches Tagblatt*, information about motives and social situations were reported more frequently regarding German juvenile offenders compared to non-German criminal youths. That newspaper disproportionately reported about adolescent criminals and about violent crimes compared with official statistics, while older criminals and smaller crimes were underrepresented. Juvenile sentences were also reported disproportionately.

Thus, while youth rarely appears in the news in general, when they do, their portrayal is connected to violence (Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001:17)—but violence *against* youth is underreported (Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001:22), particularly for those who are non-

white (Greer 2007:36), and it is depicted as offences by strangers rather than by close relatives (Jewkes 2011). "What is striking about news media representations of street crime is that they relentlessly promote the image of young people as offenders, while downplaying their everyday experiences as victims." (Greer 2007:35f) "A cultural hegemony, reinforced by media reporting, links 'youth' and 'crime' in the public mind in a way which dissolves these categories into one, regarding those caught up in the criminal justice system as simply reaping the rewards of their own culpability." (Drakeford 2006:218) Therefore, the press conveys an image of a "deeply divided and mutually hostile population" (Jewkes 2004:69), and the conclusion drawn by Greer and Jewkes (2005:29), that "the truly powerless, rather than the truly evil, are demonized and stigmatized in the popular media," may well apply.

This conclusion may also be transferred to the case of Sweden. In Sweden, juvenile violence was more often addressed in the press since the 1980s (Estrada 2001). However, with respect to the explanation of juvenile violence, social factors were largely ignored: "The image of the juvenile offender is that of a calculating 'super-predator', a hardened young delinquent whom society needs to protect itself against." (Estrada 2001:648)

Yet Adorjan (2011) as well as Spencer (2005) underlined the existence of contention within newspapers regarding the identity and culpability of young offenders ("the violent predator" vs. "the innocent child") for Canada and the United States respectively (see also Jewkes 2011:102ff). Furthermore, as suggested by a comparative study of Norwegian and British newspapers (Green 2008), different cultural constructions of childhood and adolescence as well as different political cultures may also be influential in the media representations of juvenile delinquency. In particular, homicide of a child as an instance of youth crime was considered being out of control in the British tabloid and broadsheet press, but was not so in the more informative Norwegian newspapers (Green 2008:204/207).

Other reviews of international studies as well concluded that violent crimes are overrepresented in newspapers and do not match official crime statistics (Garofalo 1981; Marsh 1991). "The most emotive and 'newsworthy' crimes are played up [e.g., robbery]; less 'exciting' crimes are played down [e.g., theft, burglary], even though the public has a far greater risk of experiencing them." (Smith 1984:291) Furthermore,

Garofalo (1981:325) summarized that "the press gives very little attention to the postdispositional processes of the criminal justice system [...], prison sentences are overrepresented [...], crime stories in newspapers consist primarily of brief accounts of discrete events, with few details and little background material." Not only are causes of crime rarely discussed, but newspapers also tend to present an image of higher effectiveness of police and courts in crime control (Marsh 1991).

It is, however, noteworthy that the mediated image of offenders differs between countries. In their comparison study, for instance, O'Donnel and Jewkes (2011) revealed that in the UK, prisoners were seen as an underclass while in the Republic of Ireland, press coverage tended to be factual and unobtrusive. In contrast to the Irish newspapers, the newspapers in the UK linked the issue of prisoner release to repeated offences by dangerous but pampered prisoners and inappropriate political correctness (O'Donnel and Jewkes 2011). The justice system is recognized as "soft on crime" especially in the tabloid press, and prisons are characterized as "'holiday camps' in which notorious inmates enjoy advantages they do not 'deserve'" (Jewkes 2007:450).

The list of studies could easily be extended. However, it seems obvious that differences in the representation of crime in tabloid versus broadsheet newspapers generally exist, but it is not or just in part clear how these differences materialize in the German press and whether or not differences exist with respect to the *content* of crime news. Although it is obvious that the mentioned news factors play an important role in the selection of crime news, it should also not be ignored that crime news represent significant "stories" for their audience, perpetuate collective identities and reaffirm the readers—as non-perpetrators—of being good and moral characters: crime news meet these needs of the readers who are often on a search for "the unexpected", but also for meaning and ordering their daily lives (Ericson 1991:242; Katz 1987:62). "Crime news is of widespread interest because it speaks dramatically to issues that are of direct relevance to readers' existential challenges, whether or not readers are preoccupied with the possible personal misfortune of becoming victims to crime." (Katz 1987:68)

Since the present study does not look at crime news in general but focusses on juvenile delinquency in the German press, the following section needs to clarify about the understanding of potential causes of youth

crime and preventative measures. Only then will it be possible to adequately examine the news coverage.

### 2.3. Youth Crime: Causes and Ways of Prevention

The study described in this paper considered criminal offences by children and adolescents. These qualify as actions that deviate from applicable law in Germany committed by people up to 21 years of age (Göppinger 2008:381; Heinz 2006:15f; Schwind 2008:62f). According to German criminal law relating to young offenders, those criminals may be subject to penalties such as corrective methods, means of correction, or youth custody beginning at the age of fourteen. Between the ages of 18 and 21, it is possible to apply criminal law relating to young offenders if the judge thinks it is appropriate. Youth crime or juvenile delinquency is, however, classified as ubiquitous and episodic, and it is assumed that formal interventions are seldom necessary (e.g., Bundesministerium des Innern and Bundesministerium der Justiz 2001:475ff; Göppinger 2008:384; Heinz 2006:18ff; Schwind 2008:71f).

Youth crime can therefore be regarded as part of personality development (Moffitt 1993:690). This kind of criminality is usually called “juvenile delinquency.” A “persistent delinquency” can be distinguished from juvenile delinquency because people who can be described as persistently delinquent often start criminal careers early, and they do not stop committing criminal acts when they grow older (e.g., Greve and Hosser 2008, ch. 2; Moffitt 1993:676f).

