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**Explaining aggressive and delinquent behaviors of  
disadvantaged adolescents:  
The impact of negative metastereotypes**

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**Explaining aggressive and delinquent behaviors of disadvantaged adolescents:**

**The impact of negative metastereotypes**

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## **1. Introduction**

“No one can be indifferent to the *abuse* and *expectations* of others...”

Gordon Allport (1954, p. 143)

Explaining the occurrence of delinquency in general and aggression and violence in particular has long since been the goal of numerous theories from criminology, sociology, social psychology, and adjacent disciplines. This is hardly surprising considering the vast societal implications these forms of deviant behavior have. In 2011 police recorded nearly six million criminal offenses in Germany, which equates to 7.328 cases per 100.000 inhabitants (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2012). The economic losses due to criminal conduct have been estimated to comprise four to seven percent of the gross national income in Germany (Entorf & Spengler, 2002). In the US, recent figures point out around \$15 billion economic losses for victims of crime and a total of \$179 billion in crime-related government expenditures (McCollister, French, & Fang, 2010). One factor clearly adding to the latter figure is the number of imprisoned persons, namely 67.671 in Germany (reference date March 31, 2012; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012) and 1.612.395 (!) in the US (reference date December 31, 2010; Guerino, Harrison, & Sabol, 2011).

Recently, several violent assaults committed by adolescents have pushed the particular topic of *youth violence* to the public agenda in Europe – as exemplified by media coverage in Germany following the “U-Bahn Schläger” incidences (e.g., Der Spiegel, May 2, 2011, title “Mordswut: Die unheimliche Eskalation der Jugendgewalt” [Tremendous rage: the scary escalation of youth violence]) or in Great Britain following the “London riots” (e.g., The Telegraph, August 9, 2011, “The criminals who shame our nation”; see also Reicher & Stott, 2011), just to name a few. These occurrences led to heated public debates about the reasons

for juvenile violence and how to handle the problem. In fact, numerous studies have found that adolescence, in particular, is the age span where violent and delinquent behavior is most common (see Baier, Pfeiffer, Simonson, & Rabold, 2009; Boers, Reinecke, Seddig, & Mariotti, 2010; Farrington, 1986; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Moffitt, 1993). Moffitt (1993), for instance, shows that the rates for both prevalence and incidence of criminal offending peak at about age 17, and the same is true for violence (Farrington, 1986) and – usually slightly earlier in adolescence – physical aggression (Loeber & Hay, 1997). Following this peak, for most offenders there is a pronounced decline in antisocial behavior towards the end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood, respectively (Moffitt, 1993; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983).

Of course, against the backdrop of these figures and findings the big question arises: what is the reason for aggressive and delinquent behavior committed by young people? Needless to say, a plethora of theories and research has centered on this question, and various detailed descriptions are available – see, for instance, Cullen & Wilcox (2010) for an overview of criminological theories, and Bierhoff and Wagner (1998) for a German or Krahe (2001) for an English overview of aggression theories. In consideration of the vast existing knowledge, the humble aim of the current thesis is to add a little piece to the big puzzle. This is done by calling attention to a construct that has not yet been (explicitly) addressed in research on aggression, violence, and delinquency, namely *negative metastereotypes*. Metastereotypes are beliefs about the impressions that outgroup members hold of one's ingroup (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). I argue that in samples of disadvantaged adolescents – that is, incarcerated and low educated adolescents – beliefs about negative views on the disadvantaged ingroup by the outgroup “majority society” have the potential to enhance aggression and delinquency.

This basic assumption and accompanying research questions are theoretically derived in the following parts of the introduction. Before that, however, I provide some brief definitions for the mentioned deviant phenomena, and elaborate on the concept of metastereotypes. Concluding the introduction, I give an overview of the three manuscripts, which constitute the centerpiece of this thesis, and give an idea how the manuscripts can be integrated into a general framework.

### 1.0.1 Definitions of aggression, violence, and delinquency

Before describing the concept of metastereotypes and related research in more detail, some definitions are needed for the central phenomena that this thesis aims to explain. Firstly, *aggression* can be defined as “any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment” (Baron & Richardson, 1994, p. 7). Secondly, following Geen (1995) *violence* is understood as “the infliction of intense force upon persons [...] for the purposes of destruction, punishment, or control” (p. 669). Thirdly, the definition of *delinquency* usually comprises two components (cf. Bliesener, 2008): on the one hand criminal behavior – that is, behavior, which is rated as culpable and legally sanctioned by public prosecuting authorities – and on the other hand misbehaviors, which are known as correlates and antecedents of criminality, which however are not legally sanctioned (e.g., skipping school, early consumption of legal drugs, etc.). Because the boundaries of the second component are rather blurry and the appraisal of behavior as misbehavior might depend on the specific frame of reference, in my use of the term delinquency I only refer to the first component. Finally, *antisocial behavior* is used as an umbrella term to refer to all three aforementioned behavioral tendencies in the current thesis.

