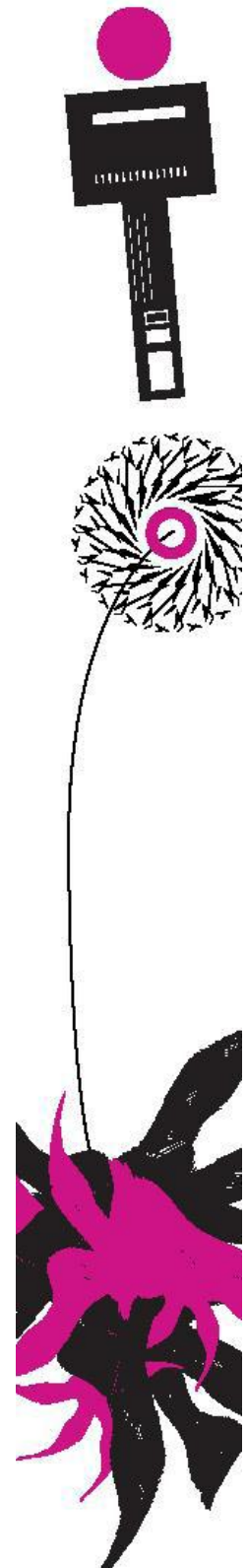# Police contacts of juveniles in Germany

An exploratory research on police contacts of
ethnic minority and non-ethnic minority juveniles

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Abstract

Within my minor 'Crime Science and Risk Governance' I was first introduced to the topic of ethnic minorities and crime in general. Due to the fact that this theme intensively attracted my attention, I decided to further deepen my insights from a scientific perspective by addressing the following question within this thesis:

How many and what kind of police contacts do German ethnic minority juveniles and non-ethnic minority juveniles have with the police? And to what extent can we explain differences in police contacts between different ethnic groups with either ethnicity, availability on the streets or delinquency?

After reviewing international literature of this research area, different explanations for possible differences in police contacts were found. By means of an online questionnaire, data was collected in order to statistically test the introduced explanations which were considered to be most relevant within this thesis.

The data indicated that ethnic minority juveniles do have more total and also more negative police contacts than native German juveniles. Next to this, it was found that both availability on the streets and individual delinquency lead to higher numbers of police contacts. Furthermore, the data drawn from the sample points to the fact that ethnic minority youngsters are more often available on the streets and show more delinquent behaviour than their native German counterparts.

In conclusion the results of the research indicate that ethnic minority juveniles are more often available in public spaces and commit more delinquent acts than native German youngsters which in turn lead to more contact with the police as well as more contacts with a negative characteristic.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

An adequate and commonly known motto describing the general work of the police is 'to protect and to serve'. As the executive of the modern democratic state, the police are responsible for combating crime and protecting citizens. Despite this, the police can also be seen in a different light because they sometimes fail to guarantee full security in cities or have to hand out fines and punishments in order to comply with their duty which is not seen with good grace by the public. As Bradford et al. (2009) state, police visibility and personal contact are essential in the process of forming police legitimacy and public confidence. Nevertheless, public perception of the authority and legitimacy of police officers can significantly be influenced by the ways citizens are treated by them. According to this, Bradford et al. (2009) claim that communication with the citizens is the most significant tool for police officers because adequate demeanour gives the citizens the feeling of being addressed with respect and fairness and hence is likely to enhance a positive image of the police as legitimate institution.

Within my minor 'Crime Science & Risk Governance' I have first been introduced to the topic of ethnic minorities and crime from a scientific perspective. For instance, we discussed research, especially from the USA and United Kingdom (UK), focusing on the questions if police officers are prejudiced against ethnic minorities and if there is a disproportionate execution of the so-called stop and search practices depending on the citizens' ethnic background. Within my bachelor thesis I want to further analyse this topic by focusing on police contacts of juveniles in Germany and the question whether these contacts can be related to ethnicity.

To get a first general idea about former research about the relation between the police and ethnic minorities and that this is a sensitive field of research, I want to bring up an example from the UK. Shortly after the introduction of the stop and search practices in the UK the so-called MacPherson Report was published in 1999 which stated that there was indeed a disproportion of non-white persons being subject of these practices (Macpherson, 1999). This should be seen as evidence for unequal treatment by the police. However, Waddington et al. (2004) convincingly showed that this conclusion was not right, as the reported disproportionality of non-whites is result of different factors, such as the availability of ethnic minorities hanging out on the streets and hence becoming potentially easier subject to police actions than other parts of the population who can rarely be found in public space. More details will be mentioned later when I set up the theoretical framework of my thesis.

Despite the increasing number of general publications and literature concerned with the topic of police interactions with the youth (Leiber et al., 1998), especially in the field of ethnic minority groups and their contacts with the police (Macpherson, 1999; Waddington et al., 2004), in Germany there is hardly any such reliable data available. A reason for this lack of adequate data is that German police crime statistics do not differentiate between different ethnic group categories but only use the broad concept of 'foreigner' (Geißler, 2008).

1.2. Problem statement

In 1984 the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) was enforced in the UK which authorized the police with the right to stop and search random people, without having a reasonable suspicion of delinquent behavior. This police action is proactive because police officers act out of their own initiative, as opposed to a reactive manner which means that first a certain incident has to happen so that the police will be called or reacts according to the observed incident. Many scholars criticized these new proactive practices and claimed that the power conferred upon the police leads to illegitimate discrimination against ethnic minorities in the UK (Norris et al. 1992). At this point it has to be mentioned that there are two different forms of unequal treatment by the police. The first is the direct form which means the police are not allowed to make differences in their executed actions according to race, age and so on. For instance it cannot be justified that police practice stop and search on a black whereas not on a white citizen (Smith, 1997). The second form is the indirect one which means that police officers do not unequally treat juveniles of different ethnic groups within the execution of actions but that the consequences of these police actions are unequal between ethnic groups (Smith, 1997). In case there are suspicions of the inequality in police actions the rule of law is threatened, as the most central concept within modern liberal democratic states is that everyone is equal before law. The conception of equality is also anchored within the German constitution, the 'Grundgesetz', as a central civil right and furthermore several international contracts and agreements incorporate this conception, such as the European Convention on Human Rights. Hence, equal treatment is a basic rule strongly regulated by law and manifested in society.

The stereotypical picture of the 'criminal foreigner' is widespread within German society and in German public. The notion that 'foreigners are more likely to commit crimes than national Germans' was supported by 45 per cent of the population in East and West Germany in 2006 as portrayed by the German General Social Survey (GESIS, 2007). Besides, especially German local, regional and national print media depict the migration difficulty highly one-sided and tend to dramatize the topic, according to Geißler (2008). As Geißler states it is the crucial societal task of social research to test the stereotype of the 'criminal foreigner' to see if it carries a certain reality and – if it proves to be mistaken – it should be corrected in order to avoid needless fear of immigrants and xenophobic, integration-inhibiting resentments.

At this point I want to highlight that the focus of research should be laid on juveniles, as a bad attitude towards the police, such as the claim the institution is not fair and legitimate, can remain for their whole lives and gravely influence their further encounters with and demeanor towards the police and another threat is that they might create mistrust against the rule of law which also might have severe consequences. Hence, I want to analyze whether juveniles having an ethnic minority[1] background have different numbers of and different types of police contacts opposed to native German[2] juveniles.

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[1] There is inconsistency in the concept of having an ethnic minority background. Within this thesis ethnic minority juveniles are seen as juveniles that have a non – Western origin. Even though there are second- or third generation immigrant juveniles that were born in Germany and who have even assimilated their language, culture and religion to the host society, they are still excluded from the dominant majority of the host society. Due to single factors as e.g. skin color or not typical German surnames people tend to consider them as the minority in a country.

[2] Native German juveniles are considered as those born in Germany and having native (white) German parents

Another aim is to find a reasonable explanation, if differences between ethnic groups can be detected. As a last step I try to explain for potential differences.

After this first evaluation I want to address the following main question within my research:

How many and what kind of police contacts do German ethnic minority juveniles and non-ethnic minority juveniles have with the police? And to what extent can we explain differences in police contacts between different ethnic groups with either ethnicity, availability[3] on the streets or delinquency?

1.3. Relevance

According to Punch (2000), there are three potential fields where research can provide relevance by adding knowledge to the area examined and giving guideline to practitioners and to further policy recommendations within the specific field.

As already mentioned, research within this field in Germany is very rare. Sufficient data about ethnic minority juveniles and interactions with the police are available in other countries, especially in UK and the USA[4], but still lacks in Germany. Therefore my research can add knowledge in this specific area.

Furthermore, practitioners such as state institutions and especially the police may profit from the findings of the research in order to avoid any suspicion of partiality or 'institutionalism racism' (Macpherson, 1999) because such suspicions will lead to a bad notion of legitimacy of the police as institution among citizens. If grievances in the system will be detected within this research they can be tackled in order to enhance further research or even lead to changes in the apparatus. Besides, as Geißler (2008) states, the widespread stereotypical notion of the 'criminal foreigner' in public opinion may also have severe consequences as it hinders proper integration and leads to xenophobia and fear of crime of foreigners and hence, this picture should be adjusted by means of reliable research in this area.

