

Research and Management of School Absenteeism in Germany

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Frame: Germany's strict laws on school attendance

- Obligation to attend school: In Germany all children are entitled to go to school for at least 10 years (age 6 – 16).
- Education in School can not be substituted otherwise (e.g. parents or private teacher)
- „Home-Schooling“ ist not possible
- Violation of attendance laws can result in fines, forced attendance by police or (short time) arrest in correctional facilities

Milestones: Research on School Absenteeism in Germany

Since 1960s Research Studies by **Child and Youth Psychiatry**:
Nissen, 1972; Matthejat 1981; Kaiser 1983; Schlung 1987; Overmeyer et al. 1994; Mackenberg 1996; Knollmann et al. 2009; Lenzen et al. 2013; Diegel 2015; ...

| 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020

1963 First big
**empirical
Study** by
Klauer

1979/80
Discourse
**Hissnauer
vs.
Kornmann**

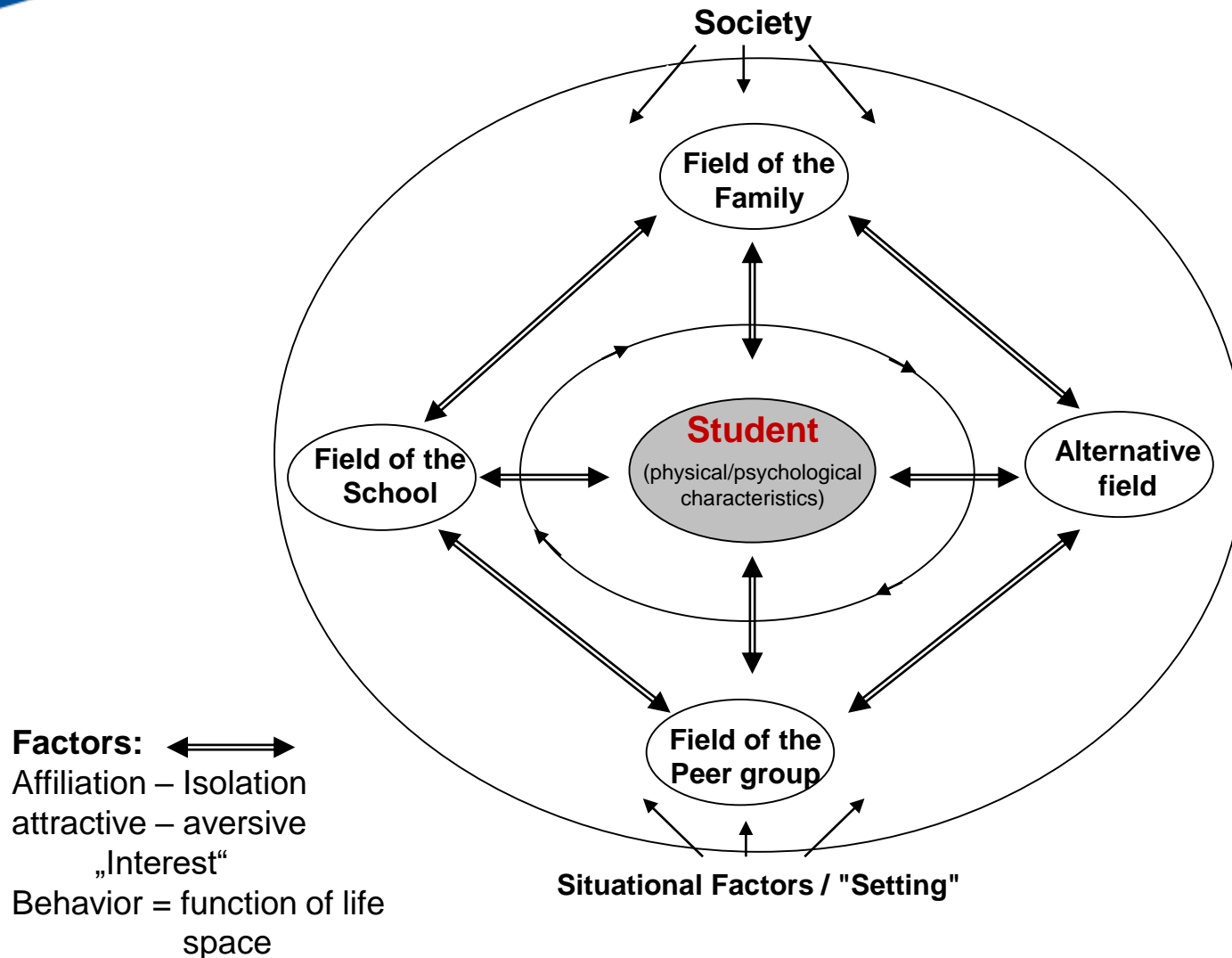
1979 Study
„**unregelmäßiges
Schulbesuchsver
halten**“ by
Hildes Schmidt et al.