### 1.0.2. Metastereotypes

In his 1922 book “Public Opinion” the journalist and philosopher Walter Lippman described stereotypes as “pictures in our heads” (Lippman, 1922). To use the same metaphor, metastereotypes can be characterized as the pictures we have in our heads about the pictures that out-group members have in their heads about us and our social ingroup (for the differentiation between in- and outgroup, see Tajfel, 1970). Correspondingly, metastereotypes have been defined as “a person’s beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about his or her own group” (Vorauer et al., 1998, p. 917). In a first study focusing explicitly on metastereotypes, Sigelman and Tuch (1997), for example, could show that the majority of their sample of black Americans agreed that most white Americans would regard them as more likely to commit violent crimes, as less intelligent, and as better athletes than whites. In the same vein, Vorauer et al. (1998) demonstrated that white Canadians believed to be seen as egocentric, prejudiced, ambitious, lacking feelings, and high status by aboriginal Canadians (to name but the central themes).

The concept of metastereotypes is closely related to that of metaperceptions in interpersonal contexts (see Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Sheckman & Kenny, 1994); however, for metastereotypes to form an *intergroup context* must be salient (Frey & Tropp, 2006). In intergroup contexts people tend to accentuate the differences between their ingroup and the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), and existing research shows that there is a general tendency to expect one’s ingroup to be seen in a negative light by the outgroup (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Krueger, 1996; Vorauer et al., 1998). Additionally, this expectation for negative judgments of the ingroup may be transferred to the individual level, meaning that group members believe that outgroup members hold



negative views of them as individuals (Mendez, Gomez, & Tropp, 2007; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001). Importantly, these tendencies might be especially strong for members of disadvantaged (that is, stigmatized) groups, as research indicates that stigmatization of one's group can make group membership more salient (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Goffman, 1963; Major & O'Brien, 2005), and that powerless groups in particular engage in metastereotyping (Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008).

Yet, although there has been an increasing interest in "the target's perspective" in stereotype and prejudice research over the past few decades (cf. Swim & Stangor, 1998), surprisingly little is actually known about the consequences of holding negative metastereotypes (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Yzerbyt, Judd, & Muller, 2009). The few existing findings create a rather diverse picture: Negative metastereotypes might lead to disidentification with the ingroup (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011), reductions in self-esteem (Gordijn, 2010), or engagement in impression management behaviors (Klein & Azzi, 2001; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012). Regarding intergroup relations, negative metastereotypes can arouse intergroup anxiety (Mendez et al., 2007), lead to less positive intergroup contact experiences (Vorauer et al., 1998), or even an avoidance of intergroup contact altogether (Finchilescu, 2005). Additionally, and most importantly for the current research, Kamans, Gordijn, Oldenhuis, and Otten (2009) provided first evidence that negative metastereotypes have the potential to enhance aggression and delinquency in disadvantaged groups. In their study, Moroccan teenagers in the Netherlands were asked about their metastereotypes towards the Dutch majority. The authors could show that those Moroccan teenagers, who are relatively negative about the Dutch and at the same time believe that they are seen through the lens of negative stereotypes by the Dutch majority, respond with the strongest legitimization of criminal and aggressive behavior committed by their ingroup.

In line with Kamans et al. (2009), the current thesis aims to examine the impact of negative metastereotypes on antisocial behavior in disadvantaged groups. However, it seeks to extend the existing findings in several important ways: a) by focusing on actual endorsement and enactment rather than only legitimization of aggression and delinquency, b) by applying more sophisticated statistical methods and providing longitudinal data (Manuscript #3), c) by broadening the perspective to new moderators, mediators and predictors of (the impact of) negative metastereotypes, d) by exploring these relationships in groups which are disadvantaged due to characteristics other than their ethnic background, and e) by expanding the theoretical focus of metastereotype-related research, for instance, to criminological theories and social exclusion approaches.

## 1.1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the following I will outline three theoretical approaches and research areas, respectively, which form the basis of the current thesis and have inspired its specific research questions: Labeling Theory of delinquent behavior, Social Identity Theory, and a social exclusion approach to antisocial behavior.

### 1.1.1. The Labeling Theory of delinquent behavior

The origins of Labeling Theory date back as far as 1938, when the sociologist, historian, and criminologist Frank Tannenbaum stated that “the young delinquent becomes bad because he is defined as bad and because he is not believed if he is good” (Tannenbaum, 1938, pp. 17). This was later to be declared as the starting point of a major theory in criminology explaining the occurrence of delinquent behavior. However, concrete formulations of Labeling Theory were first developed in the 50s and early 60s by Edwin

Lemert (1951) and Howard Becker (1963). These authors drew on the early ideas of Tannenbaum and explained explicitly that being “labeled” as a deviant person (e.g., by court conviction: *formal* labeling) can lead to further deviant behaviors. Importantly, besides its development in criminology a very similar labeling perspective was also pursued in research on mental illness stigma, aiming to explain the stabilization and maintenance of mental illness by public reactions (see Scheff, 1966).

