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The Impact of Segregated Diversity on the *Code of the Street*: An Analysis of Violence-related Norms in Selected Post-Industrial Neighborhoods in Germany

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Youth violence remains a concern in Germany, particularly in specific “risky” neighborhoods that tend to be socially segregated and ethnically diverse. In this paper we critically compare the results of twenty-seven qualitative interviews conducted in three risky neighborhoods in the German Ruhr area with the *code of the street*. While this theoretical framework is frequently cited in explaining youth violence, it was based on research in an ethnically homogenous neighborhood in the United States and thus does not engage with questions of diversity. Our findings show that the core of the *code of the street* is also applicable in heterogeneous contexts, thus extending the generalizability of the theoretical framework. Manifestations of manhood, reputation, and symbolic power were found to be major elements of street culture, although characterized somewhat differently than in the original work.

Keywords: youth violence, diversity, code of the street, urban sociology, Germany

Youth violence remains a persistent global concern, with the WHO (2016) reporting violence as one of the main causes of mortality among male adolescents. Several sociological frameworks propose explanations for a high incidence of youth violence, including social context (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Sampson and Groves 1989), individual behavior (Hirschi 2002; Sutherland, Cressey, and Luckenbill 1992), and subculture (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1982; Anderson 1999). However, the prevalence of violence is concentrated in particular neighborhoods, as a result of social inequality, discrimination and blocked life opportunities. In this vein, Wacquant (2008) describes how social exclusion and disorder within African American neighborhoods lead to deviant behavior and violence. Similar patterns in European neighborhoods have been identified by Dubet and Lapeyronnie (1994) in France and Kurtenbach (2017) in Germany.

To cope with the challenges of everyday life, male adolescents often use illegal drugs and/or join local

gangs (Goffman 2014; Venkatesh 2008). Male adolescents in segregated neighborhoods in particular are often also involved in violent situations, leading them to develop specific coping patterns and violence-related norms. One widely discussed approach to this phenomenon is the *code of the street* (Anderson 1999). This theoretical concept, which is explained in greater detail in the next section, was formulated in an ethnically homogenous context, the African-American inner-city neighborhoods of Philadelphia in the 1990s. What is not clear is whether the code of the street operates comparably in ethnically heterogeneous and post-industrial neighborhoods. There are three aspects to this: First, a widely discussed hypothesis is that heterogeneity causes mistrust on account of the lack of a collective norm system for community development (Putnam 2000, 2007). So a shared code would be implausible. Second, pathways to drug use for male adolescents in Germany are very different to the situation Anderson (1999) describes for the United States.

Levels of violence related to drug dealing may be context-specific. Third, socially segregated but ethnically diverse neighborhoods may disadvantage individuals. However, the level of disadvantage in Germany is not as high as in the United States. Furthermore, the existence of different culturally-based norms could block the construction of a general set of street norms.

On the other hand, there are good reasons to suppose that the code would be useful in explaining violence-related norms in Germany. First, certain aspects are comparable to the context of Anderson's research (1999): the selected neighborhoods are experiencing a process of structural change including deindustrialization and shrinking opportunities for unskilled workers. Second, the labor market opportunities in the selected region are limited, particularly affecting young males with a migration background. Third, over time, reported levels of deviant behavior have increased to a point where it has become a part of everyday life in these neighborhoods (Kurtenbach 2017). An accumulated body of quantitative and qualitative research into the *code of the street* in various contexts (Brezina et al. 2004; Brookman et al. 2011; Holligan 2014) creates a viable basis for research in the German context.

Against this background, the research question of our study is: *Does the code of the street operate in socially segregated and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Germany?* To answer it, the study employs a sample of twenty-seven adolescents from three social segregated and ethnically diverse post-industrial neighborhoods in Germany. Given that the street code affects differently young women (and less strongly) (Nowacki 2012), the present research focuses only on male adolescents.

1 Literature Review

In order to bring together relevant aspects of street culture concerning segregation, diversity, and violence-related norms, we concentrate on studies addressing the issue of violence-related norms among male adolescents in socially segregated neighborhoods.