Since 1990 Studies
about alternative
Schools / Projects,
„**Verweigererprojekte**“
(e.g. Thimm)

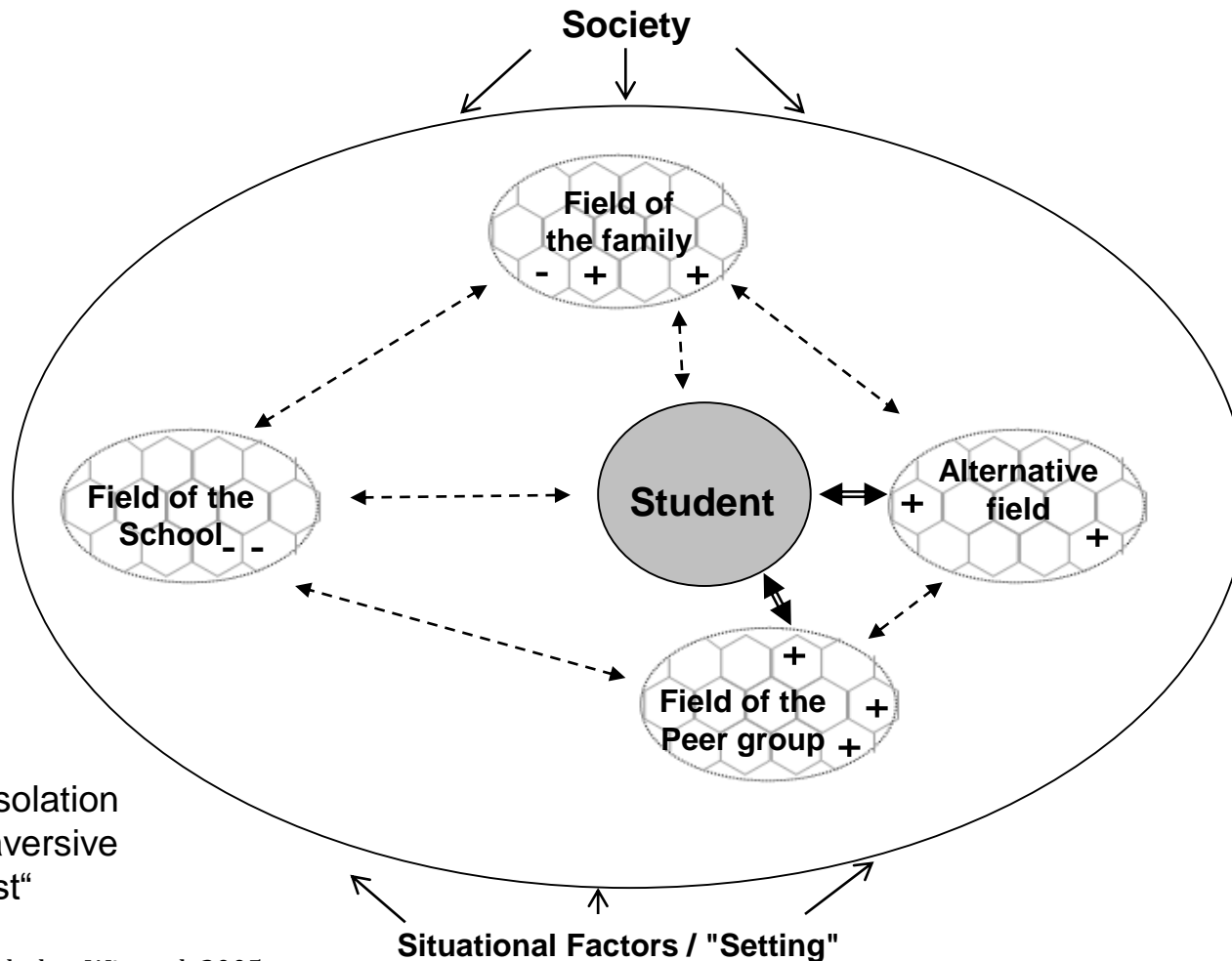
Since 2000
expansion of
research activities in
**Education and
Social Science**:

Ehmann & Rademacker (2003). **Schulversäumnisse und sozialer Ausschluss**.
Ricking, H. (2003). **Schulabsentismus als Forschungsgegenstand**.
Schulze (2003). **Unterrichtsmeidende Verhaltensmuster**
Herz et al. (2004). **Problem Schulabsentismus ...**
Wagner, M. (2007). **Schulabsentismus. ...**
Sälzer, C. (2010). **Schule und Absentismus**.
Ricking & Hagen (2016). **Schulabsentismus und Schulabbruch**.
Ricking & Speck (2018). **Schulabsentismus und Eltern**

Person-Environment-Analysis (adapted from the Life Space/Field Theorie by K. Lewin)



Person-Environment-Analysis in the Context of School Absenteeism



Factors:

Affiliation – Isolation
attractive – aversive
„Interest“



Types of school absenteeism

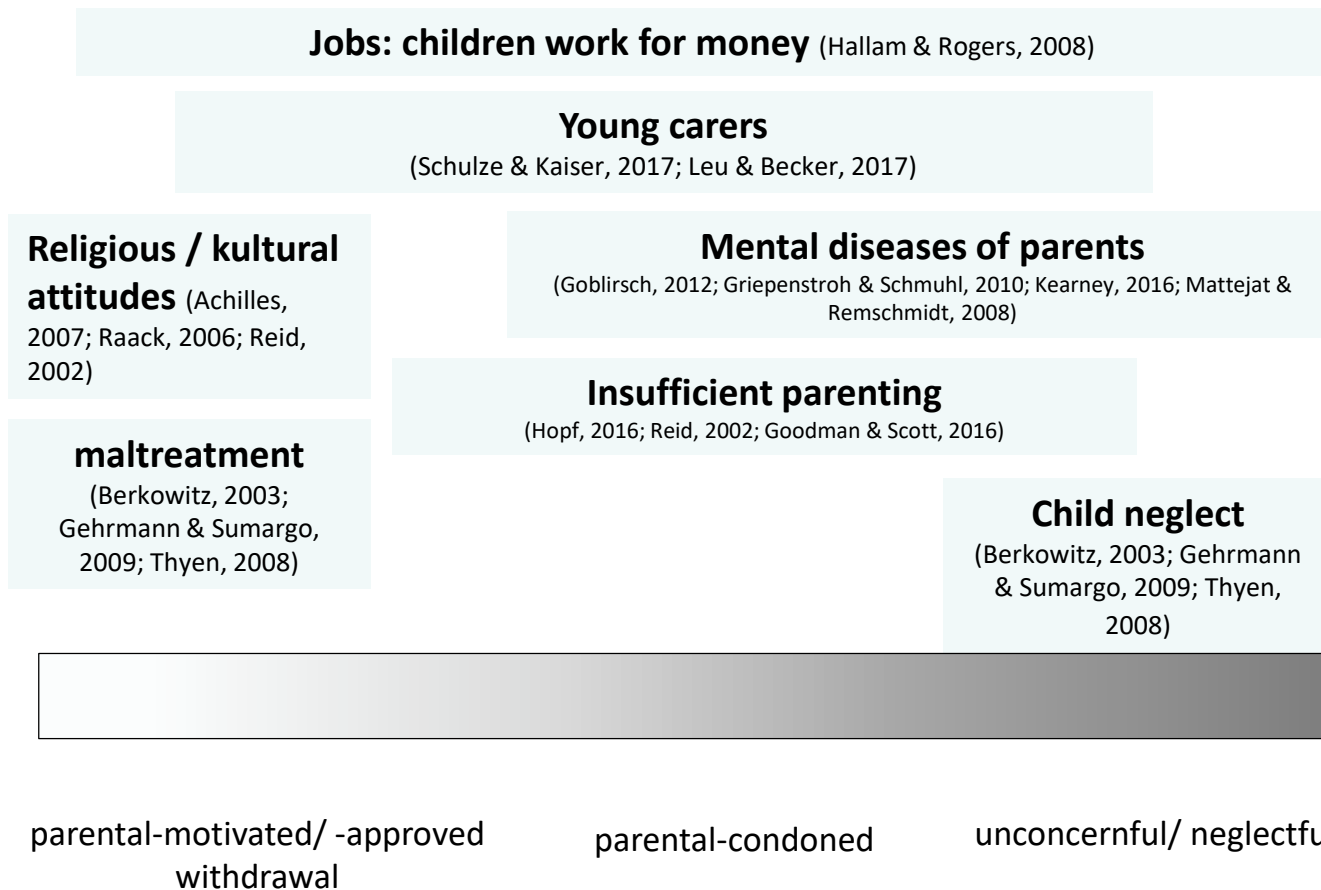
- truancy:
 - students with aversive attitude towards school / more attractive activities during school lessons
- **withdrawal, parental-condoned absences:**
 - **parents or carers keeping students away from school and/or tolerate their absences**
- school refusal:
 - students avoid school because of fear / subjective experienced threat