Lemert’s and Becker’s early formulations inspired a multitude of research over the next decades to empirically examine and eventually prove the basic idea of Labeling Theory: when a person shows behavior that is societally declared as criminal and is subsequently labeled as a “criminal”, this person in the long run is forced into further delinquency (e.g., Bernburg & Krohn, 2003; Bernburg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006; Farrington, 1977; for a review, see Paternoster & Iovanni, 1989). Of course, besides generating evidence for the general phenomenon, research was also occupied with discovering the mechanism by which labeling translates into further delinquency. Whereas most studies have focused on social structural mediators like associations with delinquent peers (Adams & Evans, 1996; Bernburg et al., 2006) or deprivation from conventional opportunities (Bernburg & Krohn, 2003; Sampson & Laub, 1993), recent research has brought the development of a delinquent self-concept into play as an additional mediator (e.g., Brownfield & Thompson, 2005; Matsueda, 1992; for precursory similar ideas, see Lemert, 1951). These studies stand in the tradition of symbolic interactionism in stating that perceptions of other’s views on oneself shape the own self-concept (“looking-glass self”, Cooley, 1902; see also Blumer, 1969). Along these lines, Matsueda (1992) and Zhang (1997) have demonstrated that parent’s and teacher’s appraisals of children as “rule violators” are reflected in the children’s appraisals of themselves, thus contributing to a “rule violator” self-concept. And this very self-concept, in

turn, was shown to enhance delinquent behavior. Note that the focus of the previously mentioned studies has shifted from the original perspective on *formal* labeling to the acknowledgment of *informal* labeling instances, i.e. labeling by significant others such as peers, parents, and teachers (Zhang, 1997).

Going one step further, Link, Cullen, Struening, Shrout, and Dohrenwend (1989) developed a modified version of the original labeling approach on mental illness, in which neither the labeling by official institutions nor by significant others leads to negative consequences, but beliefs about “societal conceptions of what it means to be a mental patient” (p. 402). According to their model, respective conceptions are common knowledge in society, but only become relevant for people who have been labeled as “mentally ill”. For these people the perception of negative societal conceptions and the anticipation of discriminatory treatment lead to feelings of threat, which may translate into defensive behaviors like withdrawal and secrecy (Link et al., 1989), reduced life-quality (Rosenfield, 1997), or depressive symptoms (Link, Struening, Rahav, Phelan, & Nuttbrock, 1997); ultimately resulting in maintenance of the disorder and increased vulnerability to new disorders, respectively. As opposed to sources cited earlier, Link et al. (1989) thus do not see a changed self-concept as causal for negative consequences, but rather argue that *threat* accounts for the resulting behaviors of labeled individuals.

Although Link and colleagues (1989) do not use the term “stereotype” in their model, in my view beliefs about societal conceptions of what it means to be a labeled person can actually be understood as negative metastereotypes: labeled persons believe that “they” (i.e., their ingroup) are seen through the lens of negative stereotypes by the outgroup “society”. This implies that the labeling process takes place in an intergroup setting, namely that the differentiation between the in- and outgroup is salient. Such a differentiation is

fundamental for Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is able to further contribute to the understanding of reactions to societal labeling and devaluation. Thus, SIT and related research will be reviewed in the following section.

Summing up the lessons learned from Labeling Theory, it is now clear that being labeled as a “deviant” can result in deviant behavior. This finding mainly stems from two research areas: delinquent behavior and mental illness. In the latter domain, Link and colleagues (1989) developed a modified labeling approach, which explains negative consequences by labeled individuals’ beliefs about negative societal views on their ingroup. Yet, this approach has so far been restricted to explaining mental illness. By focusing on the relationship of negative metastereotypes towards the majority society on one side and aggression and delinquency on the other side, the current thesis thus breaks new ground, in that it tests assumptions from the modified labeling approach in the context of aggressive and delinquent behavior.

### 1.1.2. A Social Identity Theory perspective on antisocial behavior

The basic tenet of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is that humans strive for a positive self-definition, and that this self-definition is partly resting upon the membership in social groups. SIT establishes the term *social identity* to refer to “those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). One consequence of the striving for a positive self-definition is that a positive social identity becomes crucial. A means to achieve this is to compare with outgroups who are disadvantaged in any characteristic in comparison with the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). But what happens when comparisons with relevant outgroups turn out unfavorable for the ingroup? What

happens if members of one group have to conclude that they are disadvantaged compared to an outgroup and that they are looked down upon by this group (e.g., being judged and treated on the basis of negative stereotypes)? One consequence might be the experience of threat, which, as it derives from the membership in a certain social group, is referred to as social identity threat in the literature (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Going back to the modified labeling approach and applying the logic of SIT, one could argue that the threat elicited by perceptions of negative stereotypes about the own group (i.e., the negatively labeled ingroup) in society might indeed be understood as social identity threat.

Research in the tradition of SIT has pointed out a variety of different strategies to cope with respective threats. For example, members of disadvantaged groups can try to leave the group (Wright, Taylor, & Modhaddam, 1990) or psychologically distance themselves from it (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011). They might take actions to improve the status of their ingroup, e.g., by helping the outgroup and thus conveying a positive impression (Hopkins et al., 2007; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012) or by engaging in collective action to bring about social change (Becker, 2012; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Finally, members of disadvantaged groups might openly fight back against the outgroup by reciprocating the ingroup-directed negativity (Doosje & Haslam, 2005) and by engaging in extreme forms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation, respectively (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006a).