Segregation, defined as an unequal distribution of groups between the neighborhoods of a city, is a widely discussed topic in urban studies in Germany. In our discussion, we focus on two specific kinds of

studies: those comparing different cities and those concerning the effects of neighborhood segregation in Germany. A broad longitudinal comparison of urban segregation is provided by Friedrichs and Triemer, who analyze the situation of low-income residents and migrants in fifteen German cities at two measurement points, finding that ethnic migration decreases over time and social segregation increases (2009, 117). Strohmeier (2006) discusses segregation in Germany and especially in the Ruhr area, finding a correlation on the neighborhood level between poverty, immigration and proportion of households with children: children and adolescents are especially disadvantaged by segregated neighborhoods. As well as spatial disparities of poverty, Strohmeier (2010) also describes neighborhood-level inequalities in health and life opportunities.

Neighborhood analyses provide a deeper understanding of the social dynamics within ethnically heterogeneous segregated neighborhoods. Focusing on the dynamics of exclusion, Keller (2005) interviewed eighty-one residents in two socially segregated high-rise housing projects, seeking to understand the impact of poverty on everyday life. He found that residents show different kinds of understanding of exclusion, ranging from being trapped in the neighborhood; through adaptation to poverty, isolation, and alienation; to forced mobility (Keller 2005, 137): residents interpret exclusion in different ways, based on their own biography. Kart (2014) provides findings on male adolescents' perceptions of violence and threat in four ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Bremen (Germany). He reports that adolescents perceive disadvantage and discrimination in segregated neighborhoods, but also value support provided by local organizations (238–39). Collectively, the neighborhood analyses demonstrate that in Germany residents, and male adolescents in particular, develop specific lifestyles and street code to cope with their social environment.

A broad body of theoretical literature examines the effects of ethnic diversity on coexistence in a neighborhood. These are frequently analyzed in the framework of Putnam's findings (2000, 2007) that ethnic diversity leads to distrust between and within ethnic groups. However, the term diversity is quite ambigu-

ous, and needs to be defined before the empirical results and the relationship between segregated diversity and violence are examined. Vertovec (2007) defines diversity as a situation where no group within a given area represents an absolute majority. In such a situation, coalitions are needed to dominate the social sphere. It is assumed that lower levels of neighborhood-based trust are associated with a higher probability of violence (Sampson et al. 1997).

The many empirical studies supply both support for and doubts over the negative association between diversity and trust. We focus on neighborhood studies in western Europe. Schönwälder et al. (2016) use a mixed-method approach to analyze the relationship between diversity and trust. In fifty randomly selected neighborhoods in Germany (N= 2,243), they measured diversity using data from structural participant observation (23–25), matched with survey data. Their multi-level analysis finds no effect of neighborhood diversity on intra-group or inter-group contact (85–86). In an ethnographic chapter, they provide deeper insights into five neighborhoods in three cities. Again, they find that neither diversity nor ethnic homogeneity supply significant explanations for inter-group contact (167–70). Another perspective is provided by van Eijk (2011), who uses the concept of boundary-making (Wimmer 2008). Based on thirty qualitative interviews in two neighborhoods in Rotterdam (the Netherlands), she shows how ethnic markers and internal narratives are used to construct groups and create distance between self and other. This raises questions concerning how such barriers are overcome. Çitlak's study of ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the post-industrial Ruhr area (Germany) focuses on contact between families within an ethnically diverse low-income neighborhood, using a school-based survey of parents. Her results show that "[...] residential stability is of significant importance for parents' neighborhood integration in ethnic diverse and low SES neighborhoods" (Çitlak 2017, 191).