Looking back to experiences made in other countries, especially the UK, where research within the field of relations between, in this case, racial groups and the police, policy maker can make use of the findings of the research in order to develop and implement policies which aim at combating the ethnic minorities' notion of feeling neglected and ignored by the legal apparatus of their host country. According to Muir (2011), the recent difficulty of youth riots in the UK portrayed that problematic interactions between ethnic minority youth and the police may produce inflammatory and disordered conflicts within multi-ethnic urban societies, threatening social peace and public order. Of course in Germany the relationship between the police and the youth, especially ethnic minority youth, is not that tense and fierce as it was the situation in the UK, but still there are constantly repeating riots in some German cities – especially riots in Hamburg and Berlin on the 1st of May each year. If German policy makers realize through this research that conflicts between especially juveniles with an ethnic minority

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[3] Availability is used as a measure of juveniles' visibility on the streets and/or public space. Higher availability simultaneously produces a higher chance of getting into contact with the police (Waddington et al., 2004).
[4] Most research in the UK and USA refer to the concept of 'race' rather than 'ethnic minority' or 'immigrant youth' which are the prominent concepts in German research.

background and the police arise because of unfair police demeanor, the starting point for improvement in maintenance of public order and social peace can be made by changes in policies.

1.4. Thesis Outline

The first thing which is of great relevance in order to address the research question properly and to analyze whether the number and type of police contacts differ between ethnic groups, is to build up a theoretical framework by reviewing and discussing the relevant international theoretical and empirical literature of this field of research. By means of introducing the most relevant theories, the crucial concepts of this thesis – comprising police contacts, ethnicity, availability and individual delinquency – can be presented and framed adequately. Moreover, relying on the introduced theories, hypotheses are formulated which are central within the analysis.

The next section of the thesis deals with the methodology and research strategy of the research by giving practical background information about how the data used in the analysis has been gathered and by explaining how the established hypotheses can be tested empirically. Moreover, an operationalization of the independent and dependent variables of the research is presented in order to establish a measurement helping to test the hypotheses at hand. After that, the result part of the thesis portrays the executed statistical tests with the given data and proves the hypotheses.

 Next to this, the conclusion section discusses the findings of the statistical procedure, gives answer to the research question whether there are differences in number and type of police contact between different ethnic groups and to which extent either availability or delinquency can explain for the observed differences. At this point, limits of the research and possible bias will be critically assessed. Besides, the findings of the study will be compared to those of the Dutch research.

The last part of the thesis puts forward a socially relevant discussion animated by the findings of this research and furthermore suggestions for further research in the field of ethnic minority youth and crime will be stressed.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical section of this thesis first gives an overview of the relevant international literature with respect to the topic of ethnic minorities – or respectively 'race' – and crime in general, and police contacts in specific. Here, special attention will be given to different possible explanations for the phenomenon of ethnic minorities being overrepresented in the legal system developed in the analyzed literature. After that the central concepts of *police contact* and *ethnicity* are described in order to give an adequate definition of them. As a last step, a model representing the relationship between all mentioned concepts is given.

2.1. Literature Review and Explanations for the Phenomenon

Reviewing research in Europe and across the Atlantic portrays a disproportionate representation of ethnic minority juveniles[5] at most sections of the juvenile justice system (Piquero, 2008). In international literature there exist several central hypotheses trying to explain for the mentioned overrepresentation.

The first one is the 'differential involvement hypothesis' (Piquero, 2008) or also known as the differential offending hypothesis' (Lauritsen, 2005) which states that "minorities are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal and juvenile justice system because they commit more crimes, for more extended periods of their lives, and more of the types of crime, such as violence, that lead to processing within the criminal justice system" (Piquero, 2008, p.64). The hypothesis is also used in UK research, as introduced by Stevens and Willis (1979) who claim that overrepresentation is due to differential offending rates of black and white people (Norris et. al, 1992). A Dutch example of a comprehensive study executed by Junger (1989) was concerned with crime involvement of majority and minority juveniles while relying on both official crime statistics and self-report data. Junger found – even if only slight – differences for three ethnic minority groups on the level of crime involvement compared to majority Dutch youth (Junger, 1989, p. 154). As Albrecht points out, these results are in line with findings on crime involvement of juvenile ethnic minority groups in several countries (Albrecht, 1997).

To get an even deeper insight into the motives standing behind delinquent behavior, I introduce the claim of Clark and Wenninger (1964) who examined that a bad attitude towards the legal apparatus is related to a rather poor adaptation of people to their socio-economic situation. Furthermore, Davis' (1959) 'theory of deprivation' states that people get discontent when they compare their socio-economic status with people who are better off. As a consequence they perceive themselves as being not part of the society and they try to find new ways to prevent an even worse situation of deprivation and as a consequence they show criminal behaviour. Moreover, Leiber et al. (1998) claim, that juveniles facing such circumstances mentioned above mostly fail to reach common goals such as a secure job. Within their social realities there exist no goals of the kind which are followed by the majority of the society. This in turn creates a so-called 'status of frustration' which means that juveniles react by trying to reach their goals while ignoring common norms and values of the society. A well-known advocate of the criminological 'general strain theory' – which generally speaking claims that social factors within society

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[5] In the USA, Canada and UK most research refers to 'race' as a minority, in particular 'black people', whereas research in Germany and the Netherlands make use of the concept of 'ethnic minority' instead.

put pressure on citizens to commit crime – is Cohen (1955). He proposes that ethnic minority juveniles claim social order to be the cause of their own failure rather than their own disability to improve their socio-economic status. Besides, he asserts that some ethnic groups show more tolerance towards certain types of delinquent acts than others and furthermore have less established respect for the police and courts (Cohen, 1955).

In contrast to this, the second explanation which is relevant to the phenomenon at hand is the 'differential selection and processing hypothesis' (Piquero, 2008) which is also known as the 'differential treatment hypothesis' (Bishop, 2006). It asserts that there are differences in the style of 'selection' actions, such as police presence and patrolling in minority and non-minority communities and neighbourhoods, and differences in 'processing' – that is, discriminating ethnic minorities in correctional systems and in the courts – which together account for the overrepresentation of minorities in arrest, conviction and incarceration numbers (Piquero, 2008). Support for this hypothesis, in particular for discrimination in 'processing', does also come from the UK as portrayed by Norris et. al (1992). One of their explanations for the disproportional number of ethnic minorities in crime statistics – which is based on research of Smith and Gray (1983) – is racial prejudice of police officers. Macpherson (1999) introduced the term 'Institutional Racism' which is described as the collective failure of an institution to guarantee professional and proper service to people due to their culture, colour or ethnic origin. This can be detected in attitudes, processes and behavior leading to discrimination by ignorance, unwitting prejudice, racist stereotyping and thoughtlessness that create disadvantages for ethnic minority groupings. As British research by Norris et al. (1992) revealed, black people have a disproportional high number of stopping rates compared to those of white people while often being stopped without any obvious ground and they claim that a possible explanation for this phenomenon is racial prejudice of police officers.

The third hypothesis introduced in the USA is a mixed-model one which asserts that both 'differential processing and selection' and 'differential involvement' interact and in tandem produce the disproportion of ethnic and racial minorities in crime statistics (Piquero, 2008). Research in Canada by Carrington and Fitzgerald (2011) claims that there are several risk factors, such as gender, age, the socio-economic structure and status of the family, parenting style and/or peer relations which influence the disproportional minority contacts with the police. Pointing to the evidence of studies, e.g. by Fergusson et al. (2003) and Wortley and Tanner (2005), Carrington and Fitzgerald state that for instance "being young, unsupervised, or living in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood may increase the chances of delinquent behaviour among youth [differential involvement] as well as their chances of receiving police attention [differential treatment]" (Carrington and Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 454).

The relation between police and citizen can also constitute an explanation for the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities. According to Reising and Parks (2000), from the citizens' perspective police officers are often considered to executing their tasks incorrectly and sometimes even to go beyond their boundaries. This means that citizens with a negative attitude towards the police are not willing to cooperate with them. On the contrary, police officers are sometimes of the opinion that most people hold a quite hostile view of the police as institution and also their executed work, as stated by Smith and Hawkins (1973). This situation often leads to a misunderstanding of both sides and might create self-fulfilling prophecies.

Bearing all this in mind, Waddington (1984) offers another explanation for the overrepresentation related to police and citizen relation. He asserts that black people are more likely to show disrespectful demeanour towards police officers which in turn affects the actions of the police. If black people show disrespect against officers, the officers will act in a more authoritarian style to make sure their authority is not be questioned and hence – stuffed with wide discretionary powers – they will decide to make use of harsher powers, such as arresting someone, rather than dealing informally with him (Norris et al., 1992). According to Norris et al. (1992), there is further research, supporting Waddington's idea, which found that black people do have a more hostile view about the police than other groups and are more critical concerning police performance.

As already mentioned some researchers claim that ethnicity or delinquency can be seen as the reason for disproportional interactions between the police and juveniles with an ethnic minority background. However, others, e.g. Waddington et al. (2004) offer another explanation asserting that availability on the streets is the central factor which influences the chance of being stopped by a police officer. They claim that patterns of stop and search practices can be explained by the availability of a certain population on the streets as the presence or absence of certain racial or ethnic groupings in public spaces lead to various opportunities for the police to execute the stop and search powers. Following Piquero's (2008) sub-hypothesis of 'differential selection' – more police presence and patrolling in lower-income areas which are also often minority neighbourhoods – availability seems to establish an explanatory alternative for more police contacts of ethnic minority juveniles (Piquero, 2008, p.68).

As the research of this thesis focus on Germany, it is inevitable to separately discuss former research conducted in this area. According to Albrecht (1997), in the past analyses in Germany favoring hypotheses dealing with discriminatory treatment of foreign minorities within the criminal justice system prevailed (Mansel, 1988). There have only been some research studies which are concerned with the 'differential involvement hypothesis', such as done by Traulsen (1988) and Kube and Koch (1990).