Krefeld Secondary-School Study (Dunkake, Ricking)

- date of survey: 2012/13
- students survey in 7 secondary-schools (short version of the original from 2010)
- N=627
- 27 classes (grade 8, 9)
- teachers survey (N=138)

Reasons for school absenteeism
from the students' point of view

Rank	Reason	
1.	I wanted to sleep / had overslept (30,8%)	emotional aversion, motivational problems
2.	other („had no desire“ „didn't want to go to school“) (23,0%)	
3.	I was depressed and in a bad mood (17,2%)	
4.	I had problems with my teacher (16,0%)	problems with teachers
5.	My friends were also absent (12,0%)	peer-motivated
6.	I fixed up appointments with friends (11,3%)	
7.	I would prefer not to see anyone (9,0%)	
8.	I didn't want to write a test (8,8%)	learning and performance problems
9.	I didn't do my homework (7,6%)	
10.	I was being bullied (4,7%)	anxiety / violence / bullying
11.	I was threatened with violence (4,4%)	
12.	School was too difficult (4,1%)	
13.	I had to go to work to earn money (4,6%)	parental-condoned absences/ withdrawal
14.	My parents forced me to (2,7%)	
15.	I had to help at home (2,1%)	



n. Albers & Ricking 2017



Young Carers (YC) and Education in Germany

- awareness and policy response to young carers are preliminary in public, research or practice (Leu & Becker, 2016)
- few specialized services and interventions for YC and their families but other services may be applicable
- 5% YC between 12 and 17 years (Lux & Eggert, 2017)
- children and adolescents as carers: experience and construction of familial care (Metzing, 2007)
 - **little is known about YC situation in their education**

René Magritte: Der Geist der Geometrie, 1936/37, ©VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2008

Project: Young Carers (YC) & Education

(Lead: G. Schulze)

Aims

- getting an insight into the situation of YC in school
- identifying barriers & facilitating factors in school from different perspectives
- evaluating and developing possibilities of support in school context
- YC as a target group of a counseling system

Conclusions

- first study to capture YC, parents' and teachers' perspectives
 - situation in school consistent with international research (school absenteeism, bullying, worries, ...)
 - results give in-depth explanations
 - reveals strategies to support young carers in school (Schulze & Kaiser 2015, 2017).

