



# SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND VIOLENCE - A GERMAN-ISRAELI COMPARISON

## INTRODUCTION

In Germany as well as in Israel violence among adolescents is increasingly in the headlines of the newspapers. Physical activity and especially sports are regarded to be a moderating variable to improve self-concept and to prevent violent behaviour in a socially accepted manner. The study focuses on this issue in a cross-cultural perspective and aims at generating hypothesis. Data were collected by using identical questionnaires in Israel and Germany. The study is conducted by the University of Paderborn (Chair: Prof. Dr W.-D. Breffschneider) in partnership with the Zinman-College, Netanya, Israel (Chair: Ph. D. E. Eldar).



Fig. 1: Sports against violence and aggressions?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is based on modern socialization theories (Hurrelmann, 2002) and follows developmental psychologists, who see "children and adolescents as producers of their own development". The concept of "developmental tasks" is embedded in stress-theoretical assumptions. Within this theoretical framework, sport and physical activity serve as social and individual resources.

## METHOD

The data presented are taken from a cross-cultural study of about 2.500 Israeli (54,44% female) and 3.400 German (49,85% female) adolescents, aged 12-16 years. The goals of this sampling and evaluating design were to assess possible effects of sports participation on violent behaviour and also to identify indirect effects on the self-concept.

### Instruments:

- ⇒ Multifaceted sports involvement index (time and frequency of sports-participation per week, the importance attached to different sport-settings, self-assessment of physical abilities)
- ⇒ Multidimensional self-concept (adopted version following Marsh, 1990)
- ⇒ Multidimensional violence (adopted version following Tillmann et al., 2000)

### Procedure:

- ⇒ Three regression analyses (stepwise-option  $p_{in} < .0001$ ,  $p_{out} > .0005$ ) for the German and for the Israeli sample with delinquency, psychological violence and physical violence as dependent variables
- ⇒ Predictors: Age, gender, self-esteem, parents relations peer relations (same sex and opposite sex relations), physical appearance, self-efficacy and sports-participation

## RESULTS

### German Sample

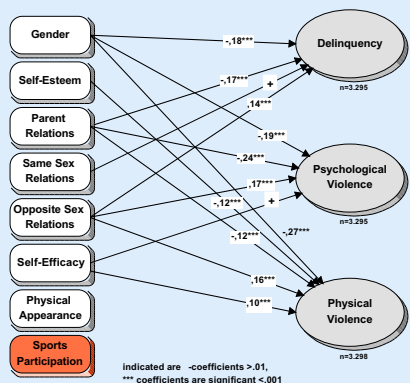


Fig. 2: Stepwise regression analysis of delinquency, psychological violence and physical violence (Note: Gender: 1=male, 2=female)

### Germany (cf. Fig. 2):

- ✘ Only two regression analyses explain variance on a satisfying level (psychological violence: 13,2%, physical violence: 13,6%).
- ✘ Physical appearance and sports participation do not explain any dependent variable.
- ✘ Gender, parent relations and opposite sex relations explain the variance of all three aspects of violence in a significant way.
- ✘ Same sex relations influence delinquency in a positive way.
- ✘ Self-efficacy is positively related with psychological and physical violence.

### Israel (cf. Fig. 3):

- ✘ Only two regression analyses explain variance on a satisfying level (delinquency: 10,9%, psychological violence: 18,0%).
- ✘ Same sex relations and self-efficacy do not explain any dependent variable.
- ✘ Male adolescents are more involved in delinquency and physical violence. Self-esteem influences delinquency and physical violence in a reducing manner.
- ✘ Parent relations explain significantly the variance of all three aspects of violence.
- ✘ Opposite sex relations explain significantly the variance of delinquency and psychological violence.
- ✘ Physical appearance has a positive effect on delinquency.
- ✘ Sports participation helps to reduce psychological violence.

### Israeli Sample

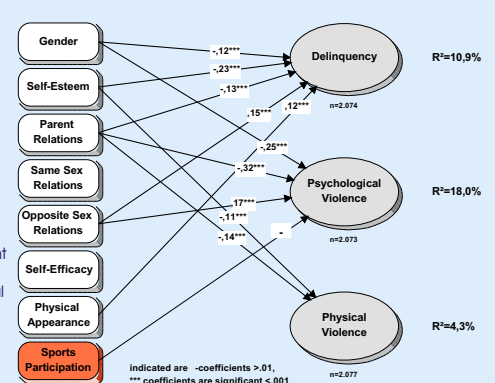


Fig. 3: Stepwise regression analysis of delinquency, psychological violence and physical violence (Note: Gender: 1=male, 2=female)

## Findings of a Cross-Cultural Comparison:

- In the cross-cultural comparison more similarities than differences can be found between the cultures.
- Violence is a typical gender-specific problem. In both cultures, boys are more involved in violent behaviour than girls.
- The different levels of explained variance in the analyzed cultures indicate different patterns concerning violence, especially physical violence.
- Looking for the influences of the predictors, gender in Israel does not determine physical violence. Detailed analyses show, that, in contrast to German adolescents, the Israeli boys and girls do not differ concerning physical violence.
- In both cultures, worse parent-adolescent-relations determine violent behaviour in all facets.
- Opposite sex relations and violent behaviour are positively related in both cultures.
- In Germany adolescents with high self-efficacy seem to be more violent, whereas Israeli youngsters seem to profit from higher general self.
- Only in the Israeli sample there is a moderate negative influence of sports participation on psychological violence.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

It is evident, that the monocausal way fails to explain the influence of sports participation and violence. There is just one path showing a moderate positive influence of sports participation on psychological violence in the Israeli sub-sample. The regression analyses of delinquency, psychological and physical violence shows, that gender-influences and parent relations are the factors with the biggest influence. Involvement in sport does not have any influence, it seems necessary to apply multicausal analyses in order to find out, whether sports participation has a moderating or mediating effect on other influencing variable, such as parents relation, general self or general self-efficacy (cf. Fig. 4).

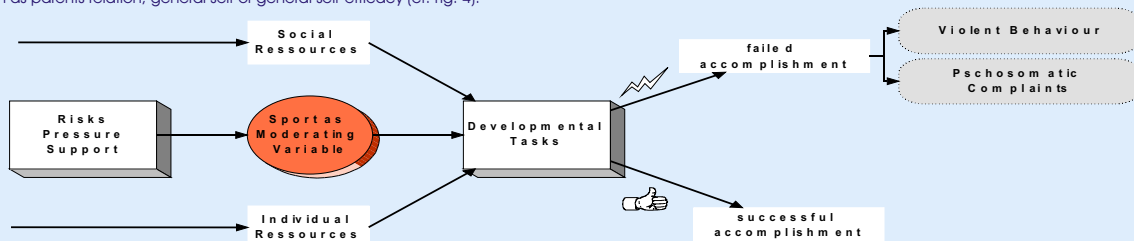


Fig. 4: Sport as a moderating variable in a poly-causal relation (adopted from Brinkhoff, 1998)

## REFERENCES

- Brinkhoff, K.-P (1998). *Sport und Sozialisation im Jugendalter*. Weinheim: Juventa-Verlag.  
Hurrelmann, K. (2002). *Einführung in die Sozialisationstheorie* (8 ed.). Weinheim: Beltz.  
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