An important question, of course, is under which conditions each of these different reactions are shown. Research and theorizing in the tradition of SIT has long since emphasized three factors that play an important role in determining the outcomes of a disadvantaged status of the ingroup relative to the outgroup: the permeability of group

boundaries, the legitimacy of the status relation, and its stability (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). While, for example, the perception of permeability of group boundaries is necessary to leave the ingroup (e.g., Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990), perceived impermeability in combination with the recognition of illegitimate and unstable status relations is argued to be necessary for attempts to social change (e.g., Ellemers, 1993). Likewise, it can be concluded that strategically reacting to negative metastereotypes in positive ways to disconfirm them, for instance by displaying more positive and less negative traits (Klein & Azzi, 2001) or by helping the outgroup (Hopkins et al. 2007; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012), should depend on the perceived possibility to let the ingroup appear in a more positive light. If the disadvantaged ingroup status, however, is perceived as illegitimate, stable and potentially inescapable, respective self-presentational attempts will not be perceived as helpful and beneficial. This might particularly be the case when the *majority society* is the outgroup, as the definatory power over appropriate appearance and behavior lies with the majority, and this very majority should have an interest in upholding their negative stereotypes to maintain and justify the status quo (Fiske, 1993). Thus, group members are likely to perceive themselves to be in a “nothing to lose” situation in which the probability of reacting with extreme forms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation is greatly enhanced (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006a, 2006b).

What forms might outgroup derogation take when the devaluing outgroup is the majority society as it is in the research at hand? Clearly one form is (violent) delinquency, as this follows from disobedience to the rules and regulations of society (Akers, 1998; Andrews & Bonta, 1994; Simons & Burt, 2011). Therefore, delinquent behavior might be judged as a blatant way of showing discontent with perceived negativity from the outgroup and derogation of the outgroup, respectively. Consistent with this view is research

demonstrating that the recurring and persistent nature of racial discrimination in the United States contributes to forcing individuals into offending behavior in general (Burt, Simons, & Gibbons, 2012) and violent behavior in particular (Simons et al., 2006). Drawing on the Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency (Agnew, 2001), Simons and colleagues argue that discrimination is a pervasive stressor which leaves few options for “conventional” coping and thus predicts increased criminal engagement via several pathways, such as increased anger and hostility (Simons, Chen, Stewart, & Brody, 2003) or a low commitment to social conventions (Simons & Burt, 2011). Furthermore, a relationship between disadvantaged ingroup status and antisocial behavior is also proposed in the SIT-preceding Relative Deprivation Theory (Runciman, 1966; Gurr, 1970) with recourse to the Frustration-Aggression-Hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1989; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Maurer, & Sears, 1939). It states, in sum, that perceived deprivation of the ingroup compared to an outgroup leads to feelings of frustration, which will erupt in aggression and violence towards the source of the frustration/deprivation, i.e., the advantaged outgroup: “If frustrations are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely, if not certain, to occur. [...] men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration” (Gurr, 1970, *Why Men Rebel*, pp. 36-37).

Interestingly, and linking the previously mentioned ideas with the Labeling Theory of delinquent behavior, in his Theory of Reintegrative Shaming John Braithwaite (1989) differentiates between two kinds of societal shaming responses towards individuals who committed transgressions of society’s rules and laws: reintegrative and stigmatizing shaming. The former refers to community reactions which on the one hand condemn the respective “deviant” behavior as bad and inappropriate, but on the other hand signal that the offender is not devalued as a whole person (“hate the sin, love the sinner”), showing



him/her alternative behavioral patterns, and thus enabling him/her to reintegrate back into the community. The latter, on the contrary, refers to community reactions which degrade the offender as a whole person without showing prospects of reintegration into the community and thus making him/her an outcast. Braithwaite (1989) makes a strong claim that reintegrative shaming has a delinquency-reducing effect, while stigmatizing shaming is delinquency-enhancing (which is also the central idea of Labeling Theory, see Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951). Thus, on an individual level the Theory of Reintegrative Shaming formulates arguments that correspond with the notion of stability of groups' status relations in the SIT tradition: only if there is the possibility of changing one's disadvantaged status there will be positive behaviors towards the outgroup (society); in contrast, stable low status and thus no prospects of changes to the status quo will lead to pervasive outgroup derogation - i.e., in the case of the current thesis: delinquent behavior.

Summing up, on the basis of the Labeling Theory, SIT, and related research I conclude that negative metastereotypes towards the outgroup "society" contribute to aggression and delinquency in disadvantaged groups. This is the central assumption of the current thesis and lays the foundation for all three manuscripts. Additionally, from the foregoing arguments it can be derived that impressions about the stability of one's disadvantaged status might play a role for the relationship between metastereotypes and antisocial behavior. While not directly tested as a construct in the thesis at hand, this stability is both inherent in the concept of perceived societal fairness, which is relevant as a mediator in Manuscript #2, and in the concept of perceived societal disintegration, which is crucial as a conceptualization of exclusion from society in Manuscript #3. Because research on social exclusion and its relation to aggression and delinquency provides the basis for Manuscript #3, I'll give an overview of this research in the following section.