#### 2.3.1. Risk Factors

There exist several causes that apply to both kinds of juvenile delinquency. In many cases, an accumulation of risk factors can be identified, and those factors are more often to be found in people with an immigrant background than in natural Germans (Heinz 2008b:34). These risk factors include the following (cf. Greve and Montada 2008:841-846; Grob and Jaschinski 2003:142-147; Paasch 2001a; 2001b; Raithel and Mansel 2003; Schwind 2008):

- At the *individual (micro) level*, male gender, behavioral problems (e.g., aggressiveness and impulsiveness), low intelligence, a lack of understanding that an act is unlawful, and deficient social skills can be identified as risk factors. The same is also true for risky behavior such as consuming drugs or alcohol.

- In the *social realm* at the *meso level*, characteristics of the core family (e.g., criminal parents, a bad economic situation, conflicts or even violence among the parents or against the children), contact with delinquent peers, urban structure and housing conditions, consequences of deviant behavior (rejection, stigmatization etc.), and school problems (poor performance at school, breaks in school or vocational education, frequent unemployment, and rejection by fellow pupils) have to be taken into consideration.
- At the *structural (macro) level*, the economic situation in society as a whole, social norms (laws), facets of formal control, and the formation of subcultures (both of which presumably correlate with urban structure and housing conditions) are particularly noteworthy.

Cross-cutting these levels, but probably best assigned to the meso level, *situational factors* may have some influence (deliberate provocations, spontaneous inducements, etc.). Not yet mentioned was the immigrant background, which may best be considered as a variable that belongs to the (core) family. Immigrants are particularly endangered because they are able to fulfill elements of a crime that for citizens of the host country—in this case, German citizens—are not possible, such as breaches of the asylum law. On the other hand, their structural composition often brings about an accumulation of risk factors—they tend to be younger, are more often males, and in most cases are worse off on average than native Germans. They also disproportionately live in urban environments and face a different control behavior, even though there are a few distortion factors in their favor (Heinz 2006:80; 2007:304; 2010: 47ff).

In particular, crimes that are committed by young immigrants are above-average reported to the police (Baier *et al.* 2009). Although more often involved in violent crimes, there do not exist striking differences between juvenile immigrants and native German adolescents without a migration history regarding other criminal behavior being typical for young people (e.g. shop lifting, damage to property; Baier *et al.* 2009; Walburg 2013), and for resettlers not even the severity of offences is more serious in comparison to Germans (cf. Kemme, Hanslmaier, and Stoll 2011). A study in Hesse also revealed that almost half of the registered juvenile intensive multiple offenders have a migration history, but 70% are born in Germany (Botte and Reich 2011; Koch-Arzberger *et al.* 2010). In this study, a

migration history was significantly associated with violent criminality according to a two-step cluster analysis.

### 2.3.2. Prevention and Intervention

Crime *prevention* comprises a plurality of programs, projects, and approaches that aim at inhibiting criminal offences. This can happen in a variety of ways. The goal of *primary prevention* is to detect and to eliminate risk factors as early as possible. *Secondary prevention* aims at the modification of the behavioral problems of youths who have not yet been officially registered as criminals. Finally, *tertiary prevention* tackles the criminal offenders themselves in order to prevent further criminal activities ("prevention of reoffending"). In addition, diverse types of prevention programs can be differentiated with respect to the societal realms to which these programs apply and where they will be effective. These realms basically correspond to the levels of risk factors. Without going into detail, it can be said that there exists a broad consensus that inhibition of crimes by primary and secondary prevention methods is better than severe punishment afterwards, although tough penalties may sometimes be necessary (e.g., Bundesministerium des Innern and Bundesministerium der Justiz 2001:612; 2006:665f; Freisleder 2010:34; Heinz 2008a).

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1. Study Material

As previously mentioned, an incident of juvenile violence occurred in December of 2007 in Munich, which for the media was a starting point for frequent reporting about youth crime. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that for the period of the Hesse election campaign in the winter of 2007/2008, many corresponding articles were available for analysis. This study examines whether and how the tabloid *Bild* and the broadsheet *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) differed with regard to their news coverage during this period. Both newspapers have been chosen because they represent Germany's top-selling daily newspapers of their genre (IVW 2013), and represented Germany's top-selling daily newspapers during the period of investigation (IVW 2008a; 2008b), too. These two papers are thus more likely than any other papers to be able to influence the knowledge of the population and to effectively support political campaigns, in particular because on the national level, the *Bild* is the only important tabloid.

### 3.1.1. Bild

The *Bild* is the top-selling tabloid throughout Germany (IVW 2013). In addition to covering a broad spectrum of subjects, it presents its content in an emotive, roll-call-like way (Voss 1999:67) and is a richly illustrated, markedly colorful newspaper. The *Bild* offers stories with human interest—scandals, sensations, disasters, and crimes—that are, as much as possible, clear without ambiguity—that is, stereotypical. Politics, economy, and scientific issues are, in contrast, treated rudimentarily and are preferably popular and concise (Schneider and Raue 2006:139). Critics have particularly criticized the fact that the *Bild* simplifies or even falsifies issues, gives no attention to important topics while exaggerating unimportant issues, and much too often violates the press code (Meyn 2004:99).

The *Bild* follows a conservative worldview and in its news coverage often demonstrates its political closeness to the CDU and the Christian Social Union (CSU) (Boenisch 2007:157). For this and other reasons, the paper was suspected of campaign journalism and of attempting to act as a political authority in the past (Boenisch 2007:157). The *Bild* is nevertheless regarded as a point of reference for journalists and policy makers, is the most cited daily German newspaper (Schatz 2013), and has been deemed a covert key medium with respect to agenda setting and presentation in Germany (Boenisch 2007:170ff; Meyn 2004:100; Renner 2004:28; Schrag 2007:150).