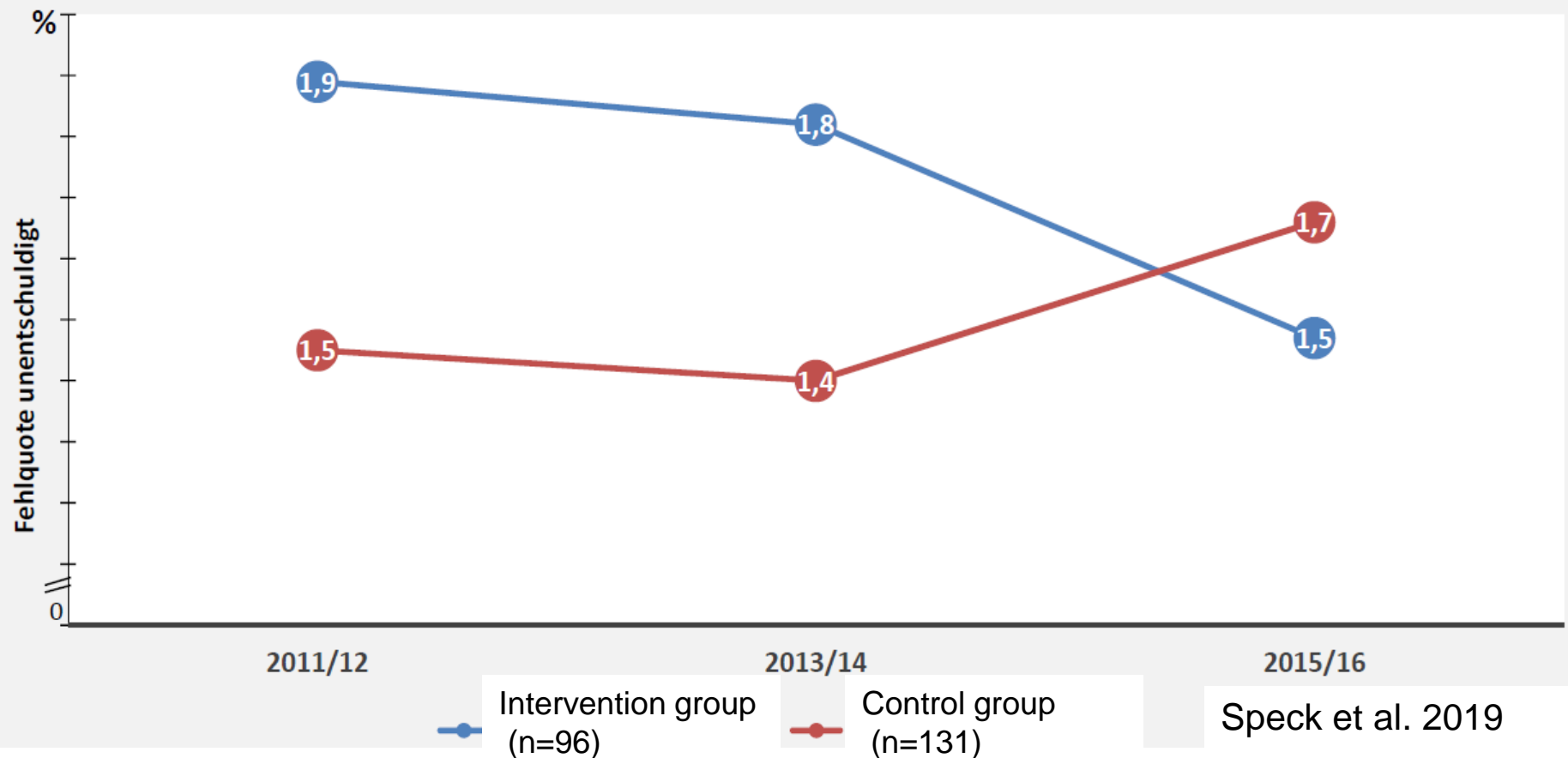
Research project: School Absenteeism / Dropout and School Social Work (Lead: K. Speck)

Database of the Federal State Berlin

- Context: Program “School social work in schools” in the Federal State Berlin
- Aims of the Program: Reduction of school absenteeis, violence, dropout; Promoting...
- Data: Database 2011/12-2015/16 of the Ministry of Education and Youth
- Sample: n = 227 schools (96 intervention group + 131 control group), different types

Research project School Social Work

Absenteeism rate in the intervention group (schools with school social work) and the control group (schools without school social work) in Berlin



Applied Research in Schools:

„Jeder Schultag zählt“ in Hamburg, 1/19-12/22

(Lead: H. Ricking)

- Kollaboration
 - between 6 Schools, 2 Foundations, the Hamburg School Board and University of Oldenburg
- Targets
 - Strengthening schools to keep the students engaged and promote their attendance and success
 - Reduction of school absenteeis and dropout
- Approach
 - School development - Transfer of scientific knowledge into practise
 - support schools in process of development

Evidence-oriented framework of for the encouragement of student's attendance and participation (Ricking 2014)

C Level System	9 Cooperation with parents		10 Cooperation with communal institutions		Individual interventions
B Level Class	5 Parenting / Relation- (ship)s	6 Promotion of learning skills	7 Mentoring	8 Enforce- ment of Attendance	
A Level School	1 Pedagogical attitude	2 Attention / Registration	3 Safety in School	4 Social competen- cies	
Modules of Prevention in Schools					Quality of Instruction
					Teacher's professional skills

Thank you!



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