So we know that diversity has a moderating effect on intergroup contact in public spaces. Closer contacts, however, are related to constructed social and ethnic boundaries. The final required aspect is the perception of space in ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Blokland and Nast (2014) formulate the con-

cept of public familiarity, meaning that an individual can feel at home in a neighborhood without having close ties with others living there. Here use of space is the crucial question: people belong to a neighborhood through routines rather than contacts (1143). The existence of a shared set of norms across disparate individuals within a heterogenous setting could contradict this finding. Marth and van de Wetering (2012) investigate perceived readiness to use violence in three neighborhoods with different levels of diversity, concluding that class-related markers like poverty explain the perception of danger better than the ethnic mix (128). The coincidence of segregated diversity and low-income households could create a spatial framework that promotes violence. A study by Baier and Prätör (2015) using a survey (N=2,434) conducted in Hannover (Germany) in 2011 finds such a relationship, although only a weak one (125). The authors conclude that segregation has an impact on the kind of youth violence, and that negative role models are observed more frequently within segregated neighborhoods (126).

Altogether, the literature review reveals a complex and ambiguous picture in Germany. On the one hand, segregated diversity has an impact on inner-group relations, but not on inter-group contact. On the other hand, ethnic diversity may have a promoting effect on youth violence, but only in an interplay with poverty. Thus, the question of how diversity impacts violence-related norms within socially segregated neighborhoods remains open.

The broader discussion about street culture and youth violence encompasses the concepts found in the *code of the street* (Anderson 1999). The approach is useful because it demonstrates how male adolescents develop a specific set of violence-related norms as a coping strategy for the challenges of a threatening and dangerous environment, usually their area of residence. A perception of the *neighborhood as a threat* is necessary to develop a street code. Anderson's work examines the dynamics between so-called "decent" and "street-oriented" families and individuals; the concept was developed within a poor but ethnically more or less homogenous neighborhood. As such, it remains unclear whether ethnic diversity has an impact on the development of specific violence-related

norms. Nor does Anderson consider whether the code has specific cultural manifestations, for instance under the circumstances of a western European welfare state and without the specific racial discrimination experienced by urban African American communities.

At the individual level, Anderson proposes a number of markers to identify the essence of the code of the street as a set of violence-related norms. The core norms are respect (1999, 33), gained through violent behavior; an archaic sense of *masculinity* (185); and an *egocentric view on life* (146). The code functions protectively to avoid future victimization, which assumes that violence has specific meanings, also for a broader audience in the neighborhood (146). The code is promoted by peers and role models, with some individuals more susceptible than others, depending on the family situation.

Anderson's concepts provoked an intense debate, concentrating on US cities (for example Allen and Lo 2010; Mears et al. 2014; Stewart et al. 2006). In contrast, there has been little discussion about the code of the street in the context of segregation and diversity in other regions. Naterer (2011) used the concept of the code to analyze violence among street children in Makeevka (Ukraine), reporting that they employ it as a survival strategy in a threatening social environment (1400). In a study in the United Kingdom, Brookmann et al. (2011) find support for a positive relationship between violence and disrespect, violence and avoidance of future victimization, and violence and a self-centered perspective in a survey of 118 prisoners. Further support comes from a longitudinal school-based survey (N=843) of young people in a socially segregated neighborhood in the Netherlands (McNeeley and Hoeben 2016). However, the authors note that not all aspects of the code will necessarily apply in Europe:

These results speak to the theory's applicability to areas beyond the Philadelphia neighborhoods on which it was based and the samples from the United States on which it has been tested. The current study also specifically demonstrates the utility of the theory in explaining violence in international contexts without the degree of neighborhood disadvantage present in many major U.S. cities. (McNeeley and Hoeben 2017, 649)

Altogether then, the empirical findings in Europe provide support for the existence of the code of the street, also outside of the United States.

The literature suggests that there a basis for testing the applicability of code of the street in Germany. Therefore, research is needed about violence-related norms of male adolescents in ethnically diverse (post-industrial) and socially segregated neighborhoods. This could have an impact on the development of violence-related norms and street culture. For our analysis, we focus on the core markers of the code: (1) neighborhood perception, (2) reputation, (3) manhood, (4) symbols, and (5) meaning of violence. Our intention is investigate whether the code of the street is observable in diverse neighborhoods and whether ethnicity causes conflicts within stressed communities.