### 3.1.2. Süddeutsche Zeitung

Although the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) is the best-selling German national daily broadsheet newspaper, its print run is far behind that of the *Bild* (IVW 2013). The SZ, whose reputation is that of a broadsheet and objective paper with detailed background news coverage of politics, culture, and the economy, may be seen as Germany's official primary news medium: most journalists reference it for orientation and information sources when it comes to press products (Weischenberg and Scholl 2006:31). Although far behind the *Bild*, it is currently the second most cited daily in Germany (Schatz 2013) and was the third most cited daily newspaper in 2007 and 2008, behind the *Bild* and the *Handelsblatt*, respectively (Schaper 2008; Schatz 2009).

Despite its links with Bavaria, the SZ has criticized the CSU-dominated government (Meyn 2004:94). The

SZ feels obliged to report without propaganda and to be an ideologically uncommitted newspaper; it is, however, commonly considered a social liberal or moderate left paper that defends constitutional democracy and civil liberties (Schrag 2007:153).

### 2.1.3. Sample: Issues and Articles

The aforementioned incidents triggered a “wave” of articles about youth crime (Reichert 2010) and are the reason why only media coverage of juvenile delinquency was taken into consideration in this study. Due to that fact, the sample period was limited to the six weeks from December 22, 2007, until February 1, 2008 (i.e., 33 issues of each paper). Only issues available in the Saxon State and University Library Dresden, the *Bild* Dresden, and the German version of the *SZ*<sup>2</sup> were used as study material. There were a total of 282 *subject-related* articles included in the low-level analyses (161 articles from the *SZ* and 121 articles from the *Bild*).

### 3.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The aim of the content analysis of articles from the *Bild* and the *SZ* was to examine whether *criminological knowledge* was integrated into those articles. By taking into consideration research on media crime, particularly on media crime in the German press, several hypotheses were specified.

On the one hand, the possible causes and motives for engaging in youth crime that the articles mentioned or that were considered by them to be significant in the explanation of youth crime should be illuminated:

H1: *Causes of crime were not considered sufficiently in the individual nor in the social realm; that is, the personal motives and situations that lead to youth crime and social reasons for juvenile delinquency were not or were only rarely highlighted as a theme, and particularly seldom were they regarded in the Bild (isolation of offence and offender, Walter 1999:351).*

H1(a): Externally directed risk behaviors (e.g., consumption of drugs or alcohol) as well as risk behaviors in general were considered particularly rarely as risk

factors, and were especially rare in the *SZ*.

H1(b): Youth crime was presented as crime committed by males, particularly in the *Bild*.

H1(c): Insights of scientific research on potential risk factors were rarely incorporated into articles by both newspapers, either implicitly or explicitly.

The other purpose of this study was to uncover which types of criminal policy and pedagogy had been reported about, and which of those measures had been regarded as meaningful or at least worth considering:

H2: *In the SZ and the Bild, distinct differences with respect to reports on claims for punishment and their evaluation existed. The social responsibility for non-criminalization was neglected because instead of reporting on the prevention of criminal offences, more possibilities of punishment were reported, particularly those measures that belong to formal social control (Schwacke 1983:238; Derwein 1995:197; Schneider 1987:324):*

H2(a): Promising opportunities for primary or secondary prevention were considered less often in the *Bild* than in the *SZ*.

H2(b): In both newspapers, tertiary measures dominated, although these measures were more dominant in the *Bild* than in the *SZ*.

### 3.3. Categories of Analysis

In order to test these hypotheses, a category scheme was developed. *Risk factors* were primarily explicated theoretically according to the above-mentioned risk factors and were underpinned empirically. These factors may be regarded as representative indicators for the micro, meso, and macro levels, though not as completely discriminatory.<sup>3</sup>

Factors that belong mainly to the *individual (micro) level* are: (male) gender; (internally- as well as

<sup>2</sup>For December 2007, only *SZ* Munich was available, while for the other weeks only the German issue of *SZ* was available. Biases are, however, minimal, because the extended local section for December issues of *SZ* normally contained articles on *criminal events* only.

<sup>3</sup>Although the assignation of single analytical categories to superordinate concepts (micro, meso, macro, and formal/informal) is not always completely clear and uncomplicated, this does not affect the results presented in the following sections (cf. Tables 1 and 2).

externally directed) risky behavior (e.g., malnutrition, dares, consumption of alcohol or drugs); personality traits (e.g., aggressiveness); age (youth); and (non-German) nationality. It should be noted that the latter could also be located at the meso level.<sup>4</sup>

At the *meso level* (i.e., the *social ecological context*), in one's own family further risk factors can be identified (e.g., criminal parents, domestic violence). Moreover, in the daily social context, school (e.g., experiences of offending or victimization, pressure to perform), excessive or "wrong" media consumption, and criminal peers defined different risk factors. Other experiences of victimization or of informal stigmatization, close contact with the victim, and involvement in the respective offences also belong in this level.

At the *macro level*, which comprises *structural facets* and, thus, *society as a whole*, a lack of societal integration, poverty, moral decline in society, formal stigmatization of youths, and structure-offering opportunities (e.g., large cities) are important risk factors.

Additionally, an open category included those risk factors that did not fit into any of the aforementioned categories.

Regarding the *preventative* and *intervention measures* that apply to youth crime, subcategories were developed (according to Karstedt 2001; Rössner, Bannenberg, and Coester 2002; Sherman *et al.* 1997) that might be representative of *informal* and *formal measures*. In contrast to the risk factors, however, a statement was only assigned to the category of prevention/intervention if it was written explicitly about *prevention* in the respective realm.<sup>5</sup>

Categories that rather belonged to *primary* or *secondary prevention* were considered informal measures, except for preventative measures by the police and more abstract political initiatives at the macro level. Measures that can be classified as interventions starting with the family (e.g., home visits), at school (e.g., explicit school rules), or in the job

market (e.g., vocational training programs) in the context of community work or situational approaches (e.g., increased facility protection) can be called informal. Behavior-oriented approaches also belong to informal preventative measures.