In Germany studies within this field of research have found inconsistent results. A small study relying on self-reported delinquency among youngsters in Mannheim (Sutterer and Karger, 1994) conclude that there is no significant difference in offending rates between ethnic minority and native German juveniles. However, Heitmeyer (1995) executed a self-report survey among a larger sample of foreign and German juveniles and reported significantly higher numbers of reported violence among foreign youngsters.

As Geißler (2008) found, five out of six recent analyses about juveniles and crime – based on self-reported delinquency – portrayed that juveniles with an ethnic minority background do only show a minimal higher level of delinquency than native German juveniles. However, the studies highlight a significant higher proportion of ethnic minority youth that commit crimes of violence and housebreaking as well as a higher number of repeat offenders than compared to native Germans (Geißler, 2008). Geißler points out that an explanation for the overrepresentation of ethnic minority juveniles can be seen in social risk factors[6] – for instance lacking education and a bad socio-economic status – which lead to more delinquent behavior. Nevertheless, Pfeiffer and Wetzels (2000) also found evidence for the

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[6] Compare: Carrington and Fitzgerald (2011)

'differential treatment hypothesis' as they state that juveniles with a 'foreign' background get harsher punishments before court than native German juveniles.

After having reviewed international literature and especially German literature about the topic of ethnic minorities, in particular ethnic minority youngsters, and crime, the theoretical framework for this thesis can be introduced. Given the five various explanations for the phenomenon at hand – the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the criminal system, to be more specific in this case in police contacts – not all of them will be tested within this thesis.

The first explanation given was the 'differential involvement hypothesis' which states that ethnic minorities are overrepresented due to the fact that they commit more crimes.
This explanation plays a significant role within my research and is going to be tested by means of the explanatory variable of *individual delinquency* – as already depicted in the research question. Next to this, special attention will be given to *availability* on the streets of juveniles as former research claims that it also may interfere and produce different numbers in police contacts; hence it will constitute another testable variable. At this point it has to be mentioned that the social risk factors[7] introduced by Geißler (2008) and Carrington and Fitzgerald (2011) can be considered as explaining background variables for both delinquency and availability explanations. Nevertheless, they are not comprised within the research design as incorporating them in the testing procedure would definitely go beyond the scope of this single thesis and hence no concrete statement about their interfering character can be given. Besides, these mentioned social risk factors do also matter when it comes to the mixed-model explanation. Due to the fact that they will not be tested and moreover, the research design is not capable of distinguishing between the extent in how far either 'differential involvement' or 'differential treatment' in tandem do influence police contacts, the mixed-model explanation can also not be tested within this thesis.
In case both *individual delinquency* and *availability* cannot sufficiently explain for the differences in police contacts which will probably be found, the 'differential selection and processing' explanation – assuming racial prejudice of the police – can be indirectly inferred from this situation. However, it will not directly be tested within this research due to the fact that the thesis does not directly investigate the selection and processing procedures of the police.
Lastly it has to be noted that the applied research design does not comprise a test of the possible explanation that disrespectful behavior towards police officers affects the actions taken and therefore leads to different police contacts in turn, as testing this explanation would also lay beyond the scope of this thesis.

This piece of research aims at answering the question of whether the number and type of police contacts differ between ethnic groups or not. I want to know in how far either *availability* on the streets or *individual delinquency* contributes to the differences – if there are any differences at all. Therefore, the alternative explanatory variables have already been introduced above. Nevertheless, what is still missing is a precise definition of the concepts of *contact with the police* and *ethnicity* which now follows.

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[7] E.g. educational and socio-economic status

2.2. Contact with the police

Police contact within this thesis is considered as the total number of encounters juveniles made with the police. The underlying assumption is that juveniles with an ethnic minority background do have more police contacts than native German juveniles. As already seen in the central research question, police contacts are distinguished between different types; contacts with a positive and contacts with a negative character, as explained in the next sub-section in more detail. While focusing on negative contacts, the assumption which follows is that ethnic minority juveniles experience more encounters of a negative nature than do their native German counterparts. In order to check for the assumptions made, the given data is analyzed to see if the total number of police encounters differs between ethnic groups and if there can be found a pattern of negative police contacts that is replicated among native German or ethnic minority youth.

2.2.1. Type of contact

The broad concept of contacts can be split up into 'encounters with a positive characteristic' and 'encounters with a negative characteristic'. The following factors define a positive contact as outlined by Bartsch and Cheurprakokit (2004): report a crime or traffic accident, being victim of a criminal act, requesting information from the police and being witness to a crime. The authors moreover consider juveniles that had positive encounters with the police to judge about these contacts and the police as an institution in a more positive way than those who experienced negative encounters. As Cheurprakobit (2006) stated, contacts with a negative characteristic are mostly police-initiated, such as being given a ticket, being arrested or personal search on the street. When examining encounters with the police, typical questions being asked by researchers deal with how often people got in touch with the police even though they did not obviously disobey legal rules and how the exact course of the police contact looked like.

2.3. Ethnicity

The phenomenon of migration is widespread all over the world as people leave their home countries to cross the borders of their country of destination legally or illegally because they are attracted by new opportunities offered within the country of settlement – the so-called pull factors. Moreover there are certain push factors which influence people's decision to leave their home country as life is no longer worthwhile due to for instance political instability or even persecution and catastrophes. When they settle in the country of destination they are categorized as belonging to a specific ethnic (minority) group. Following Albrecht's (1997) definition "the concepts of the foreign or ethnic minority include a range of minorities that differ with respect to religion, race, language, citizenship, material circumstances, cultural background, migration motives, and histories of relations between home country and immigration country" (Albrecht, 1997, p. 45).

In 2005 the German Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt) measured the number of 'foreigners' and 'Germans with migration background' by means of a census on a representation basis, which together account for approximately 19 per cent of the total population; which are 15.3 millions in concrete numbers (Federal Statistical Office, 2006).

According to Egharevba (2009), ethnic minority groups are mostly of a non-Western origin, do have a lack of knowledge of the language of the country of destination and do mostly not understand its legal system. Therefore, this lack of knowledge and understanding creates misunderstandings when ethnic minorities get into contact with legal institutions; especially police interactions are considered to be problematic. Hence, many scholars claim that ethnic minorities are treated differently by the police.

2.4. Hypotheses and Model

This sub-section of the thesis is meant to introduce the hypotheses which can be derived from the theoretical framework and the assumptions portrayed above and furthermore a simple model is drawn showing how these hypotheses relate to each other. This step enables investigations on the question whether the number and type[8] of police contacts show differences between ethnic minority and native German juveniles. Moreover, it is significant to stress for which reasons investigations on differences are done. If differences can be observed among the various groups, this simultaneously implies that one of the groups does more often have police contacts than the other. The theoretical part introduced the following independent variables – ethnicity, availability and individual delinquency – which aim at explaining for why there is police contact at all and in how far each of these variables account for differences; if observed. Figure 1 provides a simple model which seeks to portray the assumed interaction among the different concepts.

Figure 1: Relationship between the examined concepts

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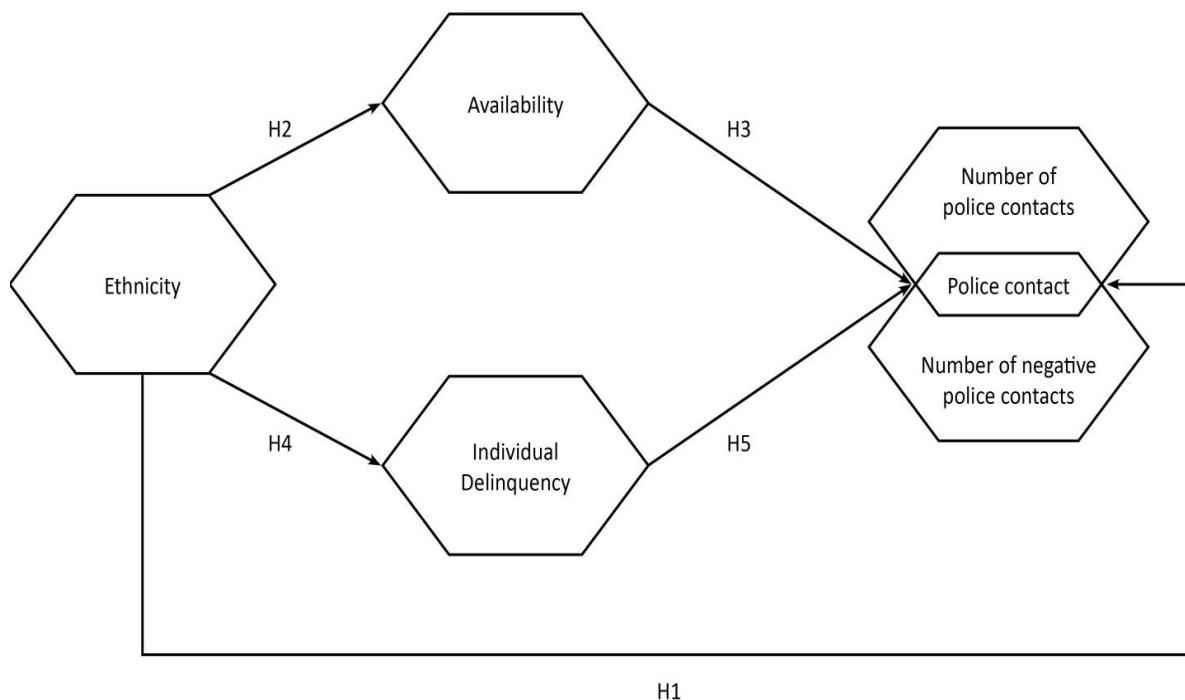
[8] Within this research the focus lies on the police contacts with a negative characteristic.