2 Research Design

To answer the research question, we analyzed interview data of male adolescents aged between 16 and 21 years from three neighborhoods in the Ruhr area. Duisburg-Marxloh (N=9) and Dortmund-Nordstadt (N=10) are typical post-industrial neighborhoods built in the decades before World War One. Scharnhorst (Ost) (N=8) is a high-rise housing project built in the 1960s. All three have low socio-economic status and are ethnically diverse. The neighborhoods were selected on the basis of level of ethnic diversity and residential mobility. Twenty-seven randomly selected young male youth club participants from these neighborhoods were interviewed. Interviews were conducted at a community youth center attended by the subjects.

The ethnic backgrounds of the interview partners are diverse: German, Turkish, Arab and eastern European. A semi-structured interview guide including themes related to youth violence was prepared at an early stage of study after reviewing relevant literature. In order to build rapport, the first part of the interview comprised a general introduction to the interviewee and the neighborhood, before moving on to everyday experiences of friendship, violence-related norms, and violence in the neighborhood. The interviewees received twenty euros for their participation. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. To protect the anonymity of the interviewees, no personal information, like nationality or name, was noted.

Table 1: Neighborhood characteristics

City	Total population	Selected neighborhood	Population	Receiving social benefits	Population with migration background (%)	Residential mobility (%)
Duisburg	502,634	Marxloh	20,422	6,774	52.8	40.3
Dortmund	601,150	Nordstadt	59,016	19,827	70.0	28.7
		Scharnhorst (Ost)	12,384	7,615	30.0	7.1

Data provided by the municipalities and police authorities of Dortmund and Duisburg; 2016/2017.

Table 2: Frequencies of codes in the neighborhoods

Themes and sub-codes	Marxloh	Nordstadt	Scharnhorst (Ost)	Total
Reputation	30	29	33	92
Ruthless image				
Aggressive persona				
Family and sibling repute				
Maintain respect				
Confrontation				
Manhood	35	34	31	100
Self-reliance				
Doing Masculinity				
Pride and respect				
Strong character				
Street etiquette				
Symbols	20	18	24	62
Small weapon				
Tasers, knuckle-dusters				
Tattoos				
Branded material				
Self-confidence				
Meaning of violence	29	32	36	97
Normalization of violence				
Gaining respect				
Settle the matters				
Stand on your grounds				
Neighborhood's perception	27	30	26	83
A commonplace of violence				
Social disorder				
Outside stigma 'no-go area'				
Media portray as 'bad neighborhood'				
Sense of belonging and solidarity				

This was necessary to conduct the interviews, but as a consequence, we are not able to contextualize the responses in relation to individual information such as migration experiences. The analysis focused on the five aforementioned dimensions of the street code, seeking to discover whether the code is observable in the sample, and if so, how it is impacted by diversity. We began with initial coding and organized the emerging themes according to the core dimensions of Anderson's theory: reputation, manhood, symbols, meaning of violence, and neighborhood perception. We used the MAXQDA 2018 software to code the interviews. In this way, we were able to develop an analytical approach for comparing the themes between interviews and neighborhoods. Table 2 shows the frequencies of codings in the three selected neighborhoods.

3 Results

Before coming to the thematic analysis, more general results are presented. The accounts of the interviewed young male adolescents support the premise of the *code of the street* that disadvantaged neighborhoods encourage the acquisition of a violent reputation to maintain respect on the street. Young men justify the use of violence to avenge disrespect and to uphold their local reputation. Most of the interviewees reported that they behaved violently in school or on the street in order to maintain respect from their peers. They described how young men hang around in the public space, like street corners or playgrounds, particularly in the evening. These places serve as stages where young men manifest their status and challenge the status of their counterparts. In all three neighborhoods, interviewees mentioned that boredom and lack of activities led them to spend their leisure time in public space. The peer groups were ethnically mixed, reflecting the diversity of the respective neighborhood as a whole.

Anderson argues (1999, 146) that young men internalize the code of the street over time. Yet our interviewees stated that they had been actively involved in street life only in their early teens. Furthermore, almost all stated that they distanced themselves from violent street life over time and dreamt of "middle

class" values now. Such ideas of a bright future stand in sharp contrast to their current situation.