Claims for punishment constitute the area of tertiary prevention (i.e., *intervention*). Nearly every measure in this area belongs to formal prevention. In practice, however, diversion and victim-offender mediation are tertiary but informal measures. Tertiary formal measures are, in contrast, separate from the above-mentioned measures: these include boot camps, (warn-shot) arrests, measures by the penal system (e.g., immediate imprisonment), the application of adult law to adolescents, deportation, institutionalization, and the claim of an exhaustion of all options available to the existing criminal law.

For all of the categories included in prevention and intervention, it was first established which category if any was mentioned in the articles studied. In addition, it was evaluated whether the mention was neutral or balanced, or whether an article commented on the given issue or referred to more arguments either for or against a particular measure.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Risk Factors in Both Newspapers

Possible causes of youth crime were considered in only two-thirds of the 282 articles that were analyzed (191 [68 percent]<sup>6</sup>). Astonishingly, articles from the *Bild* speculated more often than those from the *SZ* about possible risk factors (72 percent versus 63 percent, respectively). In the *SZ*, however, speculations about crime causes were considered more often than they were in the *Bild* when looking at absolute numbers (*Bild*: 87 articles; *SZ*: 104 articles; in the following remarks on *H1*, these 191 articles build the basis for argumentation).

In the articles from the *Bild* that more or less considered risk factors, 40 percent (34 articles) took only one level of risk factors into consideration—either individual or social contextual, or macro structural factors—while that only occurred half as frequently in the *SZ* (22 articles [21 percent]). Two levels were

<sup>4</sup>It is not clear whether an inborn disposition of foreigners or a different type of socialization is meant. "Immigration history" comprises social factors, whereas the concept of "foreigner" cannot be identified in principle as related either to social aspects or to individual factors.

<sup>5</sup>Statements that tended to address drawbacks in one of these global areas (e.g., difficult family background) had to be assigned to risk factors unless there was not an explicit reference to a concrete *project* or *program* or to a particular possible *preventative measure* or *intervention measure*.

<sup>6</sup>Percentages in the following always refer to the corresponding (sub-)sample (depending on whether they are statements about all articles or are separated into the *SZ* versus the *Bild*), in this case 282 articles.

addressed in 31 articles from the *Bild* (36 percent) and in 30 articles from the *SZ* (29 percent). Risk factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels were, in contrast, mentioned in the *Bild* in only 24 percent of articles concerned with the causes of youth crime (21), whereas they were mentioned in approximately half of the articles in the *SZ* (46 [44 percent]).

Finally, four out of five of the articles from the *Bild* (70) illuminated the micro level, meaning that causes of criminal offences were considered primarily as an element of the young individual (e.g., a part of his or her nature, or a missing awareness of values). In the *SZ*, this occurred in three out of four articles (78). The actual social context—school, media, or familial socialization—was, however, underrepresented in the *Bild*: only 34 articles (39 percent) considered the meso level. That was considerably more seldom than in the *SZ* (68 articles [65 percent]). Macro-structural facets such as misguided integration, structural poverty, or criminalization by formal levels of social control were more often taken into consideration in the *SZ* (82 times [79 percent]) than in the *Bild* (57 times [66 percent]).

Another nineteen articles mentioned additional causes of juvenile delinquency that had not been included in the category scheme. These additional mentions were found almost completely in the *SZ* (95 percent, i.e., 18 times). They had been the subject of discussion in conjunction with all three levels of risk factors in most cases (11 times), and with regard to their content, they referred fundamentally to the social context in general or to other factors at the meso level.

The nationality of a juvenile person cannot be categorized clearly as belonging to either to the micro or the meso level (see footnote 3). This was addressed particularly often in the *Bild* (45 times [52 percent]; *SZ*: 28 times [27 percent]). Since this category was eventually assigned to the meso level, an even more unbalanced background coverage emanated from the tabloid because all three levels rarely appeared and, if they did, appeared unbalanced (cf. Table 1).

#### **4.1.1. Neglect of (Externally Directed) Risky Behavior?**

Risky behavior, including the consumption of alcohol, drugs, or medicine, attempted suicides, malnutrition, or dares, were mentioned in only 31 of 191 articles analyzed (16 percent). The *SZ* had the lion's share of these articles (27). In 26 percent of the *SZ* articles, risky behavior was considered a potential cause, while in the *Bild* only four articles considered

this, accounting for only five percent. Although this rare consideration of risky behavior was expected, the hypothesis was partially refuted: it was not the *Bild*, but the *SZ* that ascribed risky behavior a higher importance regarding committing crimes, and almost all references were to externally directed risky behavior. Only four articles referred to internally directed risky behavior, such as malnutrition or attempted suicide, as causes of criminalization. Externally directed risky behavior was more frequently mentioned as a potential cause of crime in the *SZ* than in the *Bild*, particularly the consumption of alcohol and drugs.

In this context, it is interesting to look at the correlation between risky behavior and opportunities for criminal offences. Sixty-six articles (35 percent) addressed the opportunity to offend as a possible cause of crime, 31 of which were found in the *Bild* (36 percent of total *Bild* articles) and 35 in the *SZ* (34 percent). In most of these articles, a low risk of being convicted or even of being detected was considered a threat to the social order. Only 11 articles referred to spontaneous criminal behavior resulting from a special situation, or to situational constellations triggering criminal offences (*Bild*: 4; *SZ*: 7). In three of these articles, a low risk of being detected or punished was mentioned at the same time (*Bild*: 1, *SZ*: 2). When looking only at those articles that mentioned risky behavior, in the *Bild* only one out of four articles also addressed the opportunity to act in a criminal way. Out of 27 articles from the *SZ*, 11 mentioned both risky behavior and opportunities for criminal activity. Four of these articles also referred to the situational constellation, whereas the remaining seven discussed the risk of being detected and punished.