### 1.1.3. Social exclusion and antisocial behavior

Social exclusion<sup>1</sup> is described as a state in which individuals are ignored, rejected and isolated by other individuals or groups (for an overview, see Leary, 2010; Williams, 2009). This state is assumed to threaten a fundamental human need, namely the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). From an evolutionary perspective it has been argued that the desire to be bonded to individuals and groups developed because it provided huge benefits for individuals in the form of survival and reproductive success, that is, being able to share food, hunt together, take turns in caring for the offspring, find mating partners, defend against wild animals, etc. (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Buss, 1990). In contrast, being rejected or excluded by other individuals and groups is likely to have meant decreased reproductive success and an enhanced risk for early death in human's evolutionary history. Consistent with this view, recent research has demonstrated that social exclusion often results in negative emotional outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and sadness (for a review, see Gerber & Wheeler, 2009; Williams, 2007). Moreover, research was also able to demonstrate that the experience of being excluded is closely related to the experience of physical pain (e.g., Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; MacDonald & Leary, 2005).

Given the apparent importance of feeling included and bonded to others, the question arises how individuals react to the experience of exclusion. In the social psychological literature two typical (and seemingly contradicting) patterns of reactions are discussed: on the one hand excluded individuals might display particularly positive behavior to enhance their chances of reintegration, on the other hand they might be willing to strike out against the perpetrators and thus behave aggressively (for an overview, see Leary, Twenge, & Quinlivan, 2006; Williams, 2009). Supporting the former assumption, it has been

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<sup>1</sup> Note that different terms (e.g., social exclusion, ostracism, interpersonal rejection) are used in the literature to refer to the same phenomenon (cf. Williams, 2009).

demonstrated for instance that socially excluded participants tend to have more interest in making new friends and evaluate others more positively (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007), are more likely to conform to incorrect judgements by others (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000), and show increased compliance with requests from others such as the request for a donation (Carter-Sowell, Chen, & Williams, 2008). Supporting the latter assumption, however, research has shown that excluded participants blast other persons with higher levels of aversive noise (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001), express more anger (Buckley, Winkel, & Leary, 2004), and allocate more hot sauce to target persons (Warburton, Williams, & Cairns, 2006). Additionally, longitudinal studies provided evidence that peer rejection is an important predictor for aggression and delinquency (for a review, see McDougall, Hymel, Vaillancourt, & Mercer, 2001).

Thus, similar to previously discussed research which demonstrates that prosocial as well as antisocial responses might result from ingroup-directed negativity by an outgroup (see SIT section), research on social exclusion on an interpersonal level shows that both prosocial and antisocial responses might result from the perception of being excluded. Interestingly, one explanation for this finding does correspond very well with assumptions that have been referred to before, namely that stability plays an important role (cf. Braithwaite, 1989; Scheepers et al., 2006a). Accordingly, several authors argue that excluded individuals who sense a prospect of acceptance or re-inclusion will possibly behave in a prosocial manner to enhance their chances of becoming a member of the desired group again (e.g., DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Williams & Wesselmann, 2011). However, when excluded individuals sense that they won't get a chance to gain acceptance or to re-integrate (like those persons that have been ostracized for a long time) they might be more likely to respond with antisocial behavior (Leary, Kowalski, Smith, & Phillips, 2003; Zadro, 2011). In

terms of Scheepers and colleagues (2006a), the latter, again, can be referred to as a “nothing to lose” situation.

While there has been a plethora of theoretical arguments and empirical studies on the consequences of *interpersonal* exclusion and rejection in the last decades, and particularly on its influence on aggression and violence, less is known about the relationship of *societal* exclusion with the named outcomes. In the current thesis, exclusion from society is conceptualized as the perception of being marginalized in society and not being offered the conventional opportunities that other more advantaged groups and individuals have (i.e., societal disintegration; cf. Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2008). Importantly, in accordance with the formerly discussed tenets of SIT and the theoretical groundings of the metastereotype concept, perceived societal disintegration in the current research implies the idea that *one’s social group* (of disadvantaged individuals) is disintegrated. Previous “historical” evidence gives a first hint that exclusion from society and its institutions might enforce antisocial behavior: Leary et al. (2003) analyzed 15 school shooting incidences and could show that at least in some of those tragic cases rejection from important societal institutions, such as schools or the army, preceded the shootings. In addition, the concepts of alienation (see Dean, 1961) and disintegration (see Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2008) go beyond interpersonal exclusion by incorporating, for example, feelings of meaninglessness (i.e., inability to see purpose in one’s life and work) in the case of the former or social-structural disintegration (i.e., poor possibilities of participation in society’s material and cultural goods) in the case of the latter. Both theoretical accounts hypothesize that prolonged societal exclusion will contribute to a greater proclivity towards antisocial behavior. Yet, empirical studies aiming to test this causal relationship in samples of participants who belong to disadvantaged social groups are lacking so far (for first empirical evidence of a link between alienation and

aggression as well as delinquency, however, see Calabrese & Adams, 1990; Reijntjes et al., 2010). For this reason, the main goal of Manuscript #3 was to examine the aggression-enhancing effect of perceived societal disintegration in a sample of devalued adolescents.