The first assumed relationship being central within this research is between ethnicity and police contact. The underlying assumption here is that ethnic minority juveniles show contact with the police more often than their native German counterparts. Besides, it is also presumed that ethnic minority youth does report a higher number of contacts with a negative characteristic which is portrayed in the first hypothesis.

H1: Juveniles having an ethnic minority background are more likely to have higher total numbers of police contacts and make more contacts with a negative characteristic than native German juveniles.

Next to this, the figure depicts the second assumed relationship between ethnicity and availability. The hypothesis containing the assumption made states as follows:

H2: Ethnic minority juveniles are more often available on the streets than native German juveniles.

Based on this presumption the third hypothesis claims:

H3: Being more available on the streets leads to a higher number of police contacts.

In order to analyse whether the assumptions concerning individual delinquency and police contacts mentioned above also hold true within this research, the following hypotheses are concerned with the relationship between ethnicity and delinquency on the one hand and delinquency and police contacts on the other hand:

H4: Ethnic minority juveniles are more likely to commit delinquent acts than native German juveniles.

H5: A higher degree of delinquency leads to a higher number of police contacts and as a consequence more negative contacts are reported.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design, Data and Sample

The underlying research design of this thesis is a non-experimental one, to be more specific a cross-sectional design was created by executing an online survey. A cross sectional study executes the measurement of the dependent and independent variable(s) at the same time with the purpose of using naturally arising differences in the independent variable to establish quasi-experimental control groups. This research design matches my purpose of my research adequately, as I first want to examine whether there is a correlational relationship between the dependent variable of encounters with the police made by juveniles and the independent variable of ethnicity. After that step I have to cope with the so-called third variable problem. I want to analyze whether there is another third (or fourth) variable, in particular availability on the streets and individual delinquent behavior, which might also correlate with the dependent variable of police encounters and establish explanatory alternatives. Therefore, the use of a cross sectional study is justified as it properly examines the relationship between variables and is used to find correlation.

The sampling method is of high importance within research and it has to be set up carefully in order to avoid bias and further to be able to generalize correctly from the sample chosen. The theoretical population I am interested in is German youth in general, whereupon special attention will be paid to differences between native German juveniles and those having an ethnic minority background. Therefore, I have to get access to a study population which represents the theoretical population adequately. Hence, I decided to execute an online-survey, as this enables me to reach a great number of respondents. As Wright (2005) asserts, the advantages of online-survey are that access to unique populations is easier; for instance when people are surveyed about a sensitive topic[9] traditional survey methods are limited as respondents do not feel comfortable answering questions face-to-face. Hence, people may give more reliable and trustworthy answers via online surveys. Furthermore, Wright (2005) states that online surveys are time and money saving for researchers. However, there occur also disadvantages when using online-surveys as also portrayed by Wright (2005). It becomes more difficult to establish a sampling frame and a non-response rate. It is also obvious that not every youngster in Germany has access to the internet but according to data from the Federal Statistical Office, 77% of the German households do have access to the internet (Federal Statistical Office, 2011). Moreover, self-selection bias is a central limitation of research methods relying on online-surveys which has to be acknowledged, as some individuals follow the invitation to participate, while others do not (Wright, 2005). All in all, these disadvantages mentioned can limit the researcher's ability to draw generalizations from the findings of the study.

The link to the online-questionnaire of this study was spread via the social network 'facebook'. In Germany a fourth of the total population is registered on facebook whereupon two thirds of the German users are younger than 30 years old (Kaube, 2011). Hence, it is likely to reach a great number of German juveniles responding to the invitation of the online-survey. The link to the survey was in particular spread

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[9] This is the case in this research as sensitive questions about delinquency are asked.

by asking several youth centers for permission to spread the link through their very own pages on facebook and by spreading it generally on facebook, too. Due to a very limited period of time and the non-response of several youth centres, the only centre willing to support the spreading of my survey was the 'Kella' youth centre. It is located in a small town – having approximately 13.500 inhabitants[10] – called Haselünne, Emsland, Lower Saxony and is run by volunteers under the supervision of and supported by the Catholic Church's youth abstractor. The 'Kella' is open four times a week and juveniles attending Secondary General, Intermediate Secondary, Grammar or Vocational School or those who do not longer attend school meet there regularly. The socio-economic status of the youngsters can be described as ranging from low to high status, whereas most of them belong to the middle socio-economic class. The final sample of this research is made up of 28 juveniles; the youngest respondent was 12 and the oldest 21 years old.

The survey is part of a broad exploratory study analyzing the topic of juveniles and the police executed by the Faculty School of Management and Governance of the University of Twente, Netherlands. The questionnaire was established by means of relevant literature of that field of research and the questions of the survey were tested in prior research (e.g. De Leeuw van Weenen, 2011).

3.2. Variables of the Analysis

This section of the thesis is concerned with giving operational definitions of the meaning of the different dependent variables – total police contacts and police contacts with a negative characteristic – as well as the independent variables of ethnicity, availability and individual delinquency, as this is inevitable in order to test the given hypotheses.

3.2.1. Dependent Variables: Number of police contacts and negative police contacts

Frequency of police contacts

This part of the thesis deals with the dependent variables of contact with the police. In order to get data about frequencies of police contacts, questions were asked to find out how many times the native German and ethnic minority juveniles e.g. were stopped by the police, were involved in a police check, etc. The set-up of the questionnaire contains six questions about how many times youngsters encountered the police in the past 12 months.

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[10] Population numbers from www.haseluenne.de (2010)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic for Frequencies of Police Contacts of all Respondents (N=28)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How many times were you stopped by the police?	28	0	12	1,46	3,144
How many times were you involved in a police check?	28	0	9	1,64	2,281
How many times did a police officer want to talk to you without special occurrences?	28	0	15	2,21	4,049
How many times did you contact the police?	28	0	3	,64	,911
How many times did the police stop you without that you did anything bad?	28	0	10	1,71	2,608
How many times in total did you have contact with the police?	28	0	21	3,79	5,280
Valid N (listwise)	28				

The table of the frequencies of police contacts of all respondents portrays that the mean for the times juveniles were stopped by the police, involved in a police check and were stopped without doing anything bad do not show great variety. The frequency of the times juveniles initiated a contact by police, for instance because asking for help differs, as the mean is 0.64 times and its standard deviation is 0.911.

However, this thesis will further only focus on the total number of police contacts of the last year reported by the juveniles and uses this single type of contact as a measurement for the variable of police contacts. The maximum value of 21 shows that there was one juvenile having 21 times contact with the police within the past 12 months. We have to acknowledge that this specific case is an extreme outlier with respect to the mean of 3.79 times and the standard deviation of 5.28 and hence, the data distribution is skewed to the right. To see whether the distribution of the data is normal, the non-parametric one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (see Table 2) is executed on the data of total number of police contacts. Due to the fact that the p-value of 0.03 is below alpha (0.05) the null hypothesis (data is normally distributed) can be rejected. The distribution of the total number of police contacts of juveniles is thus not normal.

Table 2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Measurement of Normal Distribution of Police Contacts (N=28)

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of How many times in total did you have contact with the police? is normal with mean 3,79 and standard deviation 5,28.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	,030	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic

As already mentioned the number of police contacts having a negative characteristic[11] is also important. Hence, there are eight questions in the survey asking the juveniles about negative actions such as being given a ticket, personal search on the streets, confiscation of personal items, etc. The youngsters reported the number of times they were subject of those negative police actions (Table 3).

Table 3 shows the number of times juveniles had different types of police contact with a negative characteristic. The table indicates that the most common reason juveniles having contact with the police is, being expelled from a certain place by officers with a mean of 2.14 times and a standard deviation of 4.284. This type of negative contact is followed by being given a warning by police officers as portrayed by a mean of 1.75 times and a standard deviation of 2.474. The action that is reported the less is the confiscation of personal items by the police with a mean of 0.07 times and a standard deviation of 0.378.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic of Number of Police Contacts with a Negative Characteristic (N=28)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Got a ticket	28	0	10	1,00	2,789
Warning	28	0	10	1,75	2,474
ID was checked	28	0	15	1,61	3,201
Personal search on the street	28	0	2	,32	,670
Taken to the police station	28	0	2	,11	,416
Personal item was confiscated	28	0	2	,07	,378
Expelled from place by police	28	0	20	2,14	4,284
Police visit at home	28	0	5	,96	1,551
Valid N (listwise)	28				

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[11] Cheurprakobit (2006)

According to Pallant (2007), it is inevitable to find scales that are considered to be reliable, in case scales are comprised within a survey. Hence, the researcher has to analyze whether certain items are based on the same concept. Due to the fact that it will be adequate to have one variable for the number of negative police contacts, the interrelatedness of the eight different items of negative contacts has to be analyzed by means of Cronbach's Alpha. As table 4 portrays, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.837 which shows a high level of internal consistency between the different items. Thus, all the items can be considered as one type and be computed as a single variable. The newly established variable *number of police contacts with a negative characteristic* results from summing up the values of all items and has a mean for the number of police contacts with a negative characteristic is 7.96 times and a standard deviation of 13.062.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha of Number of Police Contacts with a Negative Characteristic

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,837	,862	8

3.2.2. Independent Variables

Ethnicity

In order to measure the ethnicity of the respondents the questionnaire contains a question which asks for the ethnic background the respondents feel themselves belonging to. Out of 28 respondents, 18 answered that they see themselves as native Germans and 10 juveniles consider themselves to belong to an ethnic minority group (Figure 2). Respondents could choose between the ethnicities of German, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Moroccan, Tunisian, Kurdish, Albanian, Lebanese or state another ethnicity which was not contained. Even though the answers offered within the survey differentiate between specific ethnic minorities, the research within this thesis will solely look at the sum of the different ethnic minority groups. Hence, the division made here within the variable of ethnicity is being of native German or ethnic minority origin.