Thus, in the *SZ* to a great extent it is the opportunity for criminal behavior, and therefore reduced criminal responsibility, that seems to be considered in charge of youths' criminality (e.g., being provoked or drunk). The *Bild* tends, in contrast, to represent individual characteristics such as nature or malevolence as responsible for crimes. This is supported by the fact that processes of stigmatization, either formal or informal, were considered in only six of 87 articles from the *Bild* (7 percent), while in the *SZ* a quarter (25) of the articles mentioned labeling by formal authorities, and 15 percent (16) addressed stigmatization by informal social control.

#### **4.1.2. Exclusion of Girls' Delinquency?**

Gender was mentioned as a possible cause of criminal behavior in only ten articles (*Bild*: 6 [7 percent];

SZ: 4 [4 percent]). In all of these, the subjects were male youths who had been considered a risk, which is consistent with criminological insights and as well official statistics. None of the newspaper articles contained any sophisticated information about the gender-specific course of a criminal career, crimes, or the like. This might explain the extremely rare consideration of internally directed risk behavior, as such behavior is usually committed by female youths who are only seldom associated with crime.

**4.1.3. Neglect of Scientific Knowledge?**

Several potential causes of youth crime were considered in the studied articles, particularly in the SZ. However, the social context and the day-to-day surroundings were neglected in comparison to other areas of reporting. An overview of all of the measured risk factors is depicted in Table 1.

This table shows that the three most mentioned risk factors were a lack of integration of whole parts of the citizenship or the development of subcultures (75 articles [39 percent]); (non-German) citizenship of adolescents (73 articles [38 percent]); and the opportunity to behave like a criminal (66 articles [35

percent]). The least frequent category found in the articles was the offender-victim relationship. It is, however, noteworthy that age—that is, the stage of adolescence—was mentioned only seven times, followed by media consumption and victimization outside of the school context (8 times each).

Attention must be drawn to a few points. In the *Bild*, only one article each considered influences by the media and the offender-victim relationship. The same applies to societal or structural poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, only one article mentioned a factor not given in the category scheme. The factors mentioned most frequently in the *Bild* were Non-German descent, crime opportunities, and lack of integration.

It was also possible to examine the association between the categories of “nationality” and “lack of integration”—nearly every third article that considered one of these two risk factors also simultaneously considered the other risk factor. This happened more often in the SZ, where, in addition, a lack of integration dominated as a potential cause of juvenile delinquency, whereas nationality was only ranked sixth (this is also

**Table 1: Risk Factors Mentioned in the Studied Articles**

Category	SZ	Bild	Total
Gender	4 (3.8%)	6 (6.9%)	10 (5.2%)
Risky behavior	27 (26.0%)	4 (4.6%)	31 (16.2%)
Personal disposition/situation, lack of values	4 (3.8%)	6 (6.9%)	10 (5.2%)
Age (youth)	3 (2.9%)	4 (4.6%)	7 (3.7%)
Nationality	28 (26.9%)	45 (51.7%)	73 (38.2%)
Family factors	36 (34.6%)	20 (23.0%)	56 (29.3%)
Media	7 (6.7%)	1 (1.1%)	8 (4.2%)
School factors	43 (41.3%)	15 (17.2%)	58 (30.4%)
Other experiences of victimization	3 (2.9%)	5 (5.7%)	8 (4.2%)
Offender-victim relationship	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (1.0%)
Peers	19 (18.3%)	7 (8.0%)	26 (13.6%)
Living in a (large) city	15 (14.4%)	19 (21.8%)	34 (17.8%)
Lack of integration	45 (43.3%)	30 (34.5%)	75 (39.3%)
Poverty	22 (21.2%)	1 (1.1%)	23 (12.0%)
Moral decline	11 (10.6%)	7 (8.0%)	18 (9.4%)
Informal/formal stigmatization	37 (35.6%)	6 (6.9%)	43 (22.5%)
Opportunity (situation, low risk)	35 (33.7%)	31 (35.6%)	66 (34.6%)
Other (social environment)	18 (17.3%)	1 (1.1%)	19 (9.9%)

Note: N = 191 articles that at least mentioned one of the eighteen risk factors (Bild: N = 87; SZ: N = 104). Absolute numbers of articles per newspaper are given (in parentheses: relative frequencies).

due to the overall more frequent mentioning of risk factors). A lack of integration was followed by school factors, which were mentioned considerably less often in the *Bild*, as well as stigmatization and familial risk factors. The least frequent risk factors considered in the *SZ* were age and experiences of victimization beside the offender-victim relationship (3 articles each).

With regard to familial risk factors, a general mentioning of those factors dominated, including chaotic family relations and lack of parental education. This was the case in 36 of 56 articles (64 percent), but no relative difference existed between the newspapers. Its predominance with respect to familial risk factors was caused by the clear dominance of articles in the *SZ* that reported on family violence (11 articles [31 percent]; *Bild*: 4 articles [20 percent]). Criminal parents were more frequently charged with responsibility for young offenders in the *Bild* than in the *SZ* (six articles each paper: *Bild*: 30 percent; *SZ*: 17 percent).