3.1 Reputation

In street culture, a violent and ruthless reputation protects against victimization and earns respect on the street (Anderson 1999, 186). Therefore, male juveniles have to show aggressive behavior to maintain family reputation. Even where they are themselves victims of violence, male adolescents seek to uphold a masculine self-image. In the words of 21-year-old interviewee from Nordstadt:

Now I have that [reputation] and nothing happens to me so (..) yes, I don't know, some time ago, but now nothing happens to me, because people know me well. Because it is very well known I can easily freak out. So I have my name [reputation], I would say, I created my name. Well, earlier, everyone said, come, let's chase him, see if he holds his nerve. [We] made it and showed that we are the kings here and so. Once my little brother came to me crying. Then I went to the boys who wanted to steal his phone. I said, listen boys! My little brother is fasting. Listen again, you do something, I go to your parents and show you and your parents who I really am. So don't touch him any more (..) never happened again since, and yes, with fifteen Bulgarians, with whom I fought, after that, nobody wants to mess with me. (Nordstadt-8-76,22:07)

It is obvious that young men who are involved in street culture have to protect their local reputation when it is challenged. Anderson (1999, 188) argues that stealing someone's property or "taking" his girlfriend are strategies to build street reputation. If the victim fails to resist and retaliate he faces repeated assault. The interview accounts show that young men acquire respect by engaging in fights on the street to manifest their manhood. One interviewee (Nordstadt-8) described how he earns and defends his honor by standing up to assailants. Similarly, interviewees told how violent representation in interpersonal relations is a strategy for building respect and reputation. Also, the young man described how he had been repeatedly assaulted in the neighborhood but acquired a reputation by confronting his assailants. The violent self-presentation protects him from future victimization.

You should always be hard and remain hard, since you will be taken seriously and also respected. As soon you show your smile, they see it as weakness. Then you have to show hardness again, for example, you hit that person hard. (Nordstadt-10_234,22:21)

Another interviewee reported:

I had already a name for myself, because I used to be a very bad person. That [reputation] is what you build up. As you're pushing yourself into street brawls, every time you are aggressive and show yourself. You can do what you want. Then people are afraid. (Scharnhorst-3_202,21:19)

The account of the interviewee from Scharnhorst (Scharnhorst-3) shows the importance for personal security of upholding a reputation on the local streets: challenging others on the street constructs reputation. The young men who subscribe to the street code behave aggressively in public. Rich and Grey (2005) similarly found that victims of violence seek to act aggressively to reassert a masculine, hegemonic violent status. In many cases, interviewees mentioned their family's reputation, older siblings or other family members who had already earned a local reputation. The results aligned with Anderson's thesis (1999, 134) that some young men are protected by the reputation of family members and older siblings. One interviewee from Nordstadt said:

I have family [with reputation], I need no protection, my brothers are older than me, they had already made themselves a name here. (Nordstadt-1_154,16:35)

The above excerpt shows that family reputation, particularly the reputation of older siblings, functions as reputation on the street. This is in line with Anderson's observation that family and friends serve as a source of power and reputation. Overall, the accounts from the three neighborhoods confirm that street reputation is instrumental for personal and family safety. Maintaining a reputation is a motive to adhere to the code of the street. If a young man's reputation is challenged he has to react violently to defend it. The above excerpts show that manhood constructs a violent personal reputation in the neighborhoods, also to guarantee personal safety, which is in line with Anderson's findings.