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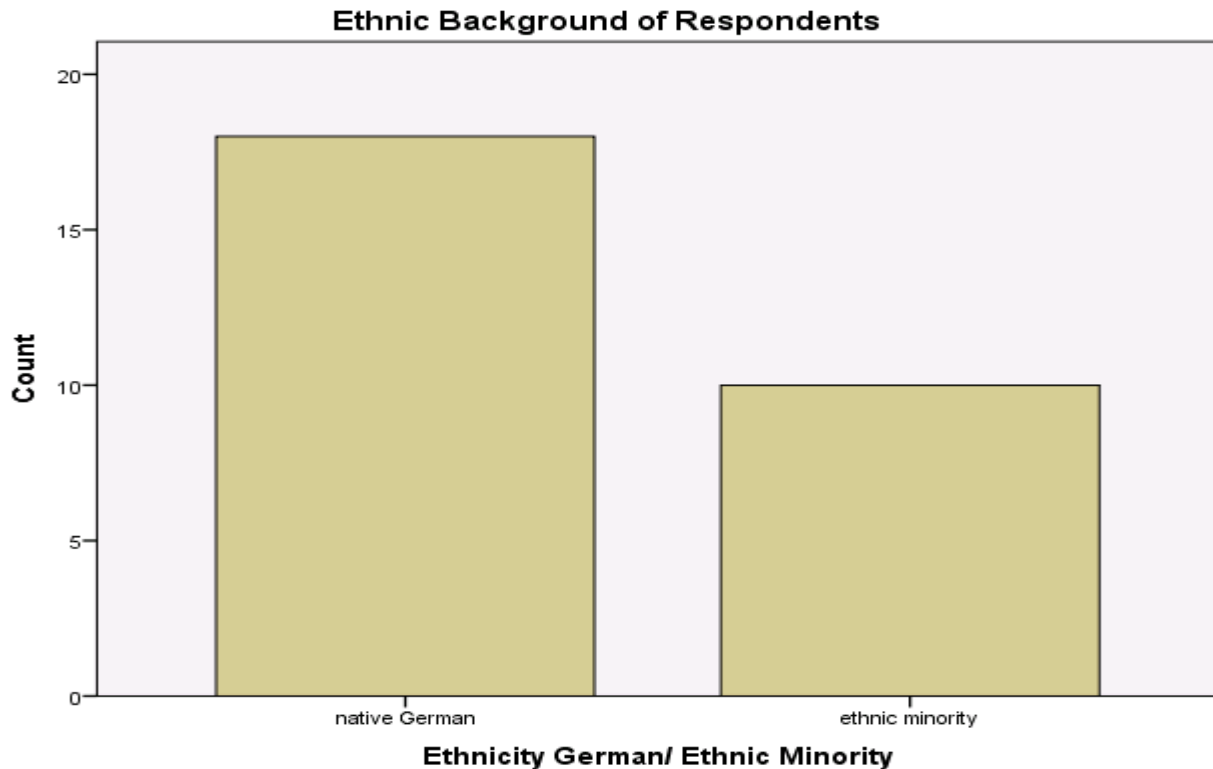
Availability

With regard to measuring the variable of availability, the questionnaire comprises six questions about how the juveniles spend their time during one week. The youngsters were asked how many hours they are occupied with school, working, sports and hobbies, being outside, etc. Table 5 indicates the time in hours juveniles spend at various places.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistic of Time (in hours) per Week Juveniles Spend at Places (N=28)**

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Going to school	28	0	45	739	26,39	15,206
Doing homework	28	0	15	133	4,75	4,873
Work	28	0	40	177	6,32	10,033
Hobby and Sport	28	2	40	282	10,07	9,832
Going out, visiting cafe, youth centres, etc.	28	0	25	250	8,93	6,776
Being outside	28	1	32	283	10,11	8,015
Valid N (listwise)	28					

As can be derived from table 5 the most time spent by the respondents is in school, as the mean is the highest with 26.39 hours per week juveniles attend school and with 739 hours per week for the sum of

all respondents. The fewest time per week is spent on doing homework with a mean of 4.75 hours per week and a total sum of all respondents of 133 hours per week.

The following step defines the measurement of the availability variable as the only item which will further be used in analysis will be the item for 'being outside'. As already mentioned it was assumed that it is more likely to get into contact with the executive of a state if the person is located in public space and hence available for the police. Except for answering the call of duty, for instance solving a conflict, police men do not generally enter pubs, schools, etc. Following this logic, being outside is considered as the central measurement of showing availability within further analysis. With a mean of 10.11 hours per week and a standard deviation of 8.015, the data for being outside is skewed to the right (Figure 3) and there are two extreme outliers (30 and 32 hours per week spent outside) as portrayed in the boxplot of figure 4.

Figure 3: Histogram of Availability on the Streets (N=28)
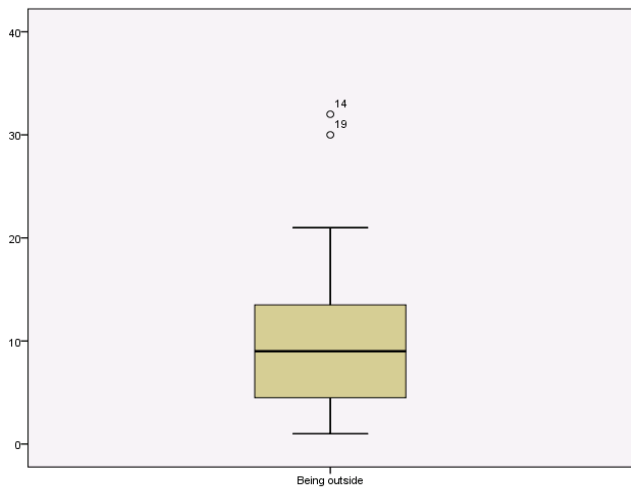
Figure 4: Boxplot of Availability on the Streets (N=28)
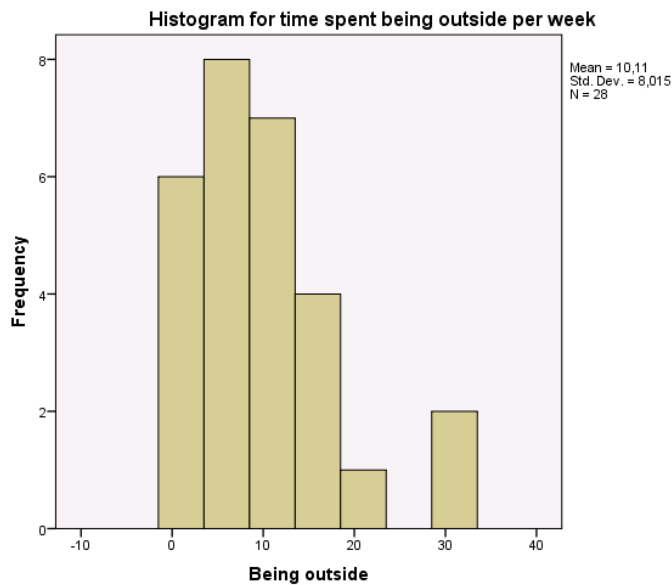
Again to check if the data of the variable availability on the streets follows a normal distribution pattern, the one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test – also known as the chi square goodness-of-fit test – is executed.

Table 6: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Measurement of Normal Distribution of Availability (N=28)

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Being outside is normal with mean 10,11 and standard deviation 8,02.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	,300	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is ,05.

With an alpha of 0.05 and a p-value of 0.30 of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test finds that the null hypothesis – which assumes that the data is normally distributed – cannot be rejected and thus is retained. Hence, the data of the variable availability on the streets follows the normal distribution.

Individual delinquency

The measurement of the variable of individual delinquency has been established within the questionnaire by asking 14 questions about how often the respondents have committed several delinquent acts. The youngsters were asked to report whether they did (yes) or did not (no) show each of these different offenses throughout the last year.

At this point it has to be stressed that only nine items of the original fourteen items will be used in the following analysis as these ones only describe delinquent behavior as it confronts legal rules, whereas the rest of the items cannot be considered as offenses within criminal law.

Moreover, as respondents could only chose between 'yes' and 'no' and the thesis focus on committed offenses of juveniles, table 7 only counts the 'yes' answers given by the juveniles as these are coded with the value 1 and 'no' with the value 0.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistic of the Variable Individual Delinquency (N=28)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intentionally damaging things	28	3	,11	,315
Littering/Painting on the wall etc.	28	2	,07	,262
Attempt/stealing something	28	4	,14	,356
Attempt to rob/robbing	28	0	,00	,000
Beating someone	28	8	,29	,460
Carried weapon for self defense	28	5	,18	,390
Taken soft drugs	28	8	,29	,460
Taken hard drugs	28	1	,04	,189
Selling drugs	28	1	,04	,189
Valid N (listwise)	28			

The two offenses which were committed the most in the last 12 months by the youngsters are 'beating someone' and 'taken soft drugs' with both a mean of 0.29 and standard deviation of 0.460. Besides, the offense which was committed the less was 'attempt to rob/robbing' because none of the respondents reported delinquency.

Due to the fact that individual delinquency should be used as a single variable in further analysis, Cronbach's alpha is used in order to check for internal consistency among the different items. Table 8 indicates a Cronbach's alpha of 0.654 which does not point to strong consistency but still is adequate enough to compute the eight[12] different items into one single variable of individual delinquency.