With reference to the hypotheses, potential causes of youth crime were rarely mentioned in the newspaper articles. On average, that was more often the case for the *SZ*. The *SZ* also offered a more balanced view on risk factors than the *Bild*. The whole range of scientific literature, particularly with regard to individual risk factors, was barely covered. This to a large extent refers to social aspects with regard to the *Bild*. However, if one considers the shortness of the newspaper articles—particularly those of the *Bild*—both papers have to be awarded a relatively broad depth of information about potential causes of youth crime. There appeared, nevertheless, a one-sidedness to the articles in the *Bild*, in which juvenile delinquency was regarded primarily as a crime committed by foreigners

and was represented as “crime by strangers” (Reichert 2009a).

#### 4.2. Which Types of Prevention Dominated, and How Have They Been Reviewed?

Tables 2 and 3 summarize the results for the second hypothesis. They also provide the means for the respective categories. Positive values indicate that there were articles that favored a given kind of prevention, while negative values stand for the dominance of a rejectionist stance and values around zero indicate that the amount of articles for or against a measure were balanced or that the articles themselves referred comparably to arguments for both sides.

An inspection of Table 3 strengthens this assumption because measures that belong to the tertiary level were mentioned more frequently in articles from the *Bild*. In contrast, remarkably smaller differences were roughly identified in the *SZ*. Primary and secondary prevention were mentioned in 33 articles in the *Bild* (27 percent) and in 87 in the *SZ* (54 percent; overall: 120 articles [43 percent]). Tertiary prevention of reoffending was found to be more frequent in an overall number of 179 articles (63 percent). One hundred five of these articles were published in the *SZ* (65 percent) and 74 were published in the *Bild* (61%). Thus, the percentage of tertiary prevention was comparable in both newspapers and was larger than the amount of articles dealing with primary or secondary prevention. The *Bild* published relatively fewer articles than the *SZ* that dealt with these preventative measures, affirming the hypothesis.

Moreover, of the 213 articles that considered preventative measures, 86 mentioned both

**Table 2: Primary and Secondary Preventative Measures Mentioned in the Articles**

Category	SZ		Bild		Total	
	Article	Rating	Article	Rating	Article	Rating
Family	24 (14.9%)	0.67	5 (4.1%)	0.80	29 (10.3%)	0.69
School	12 (7.5%)	0.58	2 (1.7%)	0.80	14 (5.0%)	0.64
Job market	18 (11.2%)	0.78	2 (1.6%)	-0.50	20 (7.1%)	0.65
Community	41 (25.5%)	0.71	6 (5.0%)	0.33	47 (16.7%)	0.66
Situation	22 (13.7%)	0.65	10 (8.3%)	0.60	23 (8.2%)	0.64
Behavior	19 (11.8%)	0.74	5 (4.1%)	0.00	24 (8.5%)	0.58
Police	23 (14.3%)	0.65	15 (12.4%)	0.53	38 (13.5%)	0.61
Macro-politics	36 (22.4%)	0.78	3 (2.5%)	0.67	39 (13.8%)	0.77

**Note:** On the left-hand side, absolute numbers of articles that mentioned each measure are given ( $N = 282$ ; relative frequency in parentheses). Every other column is per one rating, that is, the value of the tendency between -1 (= contra always) and +1 (= pro always). The closer to zero this value is, the more the articles that mentioned the category were balanced on average.

Table 3: Intervention Measures (“Tertiary Prevention”) Mentioned in the Articles

Category	SZ		Bild		Total	
	Article	Rating	Article	Rating	Article	Rating
<i>Boot camp</i>	23 (14.3%)	-0.04	13 (10.7%)	0.54	36 (12.8%)	0.17
<i>Arrest/warn-shot arrest</i>	30 (18.6%)	0.23	6 (5.0%)	0.50	36 (12.8%)	0.28
<i>Imprisonment</i>	59 (36.6%)	-0.08	29 (24.0%)	0.41	88 (31.2%)	0.08
<i>Adult law</i>	21 (13.0%)	0.62	8 (6.6%)	1.00	29 (10.3%)	0.72
<i>Deportation</i>	42 (26.1%)	0.12	33 (27.3%)	1.00	75 (26.6%)	0.51
<i>Better use of existing instruments</i>	41 (25.5%)	0.73	24 (19.8%)	0.88	65 (23.0%)	0.78
<i>Institutionalization</i>	19 (11.8%)	0.37	5 (4.1%)	0.40	24 (8.5%)	0.38
<i>Diversion/victim-offender mediation</i>	31 (19.3%)	0.13	17 (14.0%)	-0.88	48 (17.0%)	-0.23
<i>Other Measures</i>	45 (28.0%)		13 (10.7%)		58 (20.6%)	

Note: On the left-hand side, absolute numbers of articles that mentioned the measure are given ( $N = 282$ ; relative frequency in parentheses). Every other column is per one rating, that is, a value of tendency between  $-1$  (= contra always) and  $+1$  (= pro always) – the closer to zero this value is, the more the articles that mentioned the category were balanced on average.

primary/secondary and tertiary crime prevention (30 percent of all articles and 40 percent of the relevant 213 articles). The majority of these articles were published in the SZ (61 articles; *Bild*: 25 articles), which with 131 articles (81 percent) more frequently addressed crime prevention than did the *Bild* (82 articles [68 percent]).

With respect to preventative measures that may be characterized as being informal rather than formal or whose impact is targeted at the informal realm, 126 newspaper articles (45 percent out of all articles) mentioned at least one informal measure (independent of the dominance of certain positions). This amount was considerably higher in the SZ (89 articles [55 percent]) than in the *Bild* (37 articles [31 percent]). In contrast, the articles in both newspapers more frequently regarded measures that ask for the intervention of formal authorities (police, prosecution, courts) or high-level politics: out of 197 articles (70 percent), 121 were found in the SZ (75 percent) and 76 in the *Bild* (63 percent). Formal social control therefore dominated the news coverage of both papers, particularly the SZ, although the difference in the amount of articles that considered informal social control was higher in the *Bild*.