3.2 Manhood

Manhood is related to respect and "doing masculinity" on the street. Manhood on the street means being respected and establishes an image of ruthlessness in social space (Anderson 1999, 185). Self-reliance is considered an important element of manhood. In the study the young men acknowledged manifesting manhood in their neighborhood. However, many interviewees understood the meaning of manhood dif-

ferently. When talking about manhood, most of them referred to toughness, strength, and reputation for violence. For instance, one participant from Marxloh reported the following:

Yes, I've already faced the situation where I was beaten up. I fell down on the ground and still I was continuously assaulted. I got up again and fought with him. But I would never do something like him. That's cowardly. If I am fighting like a [real] man, then I'll take him, if he is able to stand up and could resist and defends himself or if he is standing and doesn't resist or [can]not, then I don't hit him like that (...) Yes, money, pride, yes problems, if someone insults someone or has problem with others then it makes a situation of anger, that's why you start fighting (Marxloh-2_83,14:04)

The above account shows the code of conduct in fighting. Interviewee Marxloh-2 described the characteristics of a "real man" fighting to claim pride and respect on the street. In the public sphere, young men challenge honor or insult others to manifest manhood. Another interviewee said:

A strong man is (...) first of all comes character, he knows what he wants and he is strong enough to halt the intimidation. (Marxloh-7_51,16:03)

In the eyes of interviewee Marxloh-7 masculinity is linked to the ability to show toughness in the sense that a man has to have his own will and know the informal roles on the street: what Anderson called street etiquette (1990, 230). This is in line with Anderson's findings in his original work (1999, 73) and is found to be operating in diverse neighborhoods as well.

3.3 Symbols

In street culture symbols including symbolic acts and martial objects manifest power and reputation on the street. Young men show dominance in street disputes, as mentioned earlier, and carry weapons including knives, tasers and knuckle-dusters.

Well, before I always avoided certain people on the street. But now I just go, I have learnt that you need to be self-confident. If you retreat the other person believes that you are intimidated and he will assault you. You are an easy victim. But if you are more confident than him you are not likely to get assaulted. [...] I was thirteen years old and I was confronted by a twenty-five-year-old with a knife, he was twelve years older than me, so already dominant, and then he had a knife which made it worst. (Nordstadt-3_82,20:32)

This account shows how symbolic self-confidence is important for self-protection in an escalated situation. The possession of weapons also communicates dominance in street culture. Many interviewees reported

that they keep a knife or taser as a symbol of power within the group and for confrontations on the street.

Interviewees stated that they were interested in expensive brands and tattoos (although some mentioned that expensive brands were not common in their peer group), but said that having those symbols was not linked to respect or a violent life course. Symbols are perceived as a sign of a lifestyle, but not a way to gain or lose respect. Also, some interviewees cited religious reasons not get tattoos.

Interviewer: Is there anything you think (is important), I don't know like (brand) clothing, tattoos or something (in street life)?

Marxloh-3: [...] No, tattoos, I would never get any, like, tattoos, first because of religion, [...] my religion, second my father doesn't like it. My skin is, so to speak, how God made it, I don't want to change it [make it impure]. (Marxloh-3_175,18:35).

Of course, there are some brands that are expensive, everybody wants to buy them and you think: so cool, such as Ralph Lauren, Hilfiger, Versace, Prada and Gucci. So if someone has something original, he is the boss, highly respected (in the group) [...] Well, these are teenagers' things, as you see it is not cool. But of course, you want a specific brand. (Scharnhorst-3_168,17:02)

While some interviewees described how (younger) teenagers pay attention to expensive brands, as in the above excerpts, most reported that expensive clothes and shoes were not related to respect on the street. In addition to expensive brands and tattoos, the symbols in Anderson's street code also include possessing a girlfriend, gold and a reputation of being someone not to mess with (Anderson, 1999, 152). We find that self-confidence and carrying weapons are symbolic elements of street culture; context-related symbols, like weapons, are recognized by juveniles in the neighborhoods. However, in contrast to Anderson's findings, the symbols are not linked to respect and serve only on a symbolic level to indicate a violent character. None of the interviewed juveniles ever used a weapon in a fight or reported a friend having done so, even if they may carry weapons. The explanation for this missing link between respect and weapons is not provided by the interviews and needs closer examination through a cross-cultural comparative study in the US and German contexts.