Table 8: Cronbach's Alpha of Individual Delinquency (N=28)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,654	,598	8

At this point, the 9 different delinquency variables are summed up in order to establish a new variable for further analysis. Now, the new variable of individual delinquency with N=28 has a mean of 1.14 and a standard deviation of 1.484.

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[12] In the Cronbach's alpha analysis, 'attempt to rob/robbing' was excluded as it has zero variance.

3.3. Summary of variables used in further analysis

Table 9: Descriptive Statistic of all Variables used in Further Analysis (N=28)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total number of police contacts	28	0	21	3,79	5,280
Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic	28	0	52	7,96	13,062
Ethnicity	28	1	2	1,36	,488
Availability on the street	28	1	32	10,11	8,015
Individual delinquency	28	0	5	1,14	1,484
Valid N (listwise)	28				

Within table 9 all the dependent and independent variables which have been introduced for the study are summarized, giving their most important statistics. The variable of total number of police contacts has a mean of 3.79 times and a standard deviation of 5.28 with a minimum count of zero and a maximum of 21 times. The variable number of police contacts with a negative characteristic was computed by adding all values for the single variables into one. Now, the variable has a mean of 7.96 and a standard deviation of 13.062 with a minimum of zero and a maximum of 52 negative contacts. Being a dichotomous variable, ethnicity calls for ranking the given answers of the survey regarding being either native German (value 1) or being of ethnic minority origin (value 2). Due to the fact that 28 participants participated in the questionnaire – 18 native German and 10 ethnic minority juveniles – the mean of this variable is 1.36 and the standard deviation is 0.488. Following the logic of coding, the minimum value is 1 and the maximum 2. After measuring the variable of availability on the street, the table portrays a minimum of one hour and the maximum of 32 hours per week, with a mean value of 10.11 hours per week and the standard deviation of 8.015. Lastly, the variable of individual delinquency was computed by summing up all items of delinquent actions of the respondents which produced a mean of 1.14 and a standard deviation of 1.484 with a minimum of zero counts and a maximum of 5.

4. Results

In this part the assumptions made of the relationships between the different variables, as already indicated in figure 1, are now put into practice by analyzing the relations by means of statistical tests. The hypotheses formulated before are as follows:

H1: Juveniles having an ethnic minority background are more likely to have higher total numbers of police contacts and make more contacts with a negative characteristic than native German juveniles.

H2: Ethnic minority juveniles are more often available on the streets than native German juveniles.

H3: Being more available on the streets leads to a higher number of police contacts.

H4: Ethnic minority juveniles are more likely to commit delinquent acts than native German juveniles.

H5: A higher degree of delinquency leads to a higher number of police contacts and as a consequence more negative contacts are reported.

Next to this, this section of the thesis will focus on giving answer to the overall research question:

How many and what kind of police contacts do German ethnic minority juveniles and non-ethnic minority juveniles have with the police? And to what extent can we explain differences in police contacts between different ethnic groups with either availability on the streets or delinquency?

As already stated in the methodology part of this thesis the two dependent variables are the total number of police contacts and the number of police contacts with a negative characteristic. What follows now, is an analysis of the question to what extent the independent variables of ethnicity, availability and individual delinquency do or do not influence the dependent variables.

Due to the fact that not all the data of the variables are normally distributed, the Spearman's rank order correlation will be run in order to analyze the relationships between the different variables which are central in this study. The test will be a one-tailed one, as all my hypotheses contain assumptions about an increase in the parameter of the variables. The results are shown in table 10. In general, the null hypothesis for all variables tested against each other states the assumption that there is no association between the variables tested.

Table 10: Spearman's Rank Order Correlation of the Different Variables Used in the Analysis (N=28)

Correlations

			Total number of police contacts	Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic	Ethnicity	Availability on the street	Individual delinquency
Spearman's rho	Total number of police contacts	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,886**	,698**	,452**	,567**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	,000	,000	,008	,001
		N	28	28	28	28	28
	Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic	Correlation Coefficient	,886**	1,000	,823**	,441**	,713**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	.	,000	,009	,000
		N	28	28	28	28	28
	Ethnicity	Correlation Coefficient	,698**	,823**	1,000	,403*	,795**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000	.	,017	,000
		N	28	28	28	28	28
	Availability on the street	Correlation Coefficient	,452**	,441**	,403*	1,000	,586**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	,008	,009	,017	.	,001
		N	28	28	28	28	28
	Individual delinquency	Correlation Coefficient	,567**	,713**	,795**	,586**	1,000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	,001	,000	,000	,001	.
		N	28	28	28	28	28

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 10 portrays that the test found a strong, positive correlation between the variable of ethnicity and the dependent variables of total number of police contacts (r_s (28) = 0.698, p < 0.001) and number of police contacts with a negative characteristic (r_s (28) = 0.823, p < 0.001). Due to the fact that in both cases the p value is below alpha 0.01 the result is statistically significant.

Furthermore, the Spearman's rank order correlation shows positive correlation between the variables availability and ethnicity (r_s (28) = 0.403, p = 0.017) which is statistically significant as the p value is below alpha 0.05. However, the Spearman's rho coefficient indicates that the relationship is not very strong, as a perfect value would be 1 or respectively -1.

Moreover, table 10 shows that there is also a positive relationship between the variable of availability and the dependent variables of total number of police contacts (r_s (28) = 0.452, p = 0.008) and number of negative police contacts (r_s (28) = 0.441, p = 0.009). Due to the p values which are in both cases below alpha 0.01 the findings are statistically significant and the null hypothesis can be rejected. Again, the coefficient value in both cases does not indicate a strong positive relationship of the variables.

The variables of ethnicity and individual delinquency do also show a strong positive relationship (r_s (28) = 0.795, p < 0.001) which is statistically significant with a p value below alpha 0.01.

Besides, the statistical test shows a positive correlation between the independent variable of individual delinquency and both dependent variables of total number of police contacts (r_s (28) = 0.567, p = 0.001) and number of police contacts with a negative characteristic (r_s (28) = 0.713, p < 0.001). In both cases statistical significance is found because both p values are below alpha 0.01.

At this point it should be declared if the data drawn from the sample do or do not support the formulated hypotheses.

Due to the data at hand, statistical evidence was found for hypothesis H1 which means that the ethnic background of the juveniles do matter in terms of the total number of police contacts and also the number of police contacts with a negative characteristic. Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected and we can state that juveniles having an ethnic minority background are more likely to have higher numbers of police contacts and make more contacts with a negative characteristic than German juveniles.

In order to answer the sub-question of the main research question '*how many and what kind of police contacts do German ethnic minority juveniles and non-ethnic minority juveniles have with the police?*' the frequency tables table 11 and 12 are introduced.

Table 11: Cross Tabulation of the Variables Total Number of Police Contacts and Ethnicity (N=28)

Total number of police contacts * Ethnicity Crosstabulation

Count

		Ethnicity		Total
		native German	ethnic minority	
Total number of police contacts	0	6	0	6
	1	7	0	7
	2	2	2	4
	3	2	1	3
	4	0	1	1
	5	0	1	1
	6	0	2	2
	10	0	1	1
	15	1	1	2
	21	0	1	1
Total		18	10	28

Table 11 shows that the majority (13 persons) of native German respondents had never or once contact with the police the last 12 months in total, whereas all of the respondents with ethnic minority background had at least twice contact with the police in total in the last year. Moreover, table 12 depicts that out of 18 native German youngsters eight had no negative contact with the police the last year. In general it can be seen from the table that juveniles with an ethnic minority background do have more police contacts with a negative characteristic than native Germans, which is in line with the findings of the Spearman's correlation findings with regard to hypothesis 1.

Table 12: Cross Tabulation of the Variables Number of Police Contacts with Negative Characteristic and Ethnicity (N=28)

Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic * Ethnicity
Crosstabulation

Count

		Ethnicity		Total
		native German	ethnic minority	
Number of police contacts with a negative characteristic	0	8	0	8
	1	4	0	4
	2	3	0	3
	3	1	0	1
	6	1	1	2
	7	1	1	2
	8	0	1	1
	9	0	1	1
	10	0	1	1
	15	0	1	1
	17	0	1	1
	31	0	1	1
	42	0	1	1
	52	0	1	1
Total		18	10	28

Concerning hypothesis H2 Spearman's rank correlation found evidence which support to reject the null hypothesis. This means the data drawn from this sample points to the statement that ethnic minority juveniles are more often available on the streets than native German juveniles.

Furthermore the analysis of the sampled data leads to the conclusion to reject the null hypothesis and that hypothesis H3 is supported due to a strong positive relationship between the variables of availability and number of police contacts. Ergo, being more available on the streets leads to a higher number of (total and negative) police contacts.

As the data from the sample points to a strong, positive association between the variable of ethnicity and individual delinquency, the null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis H4 is retained. The conclusion which follows is that ethnic minority juveniles are more likely to commit delinquent acts than native German juveniles.

The last hypothesis H5 is also supported by the sampled data as Spearman's rank order correlation found positive association between the independent variable individual delinquency and both dependent variables total number of police contacts and negative police contacts. The null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that a higher degree of delinquency leads to a higher number of police contacts and as a consequence more negative contacts are reported.

5. Conclusion

The stereotypical picture of the criminal foreigner is still widespread among the German population, thus it was an incentive of this research to check if the picture carries a certain reality or if it proves to be mistaken. Besides, studies and literature within this field of research in Germany is lacking and reliable data is rare, as the topic of ethnic minorities' relations towards the police is considered to be highly sensitive.

Thus, the aim of this thesis is to throw light on the relationship between ethnic juveniles and the police in Germany by means of analyzing data gathered from an online-survey. The focus of research was conferred upon the question whether police contacts, especially police contacts with a negative characteristic, of juveniles differ by ethnicity. Besides, the variables of availability and individual delinquency have been incorporated as research of the past found that these factors do also play a role when it comes to contact with the police (Waddington et al., 2004).