A “milder” view was identified in the SZ because it refuted measures such as longer or earlier imprisonments, so-called “warning-shot detention,” boot camps, and earlier deportations more frequently than the *Bild*. In contrast, both newspapers showed a clear support of measures on the political macro level as well as prevention by the police, and asked for a more consequent application of adult criminal law to

adolescents and for better use of existing instruments (e.g., more severe punishments in the context of criminal law, faster execution of lawsuits). Placing youths in youth institutions was advocated a comparable amount in both papers, although more frequently in the SZ.

Measures of informal prevention were regarded more often in the SZ and were primarily addressed positively, as compared to the *Bild*. In particular, programs to qualify and to educate, community-based approaches that take into account social context and leisure (e.g., youth clubs), and behavioral prevention in general were better positioned in the SZ. The same applies to informal arrangements after becoming an offender, as diversion and victim-offender mediation (e.g., release on license) were not regarded positively in the *Bild*.

As Reichert (2009c:107) showed, the *Bild* suggested a more rigid approach than the SZ, meaning that mild—or at least not tough—punishment was rarely considered in the *Bild*, although on an absolute basis, direct and indirect claims for increases in penalties were developed as frequently in both newspapers.

Looking at an aggregate value for the measures of punishment that were actually considered results in a similar finding: in the *Bild*, a more positive evaluation of rigid *punishments* and formal regulations dominated in this regard, while in the SZ more mild ways of treating juvenile delinquents and informal methods of *prevention* were considered meaningful.

Further suggestions for the prevention of youth crime were detected in an open category containing four aspects. Punishments such as the revocation of a driver's license, bans on driving or mobile phones, and communication bans with respect to one's clique were referred to only in the *SZ* (6 times) and in most cases, these measures were appreciated. Moral courage was considered positively as a measure to prevent crimes (5 times in the *SZ*, 6 times in the *Bild*). Empowerment to achieve a self-determined, active lifestyle was pointed out only in the *SZ*, the paper that presented societal participation and tolerance of society in general as necessary tasks (14 times; in the *Bild* one time positive, one time negative). Finally, a comparable amount of measures were mentioned that can be characterized as "control," aiming at the complete observation of youths after they are convicted (in some cases without any privacy), or belated preventive detention (*Bild*: 2 articles; *SZ*: 14 articles). Other methods were addressed a maximum of one time only.

In sum, both parts of the second hypothesis were verified. The number of tertiary preventative measures discussed in both newspapers was comparable and always larger than other preventative methods. With respect to relative frequencies, the *SZ* published articles on primary or secondary prevention approximately twice as often as the *Bild*.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, an interesting correlation between formal prevention and election campaigns merits mentioning. Those articles that issued formal measures more often took into account an election campaign (36 percent of the studied articles) than considered informal methods (29 percent). Thus, election campaigns were obviously aligned with formal control, or at least less intensely associated with the informal level. With regard to primary/secondary prevention and relapse prevention, such an imbalance could not be identified (34 percent each).

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The assumption that risk factors at the individual level, and in part in the social context, were not considered, or at least not regarded as sufficiently differentiated, was proved. For the *Bild* and its

journalists, criminal actions are viewed as being caused by the adolescent himself or herself (cf. Reichert 2009a) and his or her malevolence. In addition, in that newspaper it is strangers—foreigners—who are seen to jeopardize law and order. Reasons for the criminal potential of those young immigrants were, however, not discussed. It even was not considered the fact that crimes committed by young immigrants are more often reported to the police compared to offences by native Germans without a migration history. Except for being more often involved in violent crimes and that it is young males who violently offend, that way of news reporting draws a distorted picture of reality. Negative images of minority groups (e.g., Dorfman and Schiraldi 2001; Jewkes 2004; Schissel 1991) are, therefore, in particular communicated through the tabloid.

It is moreover noteworthy that, in contrast to other studies about crime in the German press (e.g., Ionescu 1996; Scharf, Mühlenfeld, and Stockmann 1999), significant content differences between tabloid and broadsheet newspaper were detected. Again it bears mentioning that previous studies had often focused only on articles about individual criminal events.

Contrarily to the *Bild*, journalists at the *SZ* depicted juvenile delinquency as an extremely complicated, multilayered phenomenon that can only be explained as a varied and complex entity. One-sided ascriptions seem to be forbidden at the *SZ*, even though the *SZ* did not explicitly address the ubiquity of youth crime. Risks of criminalization are to be considered at all levels, from personal development and the social context to the informal and structural processes of decision making. As the view of the *Bild* pointed to its political closeness to CDU/CSU, as well as a pronounced proximity to everyday conditions and avoidance of ambivalence in media coverage that would induce contemplation, the perspectives of the *SZ* could be explained by social liberal or social democratic preferences and a scientific orientation.

Whereas individual and social causes were not considered to their full extent on the one hand, on the other, tertiary measures for intervention were overrepresented, particularly in the *Bild*. Moreover, formal measures of social control were predominantly regarded to be effective. An imbalance and dominance of definite thought patterns found in the *Bild* imply that its idea of punishment is key, and that specific deterrence is not considered to be effective compared to the *SZ*.

<sup>7</sup>It should be above all mentioned that among the 213 articles that regarded prevention, only 19 (7 percent) also addressed *recidivism* explicitly (*Bild*: 3 [4 percent]; *SZ*: 16 [12 percent]). Despite the dominance of the prevention of reoffending, recidivism did not tend to be made a subject, which applies in particular to the *Bild*.