Besides testing the effect of disintegration on antisocial behavior, an additional purpose of the current thesis (precisely, Manuscript #3) was to learn about possible mediating processes. Establishing the connection to Manuscripts #1 and #2, it was hypothesized that negative metastereotypes mediate the impact of disintegration on resulting problematic behaviors. Whereas the latter part of the mediation (i.e., negative metastereotype predicting antisocial behavior) has already been discussed in the preceding sections, the former part (i.e., perceived disintegration predicting negative metastereotypes) requires some further clarification. To put it straight: why should perceived exclusion from society result in an enhancement of perceived negative stereotypes about the ingroup in society? This assumption is largely grounded in previous research showing that powerless individuals and groups are more likely than powerful individuals and groups to engage in perspective taking in general (Fiske, 1993; Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006) and in metastereotype activation in particular (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Lammers et al., 2008). Note that metastereotyping is often conceptualized as involving perspective taking (e.g., Frey & Tropp, 2006). These findings are explained by the difference in control and dependency between powerless and powerful individuals and groups: whereas the powerful by definition have the control over valuable resources and thus simply do not have to put themselves in other's shoes to accomplish their goals, the powerless are dependent on the powerful to achieve their goals and thus have to be particularly accurate in understanding the other's perspective (Galinsky et al., 2006; Lammers et al., 2008). Applied to the context of the current thesis this would mean that individuals who perceive to be pushed towards the

margins of society should be especially likely to activate metastereotypes when it comes to the relationship with the outgroup “society”. Furthermore, in this intergroup context one would surely expect the metastereotypes to be of *negative* valence (Frey & Tropp, 2006).

A further argument for the relationship between disintegration and negative metastereotypes can again be derived from research on social exclusion. In a recent study, DeWall, Twenge, Gitter, and Baumeister (2009) could show that social rejection increases the inclination to interpret ambiguous actions of other persons as hostile, and that this hostile cognitive bias is in turn related to aggressive behavior (see also Anderson & Bushman, 2002). In a similar vein, recent research has demonstrated that members of disadvantaged groups in society are particularly inclined to attribute social rejection to discrimination and prejudice and respond with increased anger (Goodwin, Williams, & Carter-Sowell, 2010; Mendes, Major, McCoy, & Blascovich, 2008). Thus, one can assume that an attributional process will be instigated by perceived societal disintegration, namely that perceived disintegration is attributed to hostile intentions by the majority society, which will find its expression in intensified perceptions of devaluation – i.e., increased negative metastereotypes. Attributing hostile intentions to the sources of exclusion, in turn, will most probably result in even stronger aggression and antisocial behavior (DeWall et al., 2009; Orobio de Castro, Veerman, Koops, Bosch, & Monshouwer, 2002).

Summing up, from research on social exclusion I derive that perceived societal disintegration enhances aggression, and that this effect is mediated by negative metastereotypes towards the outgroup “majority society”. Specifically, these assumptions are tested by means of longitudinal data in Manuscript #3.

## 1.2. THE CURRENT RESEARCH

### 1.2.1. Manuscript #1

*Issmer, C., Stellmacher, J., & Gollwitzer, M. (in press). "When Disadvantaged Adolescents Strike Out: The Impact of Negative Metastereotypes on Delinquency." Journal of Criminal Psychology.*

The first manuscript comprises two studies, which aim to demonstrate the general effect of negative metastereotypes towards the majority society predicting delinquency-related attitudes and behaviors (Study 1) as well as actual delinquency (Study 2). For this purpose, data from two samples of disadvantaged adolescents – imprisoned male adolescents in Study 1 (N = 225) and low educated adolescents visiting special vocational education courses in Study 2 (N = 92)<sup>2</sup> – are analyzed. In Study 1 structural equation modeling with latent variables is applied to test the influence of metastereotypes on four delinquency-related outcomes. Study 2 resorts to linear regression with manifest variables due to the rather small sample size, and tests the influence of metastereotypes on a measure of actual delinquent behavior.

An additional aim of Manuscript #1 is to test the impact of a personality difference variable, namely individual self-esteem, on the relationship between metastereotypes and delinquency. It is hypothesized that the relationship is strongest for individuals high in self-esteem, whereas there should be a smaller or even no effect for individuals low in self-esteem. The reasoning, in short, is that persons who do not hold a positive evaluation of

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<sup>2</sup> Data for Study 1 were collected in the course of the research project "Evaluation of the new Prisons Act for Adolescents in the federal state Hessen, Germany" realized by the universities of Marburg and Tübingen. Data for Study 2 were collected in the course of the school research project "Psycho-social development of adolescents with a precarious education background" realized by the social psychology workgroup of Philipps-University Marburg.

themselves will not expect a positive evaluation by others either and thus should not be affected by negative metastereotypes to a great extent. Persons holding strongly positive self-evaluations, on the other hand, will be especially offended and threatened by opposing negative views from the outside and should thus react most strongly. This hypothesis receives further support from research showing that high rather than low self-esteem is related to aggression (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Bushman et al., 2009) and other research demonstrating that high rather than low self-esteem is related to anger expression (Gaucher et al., 2012) as well as approach behavior (Heimpel, Elliot, & Wood, 2006).