In order to get to the core of the research and to state first assumptions, the first step which was done was reviewing the relevant international literature that has been published so far within this subfield of research in order to get an adequate overview of the explanations for the phenomenon of overrepresentation. Next to this, the literature was applied which enabled me to set up a theoretical framework of the concepts considered to be important to my study. With the established concepts in mind, the first assumed relations between the relevant variables have been stated by means of formulating hypotheses. The step that followed then was to adequately indicate how the different dependent and independent variables were measured and how the sampled data was prepared for further analysis by means of statistical procedures. The results part then introduced the statistical test which was used to check if the variables of interest correlate and lastly the findings of the empirical research were presented.

The data gathered from the sample of 28 juveniles confirms that the number and type of police contact differ between native German and ethnic minority juveniles, as ethnic minority youngsters showed a higher number of both police contacts in total and police encounters with a negative characteristic. The fact that juveniles having an ethnic minority background face more negative police contacts may point to the assumption of 'Institutional Racism' as introduced by Macpherson (1999). Police officers are equipped with a broad range of discretionary power which means they have to decide from case to case if and which actions they take in case juveniles confront legal rules and show delinquent behavior. Some scholars therefore claim that police differentiate between ethnic groups, as they may implement different actions for the same type of offence with respect to the ethnic background. However, we have to acknowledge that there is also another claim assuming that juveniles of ethnic minority origin do show less respectful demeanour towards policemen. This simultaneously influences the discretionary decision of the officers and hence will lead to harsher actions. Due to the fact that the research was limited to the independent variables of ethnicity, availability and delinquency, and the two mentioned explanations were not tested within this thesis, no concluding remarks can be given; but still it is relevant to acknowledge the various explanations again.

As already introduced in the theoretical framework part, it is assumed that ethnicity is not the only variable which affects the number of police contacts because also availability and individual delinquency constitute considerable explanations for an overrepresentation of ethnic minorities. Hence, these explanatory variables were tested. The data from the sample shows that the variables of availability on the streets and individual delinquency do play a significant role, as both are positively correlated with the number of police contacts. It is not surprising that more individual delinquency leads to more police contacts as it follows logic reasoning. If a juvenile is more often in conflict with the law he will more often get into conflict with the state institution that secures the abidance by the law. At this point it is necessary to present another finding which is that the ethnic background of a youngster does affect the level of individual delinquency, reflected by the sampled data. Certain scholars (e.g. Carrington and Fitzgerald, 2011) claim that there are several social risk factors, such as bad socio-economic status of the family, lacking education, parenting style, etc. which can be held responsible for the situation that ethnic minority youth more often show delinquent behavior and hence have more police contacts. Nevertheless, these risk factors have not been included within this study and establish limitations to the research.

The last major finding of the study is that the sampled ethnic minority juveniles are likely to be more often available on the streets than their native German counterparts. According to Waddington et al. (2004) and Piquero (2008) being available in public space leads to a higher chance of getting into contact with the police, as the police is more present by patrolling in especially minority communities and neighbourhoods. This may constitute another explanation for the finding of this study that more availability is likely to lead to more police contacts. However, it has to be highlighted that the research is limited with regard to the assumption that ethnic minority juveniles are more often available on the streets, show more delinquency and hence are more often in contact with the police. The research focused on the variables of ethnicity, availability and individual delinquency and how they are individually correlated with the variable of police contacts. Hence, we have to be careful when finding possible explanations. The research of this thesis allows for the definite statement, that the ethnic background of a juvenile does not exclusively explain for the number and type of police contact the youngsters report due to the fact that also the availability in public space and the individual delinquent behavior play a significant role in the occurrence of police contacts.

As a last step I want to stress the limitations of the research of my thesis and discuss suggestions for further research within this area of ethnic minorities and crime or respectively police contacts. The first thing which is inevitable to critically asses is the small number (N=28) of the survey respondents. Actually research is aimed at drawing generalizations about the phenomenon analysed, but in this case generalizing from the sample at hand to a more general population is hardly possible, as 28 juveniles – while only 10 of them belong to an ethnic minority – do not represent an adequate part of a larger population. As already mentioned before, a great lack of time to collect more questionnaires and problems with youth centres that were not willing to co-operate make up for this limitation. Being aware of this fact I precisely elaborated on the theoretical part and furthermore made use of sound statistics to make sure that my study can easily be replicated in future.

Bearing all this in mind, I would suggest conducting this piece of research in various regions all over Germany, including big cities, as well as smaller ones and rural areas to enable more adequate

comparisons and to aim at a bigger sample. Moreover, it is advisable to use different data collection techniques for example online surveys as well as group administered questionnaires in schools or youth centres in order to cope with the disadvantages of the different collection tools. Bigger samples produce more data for statistical testing procedures and thus statistical power is improved, the chance of errors within statistical tests decreases and therefore better generalizations can be drawn from the sampled population.

According to Piquero (2008) the phenomenon of 'disproportionate minority contact' has far reaching consequences which should be further analyzed by researchers. Being involved in the legal or justice system does affect the youngsters' education, voting, participation in the labour market and family formation and thus produces severe discrepancies in future adulthood. Besides, as the international literature review has proven, scientists are still uncertain about which factors can be held responsible for the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities. Are foreigners more criminal? And if so, why is this? In how far can social risk factors[13] explain for the situation? Or is it the police and the criminal justice apparatus being prejudiced against ethnic minorities; and thus subliminal discrimination is the key factor?

After having intensely been preoccupied with the different explanations for this phenomenon offered by different scholars, my concluding suggestion for researchers and policy makers is not to solely focus on the question to what extent which factor does lead to disproportionate minority contact. Instead, more effort should be laid on finding strategies which successfully reduce the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities. Following Piquero's claim (2008), changes in the correctional system have to be made; policy programmes and initiatives have to be introduced. Besides, it seems inevitable to reduce risk factors[14] such as bad socio-economic status of the family, lacking education, etc. which are considered to influence the level of individual delinquency and the availability on the streets. All in all it is obvious that disproportionate minority contact is a strongly complex phenomenon which cannot be solved without great effort; nevertheless reducing social risk factors and changes in the legal system might constitute significant starting points.

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[13] See: Carrington and Fitzgerald (2011) and Geißler (2008)
[14] Note: The mentioned risk factors have not been statistically tested within this thesis, however the author considers them to be of importance when it comes to policy suggestions

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Appendix

Hallo liebe(r) Teilnehmer(in),

danke, dass du dir die Zeit nimmst, diesen Fragebogen auszufüllen.
Mit Hilfe deiner Antworten möchten wir herausfinden, wie Jugendliche über die Polizei denken und welche Erfahrungen sie mit der Polizei gemacht haben.

Deine Teilnahme kann dazu beitragen, dass sich das Verhältnis zwischen Jugendlichen und der Polizei in Zukunft verbessert.

Der Fragebogen ist komplett anonym, d.h. dein Name wird nicht notiert und somit kannst du ehrlich antworten und musst dir keine Sorgen um eventuelle Konsequenzen machen, falls du z.B. vertrauliche Fragen über verbotene Dinge beantwortest.
Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie werden allein zu Forschungs- und Studienzwecken ausgewertet und verwendet.

Nun viel Spaß beim Ausfüllen des Fragebogens!

A. Hintergrundfragen

A1   Wie alt bist du? Bitte hier eintragen : ……………Jahre alt

A2   Welches Geschlecht hast du:

- ○ Mann
- ○ Frau

A3   Welchem ethnischen Hintergrund (Herkunft) fühlst du dich selber zugehörig?

○ Deutsch	○ Tunesisch
○ Russisch	○ Kurdisch
○ Polnisch	○ Albanisch
○ Türkisch	○ Libanesisch
○ Marokkanisch	○ Sonstiges, bitte hier eintragen………………………………………

A4   Was denkst du: Wie sehen dich Menschen, denen du auf der Straße begegnest?

○ Deutsch	○ Tunesisch
○ Russisch	○ Kurdisch
○ Polnisch	○ Albanisch
○ Türkisch	○ Libanesisch
○ Marokkanisch	○ Sonstiges, bitte hier eintragen………………………………………

A5   Bitte trage hier deine Postleitzahl ein: _ _ _ _ _

A6	Wie viel Zeit verbringst du pro Woche mit den folgenden Dingen?

a.	Zur Schule gehen	…Stunden pro Woche
b.	Hausarbeiten ausüben	…Stunden pro Woche
c.	Arbeiten	…Stunden pro Woche
d.	Sport und Hobby	…Stunden pro Woche
e.	Ausgehen, Kaffeebesuche, Jugendheim usw.?	…Stunden pro Woche
f.	Draußen sein, sich auf der Straße/im Shopping Center aufhalten usw.	…Stunden pro Woche

A7 In welcher Schulform befindest du dich (Falls du nicht mehr in die Schule gehst, fülle bitte die letzte Schulform ein die du besucht hast.

- ○ Grundschule
- ○ Sonderschule
- ○ Hauptschule
- ○ Gesamtschule
- ○ Realschule
- ○ Gymnasium
- ○ Berufsschule
- ○ Universität
- ○ Sonstiges, bitte hier eintragen…………………………………….

A8 Inwiefern treffen die folgenden Aussagen zu?