With regard to focusing on individual risk factors and tertiary preventative measures, the concept of correspondence bias (or fundamental attribution error) could be consulted to argue that people often tend to look at dispositional factors in order to find causes for people's actions (e.g., Gilbert and Malone 1995; Harman 1999). Actor-observer bias, or actor-observer asymmetry, might also be referred to because it seems a reasonable explanation with respect to negative events (Malle 2006). All of these concepts, or hypotheses, state that situational variables, including social influences, are frequently neglected in the attribution of the behavior of other people (see also Fincham and Hewstone 2003:229ff; Smith and Mackie 2000:74ff; 109ff), even though "situational excuses" might be helpful at least regarding the prevention of re-offending (cf. Maruna and Mann 2006:166ff). This could explain why situational factors were not considered adequately in news coverage, because these aspects seldom stick out. This attribution error seems more apparent in the *Bild's* journalists than those of the *SZ*, pointing towards the poor perspective adoption of the former. It seems particularly reasonable that the *Bild* and some politicians tried to maintain their "Belief in a Just World" (Lerner 1980), in which everyone gets what he or she deserves, and that emphatic feelings are cushioned (e.g., Bénabour and Tirole 2006:724; Bierhoff 2003:327ff; Fincham and Hewstone 2003:230). Therefore, in the *Bild* the accountability of social context regarding criminalization was neglected, because in this view the individual determines his or her own fate—which, accordingly, serves the news factor of consonance. Dispositional facets that were highlighted at the same time do not ascribe as much impact to preventative measures.

The fact that, for instance, intensive multiple offenders are most often already born in Germany instead of being first generation immigrants (Botte and Reich 2011; Koch-Arzberger *et al.* 2010) was not adequately accounted for in the *Bild*, thus neglecting social contextual factors. In addition and contrarily to the broadsheet newspaper, in the *Bild* personification ("individualism" according to Jewkes 2011) may be a news factor of great importance, too, because of the attribution of individual causation. Youth and immigration in combination result in crime is the message of the tabloid, demonizing young immigrants as the "criminal other" (Greer 2007:36; see also, e.g., Greer and Jewkes 2005; Humphries 1981; Jewkes 2004; 2011; Schissel 1991; Welch, Price, and Yankey

2002). Following such clear thought patterns also implies the importance of clear and distinct courses of events and consequences in the *Bild*, and might also underline the political desire of the *Bild's* journalists.

The frequency of single claims for punishment, however, does not allow for continuative implications. In the end, newspapers have to conform to their information function, and tertiary as well as formal measures were more present in political discourses, although if that was the case, the rare consideration of preventative and informal methods in the *Bild* compared to the *SZ* was surprising. One could infer that the *Bild* and its decision-makers are one-sided with respect to the selection of issues and information. Furthermore, the dominance of a tough approach that was found in the tabloid points to a preference for negative content, as one may assume that the more serious the crime, the harder the punishment should be. Moreover does it hint at the significance of the news factor of risk (Jewkes 2011)—instead of informing about crime prevention or avoidance, the tabloid draws a picture of a violent youth that should be arrested, deported, or sent to boot camps. In this regard, the image of pampered prisoners living in holiday institutions (O'Donnel and Jewkes 2011) is clearly present in the tabloid (see also Reichert 2009a).

When taking both newspapers into consideration, it is not to speak of the construction of moral panic in general, because one key indicator—collective consensus among the people and politicians—could not be found among both newspapers. However, the *Bild* obviously tried to stimulate such a panic as can be concluded when looking at the indicators for examining a moral panic (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994): The *Bild* obviously raised concern about youth violence, and particularly about offences by young immigrants (*hostility*). There was also a consensus on this topic among the politicians of the CDU/CSU, the readers of the *Bild* (Reichert 2009a:273), and the *Bild's* journalists. Finally, the tabloid enormously exaggerated the true harm (*disproportionality*), but its news coverage was also characterized by *volatility* (Reichert 2010).

The studied articles thus provide evidence of the political emphasis of both newspapers: youth crime was primarily an issue of the CDU/CSU, which was reflected in the more frequent quotation of politicians from these parties in comparison to the other parties (cf. Reichert 2009b). A better balance was, however, found in the *SZ* in terms of a stronger consideration of

different positions. This greater imbalance of the *Bild* articles could also be confirmed with regard to the "Wiesbadener Erklärung" of the CDU and the preventative measures considered as promising in both newspapers. Not only was the *Bild*, unlike the *SZ*, clearly inclined to be punitive (see also Reichert 2009a; 2009c). It often assessed penalties as positive or preferred punitive "prevention" measures to a greater extent than the much more neutral and preventative-measures-preferring *SZ*.

This reflects aspects of composition insofar as the *Bild* as a tabloid may have felt "institutional pressures to take 'popular' positions regarding [...] youth crime" (Adorjan 2011:191). It is characteristic of tabloids to sensationalize crime, to take on "law-and-order" positions, and to explain crime by individual causes while ignoring social contextual factors (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991; Machado and Santos 2009; Schlesinger, Tumber, and Murdock 1991).<sup>8</sup> It also underlines that the examined tabloid is a carrier of a conservative ideology, whereas the broadsheet *SZ* supports a social liberal position (see section 3.1), balancing multiple perspectives and including extensive explanations as well as expert views more frequently than the *Bild* (Reichert 2009b; Reichert 2010) (cf. Adorjan 2011; Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991). The proximity of the *Bild* to the position of the "Wiesbadener Erklärung," and thus that of the CDU, was obvious. In contrast, the *SZ* distinguished itself through a noticeable distance from the positions of the CDU and, thus, to a distancing from electoral campaigns' tactical "action shouts." Therefore, to the thinking, challenging reader who wishes to gain information and form opinions, the *Bild* seems unsuitable. The stereotypical reader who focuses on entertainment and unambiguousness may appreciate the work of the *Bild* journalists.

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<sup>8</sup>Moreover, tabloids use emotive language and visual aids more frequently compared to broadsheets (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991), thereby indicating a higher need for spectacle and graphic imagery (Jewkes 2011). This was also shown for the *Bild* and the *SZ* (Reichert 2009c).

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