### 1.2.2. Manuscript #2

*Owuamalam, C. K., Issmer, C., Zagefka, H., Klaßen, M., & Wagner, U. (2012, submitted). "Why Do Members of Disadvantaged Groups Strike Back at (Perceived) Negativity towards the Ingroup? Stereotyping and Expressions of Discontent."*

The second manuscript again comprises two studies, which deal with the consequences of disadvantaged group members' negative metastereotypes towards privileged outgroups. Study 1 tests the assumption that negative metastereotypes increase the recall of previous experiences with discrimination, which in turn reduce the perception of societal fairness. Study 2 tests a model in which negative metastereotypes predict increased non-normative (i.e., disruptive, aggressive) and decreased normative (i.e., peaceful, societally accepted) expressions of discontent. Furthermore, recall of previous experiences with discrimination and perceived societal fairness act as serial mediators here. The rationale for these two mediators is that perceived negative views by privileged



outgroups will increase the accessibility of previous discrimination experiences (see Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2012; Pinel, 1999), which will in turn challenge disadvantaged group members' world views (Foster, Sloto, & Ruby, 2006; Stroebe, Dovidio, Barreto, Ellemers, & John, 2011). Perceiving that society as a whole is unfair, however, implies that the ingroup's low status cannot easily be changed or avoided. Consequently, as outlined above, disruptive outgroup derogation is more likely to occur (cf. Scheepers et al. 2006a, 2006b).

Study 1 seeks to replicate the constitutive effect demonstrated by Owuamalam and Zagefka (2012), namely that metastereotypes negatively impact on perceived societal fairness because they lead disadvantaged individuals to reflect on negative experiences they have had with the outgroup in the past. For this purpose, data from 50 ethnic minority people in Great Britain are analyzed by means of mediation analysis. Note that the outgroup this time are "native British people". In Study 2 the model of Study 1 is extended by adding several normative and non-normative reactions as dependent variables. Furthermore, as in Manuscript #1 (Study 2), the sample this time consists of educationally disadvantaged adolescents (N = 132) who attend special vocational education courses<sup>3</sup>, and the outgroup again is the "majority society". The extended model of Study 2 is tested by means of structural equation modeling with latent variables. Particularly, indirect effects for serial three-way-mediations are examined. In sum, Manuscript #2 broadens the perspective of Manuscript #1 by specifically exploring possible mediators of the relationship between negative metastereotypes and antisocial behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> Data for Study 1 were collected in the UK by Dr. Chuma Owuamalam. Study 2 was conducted in a vocational education and training center in Marburg, Germany; responsible was Dipl.-Psych. Christian Issmer.

### 1.2.3. Manuscript #3

*Issmer, C., & Wagner, U. (2012, submitted). "Perceived Disintegration and Aggression: A Longitudinal Study with Low-Educated Adolescents."*

As mentioned above, the third manuscript considers the phenomena of metastereotypes and antisocial behavior from a slightly different angle than the first two manuscripts. This time, the theoretical focus lies on the research area of social and societal exclusion, respectively. Previous research has outlined that *interpersonal* exclusion (Leary, et al., 2006) as well as peer rejection (McDougall et al., 2001) have the potential to enhance aggression. Furthermore, respective consequences have also been postulated as a reaction to *societal* exclusion (e.g., insufficient participation in society's material goods, as described in the disintegration theory; see Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2008), and first empirical studies present evidence that estrangement from society is indeed linked to juvenile delinquency (Calabrese & Adams, 1990) and aggressive behavior (Reijntjes et al., 2010). Manuscript #3 complements the mentioned research by examining the aggression-enhancing effect of perceived societal exclusion both cross-sectionally (N = 318) and longitudinally (N = 181) in a sample of adolescents with a low educational background<sup>4</sup>.

In this manuscript, negative metastereotypes towards the majority society are considered as a mediator. Thus, the manuscript on the one hand assumes that metastereotypes increase antisocial behavior, on the other hand seeks to establish perceived societal disintegration as a predictor of negative metastereotypes. All analyses are computed by use of structural equation modeling with latent variables, and the *loading invariance over time* is tested prior to the longitudinal analyses.

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<sup>4</sup> Again, data were obtained in the course of the research project "Psycho-social development of adolescents with a precarious education background" (cf. footnote 2).