3.4 Meaning of Violence

In risky neighborhoods, the violence experienced by young people confirms a perception that violence is

prevalent throughout the community (Dunlap et al. 2009). Most participants mentioned violence as an everyday activity. Some did not even consider fighting to be violence:

Yes, it is normal if windows are broken and fighting is normal in Marxloh. (Marxloh-8_8,2:00)

Or as asserted in another interview:

Violence is when you punch someone or hit them hard. It hasn't happened in our group. But if you hit him with a cosh and he falls down on the floor and you're still hitting him. Then, you have no mercy. (Marxloh-6_131,13:47)

The accounts highlight the poor condition of the neighborhoods and the use of violence. The interviewee just quoted mentioned that the assailant has no mercy for the victim. Another respondent described how everyday fighting is not considered to be violence:

About fights, well how can you change something like that? I personally think it's not necessary to have a proper fight if it's a small dispute. A fight is more where someone gets more seriously injured. (Scharnhorst-6_82,10:09)

Punching someone or pushing [...] of course, it would be not considered so much violence, but sometime in schools it [violence] happens. (Scharnhorst-3_106,8:52)

The narratives show the instrumental use of violence to resolve disputes in the neighborhood. The general pattern in the interviews was the belief in the use of violence to deal with situations in the neighborhood.

At the festival, I was stopped and beaten up and so. Like it is among young people. Yes, and once, I was beaten up, I think it was in April, Easter, Easter break probably, my brother saw, he saw me I was attacked and fell down but he did nothing. (Nordstadt-6_17,4:30)

... you know, it [violence] happens a lot [here] among mates especially if they are drunk, they fight and hit each other. (Nordstadt-1_138,15:00)

The accounts suggest that fighting is a normal part of life in risky neighborhoods and that it is important for a young man to be able to "stand his ground" in a violent situation. The use of violence becomes normal, even a norm. In the context of collective socialization, adolescents embrace the street culture and consider violence an instrument to resolve disputes. The results are in line with Anderson (1999, 118), who argues that when young people internalize the code of the street the use of violence become routine.

3.5 Neighborhood Perception

Many theoretical frameworks suggest an ecological explanation of individual behavior and emphasize the contextual understanding. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994) postulates that individuals are embedded within the environment and interact with it to influence processes. Sampson et al. (1997) verifies neighborhood effects on individual norms by conceptualizing collective efficacy. Neighborhood collective efficacy is the ability of a community to set norms and bind people in a neighborhood together by interpersonal trust and solidarity. Collective efficacy can influence the individual's norms and behavior in the neighborhood. In accordance with this premise, Roosa et al. (2009) argue that individuals actively interact with their environment and construct beliefs and perceptions concerning the environment.

The interviews confirm that neighborhood processes frame beliefs and perceptions, with interviewees frequently mentioning the disadvantaged conditions of their neighborhoods. Although they believe they need to exhibit violent behavior to avoid future victimization, and the interviewed juveniles expressed a strong sense of belonging and solidarity with their neighborhood. Moreover, their acknowledgement of local diversity and social ties and friendship independent of the ethnic background represents a new aspect for the discussion about the code of the street. Interviewees also reported geographically based discrimination in various aspects of their lives, and mentioned that they are treated differently because of where they live. They also observe street fights and criminal activities at various locations in their neighborhoods.

In these risky neighborhoods, it is the norm to follow the street culture to settle conflicts in school. Consequently, it becomes difficult for teachers to distinguish between "decent kids" and street-oriented peers and so they treat them all the same way

Marxloh is struggling with its image. Even in the schools as well, probably, some teachers, when they come from outside, the new ones; once when we were still in school, I remember, sixth, seventh grade, a new teacher who came from Oberhausen to Marxloh and first day, it was catastrophic, because she said, yes okay, you are Marxloh students. [I thought] I know what I am and I have the ability to argue with her [...] but she went on leave, she sent out sheets and said copy that out and that'll do. Well it's already crap when they start that

kind of thing. You can't just say okay then I'll do nothing. (Marxloh-5_12,3:40)

In the media these neighborhoods are frequently portrayed as asocial "no-go areas", places of drug dealing and crime. The following statements were typical:

We wanted to do Abitur [high school certificate]. But the school didn't accept us, so the letter stated some reasons why we were not accepted, for instance, my CV. But my CV was great. No gaps. I have always done something. When I finished tenth grade, I had a mark of 1.7 [good]. I think it was the place where I live. That's why they said to me because of the place, so because of the place of residence, they would not accept me and the same with my two friends. (Nordstadt- 4_26,4:09)

So, it is not dirty for us, But dirty for the people from the outside. So, stop [labelling it as dirty], [...] we live, we like it so much. I say many times, so from my perspective, I am happy in Nordstadt, I mean very happy. (Nordstadt-10_126,11:14)

Media and people from outside Scharnhorst also constructed an image of neighborhood as asocial and criminal. My driving teacher said, you also come from Scharnhorst, so it is full of criminals and something, then I thought to myself, perhaps it is so criminal for you, but if you grow up here, then you don't see it this way. You know everyone here and there is always that kind of crime everywhere [...]. (Scharnhorst-4_5,2:36)

The above excerpts show that the interviewees know about and reject the poor reputation of their neighborhood. Similarly, the quote from interviewee Nordstadt-4 illustrate how young people feel they are treated outside their neighborhood and feel they face discrimination because of where they live. People who do not live in these neighborhoods perceive them as "bad" neighborhoods with high crime rates, drug dealing, and low socioeconomic status. Many interviewees reported that the image of the neighborhoods in the media was asocial, dirty and criminal, and that they faced discrimination for being residents there. This attitude of outsiders offends and provokes them. However, one interviewee did mention that residents of his neighborhood themselves struggle with their identity, and that especially the territorial stigma of the neighborhoods causes self-centered and violent behavior. The poor reputation of the neighborhoods may also exclude residents from mainstream society, as illustrated by the report cited above of rejection by a school on the basis of residential address. On the collective level, the milieu and marginalization within the neighborhood produce an alternative street cul-

ture for young people to embrace and conduct to live in the risky neighborhoods. However, there violence is not a considered as instrumental to gain respect, but a strategy to express masculinity.

4 Conclusion

A review of the state of research on segregation in Germany, spatial aspects of diversity, and the code of the street identified five core dimensions for the empirical research: neighborhood perception, reputation, manhood, symbols, and meaning of violence. These were used to analyze interviews with male adolescents from three ethnically diverse neighborhoods in a post-industrial area.

The findings show that the code of the street operates in the socially segregated and diverse neighborhoods, but has context-embedded differences compared to Anderson's original findings in Philadelphia. The main findings of our study – the perception of the neighborhood, the meaning of violence, ideas of masculinity and the role of respect – overlap with Anderson's findings. However, the role of symbols differs significantly, however, suggesting specific differences concerning the code of the street. One reason could be that the theoretical approach was developed using data from interviews mainly with African-Americans in a segregated neighborhood in Philadelphia in the 1990s. Also, McNeeley and Hoeben (2016) argue similarly, having also found differences between their data from the Netherlands and Anderson's theory. However, the basic elements of the code also operating in ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

The results of the study are limited by two aspects. First, we focused only on violent behavior among male adolescents, which was also the principal focus of Anderson's study (1999). Future research should examine the code of the street among females in diverse neighborhoods as well. Second, we focused only on qualitative interviews where there is chance of socially acceptable self-representation by participants in their interviews. From a methodological perspective, the picture could have been complemented by participant observations in public space, as well as in schools and youth clubs.

We do know more about the code of the street now, but we also need a cross-cultural perspective in fur-

ther studies, to understand what the core of the code is and what the culturally specific elements of the code of the street are. Furthermore, individuals who move into a risky neighborhoods also should be interviewed at different times, in order to understand the development of the code over time.

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Appendix

Interview guideline

1. What is respect?
2. What is violence?
3. What is a friend?
4. What is success to/for you?
5. What kind of clothes/tattoos do you want to have or do have?
6. What is disrespect?
7. How do you define “tough”?
8. How do you solve ambiguous situations?
9. Who provides security to/for you?
10. What is an enemy?
11. What makes your neighbourhood unique?