		Trifft sehr zu	Trifft zu	Ich weiß es nicht	Trift nicht so sehr zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
a.	Ich bin viel zuhause	○	**O**	○	○	○
b.	Ich finde es schön zuhause zu sein	○	**O**	○	○	○
c.	Ich gehe lieber woanders hin, als mich zu Hause aufzuhalten	○	**O**	○	○	○
d.	Meiner Meinung nach führe ich ein gutes Leben	○	**O**	○	○	○
e.	Ich habe gute Freunde	○	**O**	○	○	○
f.	Ich bin zufrieden mit dem, was ich habe	○	**O**	○	○	○
g.	Ich habe gute Chancen im Leben	○	**O**	○	○	○

A9 Wie sehr vertraust du folgenden Menschen?

		viel vertrauen	ziemlich viel vertrauen	wenig vertrauen	kein vertrauen
a.	Deiner Familie	○	○	○	○
b.	Politikern	○	○	○	○
c.	Leitern von Institutionen (z.B. Jugendheim)	○	○	○	○
d.	Polizisten	○	○	○	○
e.	Lehrern	○	○	○	○
f.	Menschen denen du das erste Mal begegnest	○	○	○	○

B. Fragen über deine Freunde und deinen Freundeskreis

B1   Hast du eine Gruppe von Freunden mit denen du „abhängst"?

  ○ Ja
  ○ Nein → überspringe die folgenden Fragen und fahre mit Rubrik C fort!

Die nächsten Fragen beziehen sich auf dich und deine Freunde mit denen du dich am meisten triffst.

B2   Mit wie vielen Freunden triffst du dich meistens gleichzeitig? (Bitte beziehe dich selbst auch mit ein)

  ○ 2-4 Personen
  ○ 5-10 Personen
  ○ 11-20 Personen
  ○ Mehr als 20 Personen

B3   Wie oft triffst du dich meistens mit deinen Freunden?

  ○ Täglich, fünf oder mehrmals pro Woche
  ○ Drei oder viermal pro Woche
  ○ Ein oder zweimal pro Woche
  ○ Weniger als einmal pro Woche

B4   Wie viele Stunden seid ihr dann ca. insgesamt zusammen an einem Tag?

  ○ Weniger als eine Stunde
  ○ 1-2 Stunden
  ○ 2-3 Stunden
  ○ Länger als 3 Stunden

B5   An welchem Ort triffst du deine Freunde bei schönem Wetter? (Du kannst maximal 3 Antworten ankreuzen)

- ○ Bei einem von uns zu Hause
- ○ An der Schule und auf dem Schulhof
- ○ In einem Sportklub oder Verein
- ○ Auf der Straße
- ○ In einem Kaufhaus
- ○ In einem Jugendtreff
- ○ In der Diskothek oder in einer Kneipe/Gaststätte
- ○ An einem anderen Ort, nämlich: ………………………

B6   Inwiefern stimmst du den folgenden Aussagen zu?

	Stimme ich voll zu	Stimme ich zu	Ich weiß es nicht	Stimme ich nicht zu	Stimme ich überhaupt nicht zu
a. Wir sind eine ruhige Gruppe die keinem etwas zu Leide tut	○	○	○	○	○
b. Man beklagt sich über unsere Gruppe	○	○	○	○	○
c. Andere Menschen haben Angst vor uns	○	○	○	○	○
d. Andere Menschen fühlen sich in unserer Gegenwart sicher	○	○	○	○	○

C. Fragen über deine Erfahrungen mit der Polizei

C1 Bitte trage ein wie oft (wie viel Mal) folgende Dinge in den letzten zwölf Monaten vorgekommen sind.

Trage bitte ein

a. Wie oft wurdest du von der Polizei wegen einer Verletzung der Verkehrsregeln oder wegen einer anderen Übertretung angehalten? ……. mal

b. Wie oft hast du in den letzten 12 Monaten eine Polizeikontrolle miterlebt ……. mal

c. Wie oft ist es vorgekommen, dass ein Polizist ohne besondere Vorkommnisse mit dir (und deinen Freunden) reden wollte? ……. mal

d. Wie oft hast du alleine oder mit anderen zusammen Kontakt zur Polizei aufgenommen, z.B. weil du Hilfe brauchtest? ……. mal

e. Wie oft ist es vorgekommen, dass du von der Polizei angehalten wurdest, obwohl du nichts angestellt hast? ……. mal

f. Wie oft hattest du in den letzten 12 Monaten insgesamt mit der Polizei zu tun? ……. mal

C2 Welche Vorkommnisse sind während der Kontakte, die du mit der Polizei in den letzten 12 Monaten hattest, aufgetreten?

Trage ein

a. Hast du eine oder mehrere Geldbuße bezahlen müssen? Wie oft? ……. mal

b. Hat die Polizei Verwarnungen gegen dich (und deine Freunde) ausgesprochen? Wie oft? ……. mal

c. Hast du deine Personalien vorzeigen müssen? Wie oft? ……. mal

d. Bist du auf der Straße gefilzt worden? Wie oft? ……. mal

e. Wurdest du mit auf das Polizeipräsidium genommen? Wie oft? ……. mal

f. Hat die Polizei Dinge, die dir gehören, beschlagnahmt? Wie oft? ……. mal

g. Wurdest du alleine oder mit Freunden durch die Polizei von einem Ort vertrieben? Wie oft? ……. mal

h. Ist die Polizei bei dir zu Hause gewesen? Wie oft? ……. mal

C3 Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich darauf, wie du das Verhalten der Polizei dir gegenüber in den letzten 12 Monaten empfunden hast (wenn du in den letzten 12 Monaten keinen Kontakt mit der Polizei hattest, überspringe bitte diese Frage!).

		Trifft sehr zu	Trifft zu	Ich weiß es nicht	Trifft nicht so sehr zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
a.	Ich wurde gerecht von der Polizei behandelt	O	O	O	O	O
b.	Ich wurde mit Respekt behandelt	O	O	O	O	O
c.	Ich wurde grob behandelt	O	O	O	O	O
d.	Ich wurde freundlich behandelt	O	O	O	O	O

C3b Hier hast du die Möglichkeit eine Erläuterung zu deinen soeben gewählten Antworten zu geben, eine Erläuterung ist jedoch kein Muss.

………

………

………

………

………

C4 Inwiefern stimmst du den folgenden Aussagen zu?	Trifft sehr zu	Trifft zu	Neutral	Trifft nicht so sehr zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
a. Die Polizei übt eine wichtige Tätigkeit aus	O	O	O	O	O
b. Es ist gut, dass die Polizei auf der Straße ist	O	O	O	O	O
c. Es muss mehr Polizisten auf der Straße geben	O	O	O	O	O
d. Polizisten sorgen für mehr Sicherheit in der Stadt	O	O	O	O	O
e. Polizisten sind zuverlässig	O	O	O	O	O
f. Polizisten führen ihre Tätigkeit gut aus	O	O	O	O	O
g. Polizisten behandeln deutsche Jugendliche mit mehr Respekt als ausländische Jugendliche	O	O	O	O	O
h. Polizisten behandeln deutsche Jugendliche gröber als ausländische Jugendliche	O	O	O	O	O
i. Ausländische Jugendliche werden schneller verhaftet als deutsche Jugendliche	O	O	O	O	O
j. Wenn die Polizei mich als Zeugen befragt, bin ich kooperativ	O	O	O	O	O
k. Wenn die Polizei mich von einem Ort verdrängt, gehe ich ohne zu diskutieren	O	O	O	O	O
l. Wenn ich mitbekomme, dass jemand in ein Auto einbricht, versuche ich die Polizei zu verständigen	O	O	O	O	O

D. Verbotene Dinge tun

Wir möchten gerne wissen ob du und deine Freunde manchmal verbotene Dinge tun. Falls du zu manchen Aussagen keine Stellung beziehen möchtest, haben wir Verständnis dafür. Es würde unserer Umfrage jedoch sehr helfen, wenn du so viele Vorkommnisse wie möglich schilderst. Vergiss bitte nicht, dass (wie am Anfang erwähnt) die Umfrage anonym ist.

	Wie viele aus deinem Freundeskreis haben in den letzten 12 Monaten folgendes getan?			Hast du folgendes in den letzten 12 Monaten getan?	
	Keiner	Ein oder zwei	Mehr als zwei	Nein	Ja
a. Schwarzfahren im Bus, Zug oder in der (S/U)Bahn	O	O	O	O	O
b. Ein Verkehrsdelikt begangen	O	O	O	O	O
c. Die Schule geschwänzt	O	O	O	O	O
d. Absichtlich Dinge anderer beschädigt	O	O	O	O	O
e. Wände, Zäune, Bussitze und ähnliches mit Tinte oder Farbe beschmiert	O	O	O	O	O
f. Etwas gestohlen oder probiert etwas zu stehlen	O	O	O	O	O
g. Irgendwo eingebrochen oder probiert einzubrechen	O	O	O	O	O
h. Jemanden verprügelt	O	O	O	O	O
i. Nicht die Wahrheit über dein Alter gesagt, um irgendwo hereinzukommen oder um etwas zu kaufen (z.B. Alkohol oder Zigaretten).	O	O	O	O	O
j. Eine Waffe (z.B. Schusswaffe, Messer, Schlagring, etc.) mit sich getragen zum Schutz	O	O	O	O	O
k. In der Öffentlichkeit betrunken gewesen	O	O	O	O	O
l. Weiche Drogen eingenommen (z.B. Haschisch oder Marihuana)	O	O	O	O	O

m.	Harte Drogen eingenommen (z.B. Kokain, Ecstasy, Speed, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
n.	Drogen verkauft	O	O	O	O	O

D2 Dies ist das Ende des Fragenbogens hast du selber noch Fragen oder Anmerkungen?

……

……

……

……

……

Ich bedanke mich sehr für deine Teilnahme an dieser Umfrage!