#### 1.2.4. Integration of the three manuscripts

Although diverging in their particular focus, the three manuscripts can nicely be integrated into a general framework, which has the phenomenon “negative metastereotypes towards the majority society enhance aggression and delinquency in disadvantaged groups” as its basis. After all, a test of this phenomenon is inherent in each manuscript. Additionally, Manuscript #1 addresses the question, whether personality differences (that is, differences in individual self-esteem) function as a moderator; or put in other words, it examines *for whom* negative metastereotypes result in more antisocial behavior. Manuscript #2, on the other hand, is concerned with finding mediators; or more precisely, with testing the mediating role of recall of previous experiences with discrimination and perceived societal fairness. Thus, it examines *why* negative metastereotypes result in more antisocial behavior. Finally, Manuscript #3 shifts the focus to antecedents of negative metastereotypes by probing the longitudinal effect of perceived societal disintegration on antisocial behavior and considering metastereotypes as a mediator. Put differently, it examines *where* negative metastereotypes *stem from* and if they might be involved in translating feelings of societal disintegration into antisocial behavior.

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***Manuscript #1:***

***When Disadvantaged Adolescents Strike Out: The Impact of  
Negative Metastereotypes on Delinquency***

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**Structured Abstract:**

*Purpose* – This paper examines the impact of perceived negativity against the ingroup on delinquency in disadvantaged social groups. It is based on assumptions from Labeling Theory and Social Identity Theory.

*Design/methodology/approach* – We hypothesized that negative metastereotypes towards the outgroup “majority society” (i.e., the perception of the outgroup holding negative stereotypes against the ingroup) would enhance delinquent behavior. Based on recent findings from research on self-esteem and aggression, we further hypothesized that self-esteem would moderate this effect, namely that delinquency-enhancement would be strongest for individuals high in self-esteem. The hypotheses were tested in a sample of incarcerated adolescents (N = 225) and a sample of educationally disadvantaged adolescents (N = 92), respectively.

*Findings* – Negative metastereotypes towards the “majority society” are positively related to delinquent behavior. This effect is particularly strong when disadvantaged individuals’ positive self-regard is high.

*Research limitations/implications* – This research gives important, new insights on the basis of cross-sectional, correlative data. Future research should aim to corroborate the findings by use of experimental or longitudinal designs.

*Originality/value* – The paper shows that the perception of negative stereotypes against one’s disadvantaged ingroup in society is a risk factor for delinquent behavior. It furthermore highlights how personality differences in self-esteem influence this relationship. The research builds a bridge between criminological Labeling Theory and social-psychological Social Identity Theory.

Negative labeling and stigmatization by society contribute to delinquency. This basic premise of the Labeling Theory of delinquent behavior (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951) has been demonstrated in a range of empirical studies (e.g., Bernburg et al., 2006; for an overview see Paternoster and Iovanni, 1989). Yet, while there is ample evidence for the delinquency-enhancing effect of objective labeling (e.g., by a criminal conviction), less is known about the subjective processes involved, namely which role affected individuals' perceptions of labels and associated stereotypes play (for a notable exception in research on mental illness stigma, see Link et al., 1989).

The current paper focuses on the impact of disadvantaged individuals' perceptions of negative stereotypes against them and their social group in society. These perceptions are conceptualized as negative metastereotypes. Metastereotypes have been defined as "a person's beliefs regarding the stereotypes that out-group members hold about his or her own group" (Vorauer et al., 1998; p. 917). In the current research the majority society is the relevant out-group. Previous research has shown that metastereotypes are most readily activated and applied by groups low in power (Lammers et al., 2008) and are predominantly negative (Vorauer et al., 1998).

Data were gathered from a sample of incarcerated adolescents (Study 1) and a sample of educationally disadvantaged adolescents in prevocational education schemes (Study 2). Based on the assumption that the perception of negative views on the ingroup poses a threat to disadvantaged individuals (Link et al., 1989; Major and O'Brien, 2005), and given the particularly low social standing of members of the two examined groups, we hypothesize that negative metastereotypes increase the likelihood of delinquent behavioral tendencies. Furthermore, we will investigate the role of self-esteem as a moderator. Based on findings by Bushman and colleagues (e.g., Bushman et al., 2009) we predict that the effect of negative metastereotypes on delinquency is strongest for adolescents high in self-esteem. These hypotheses will be developed in the next sections.

## Labeling Theory

Labeling Theory states that official labeling of criminal offenders can be the stepping stone into a criminal career. In the past 50 years a series of empirical studies have been conducted, which support Labeling Theory's basic assumptions (Bernburg et al., 2006; Farrington, 1977; Paternoster and Iovanni, 1989). An important innovation in recent research regarding this theory was to focus on the *perception* of being labeled by affected persons and the consequences of this perception (Brownfield and Thompson, 2005; Matsueda, 1992; Zhang, 1997). For example Matsueda (1992) shows that the perception of the parental appraisal "trouble-maker" results in an increase of adolescents' delinquent behavior, which is mediated by changes in adolescents' self-appraisals, that is, the development of a "trouble-maker" self-concept.

The Modified Labeling Approach (Link et al., 1989) argues that the *perception of stereotypes against one's labeled group* in society can have serious consequences for group members. Link et al. (1989) showed in the context of mental illness stigma that the perception of devaluing "societal conceptions of what it means to be a mental patient" went along with responses like secrecy and withdrawal among patients with a diagnosis of depression or schizophrenia. In addition, respective perceptions were related to considerable restrictions in social network ties (Link et al., 1989), income loss, and unemployment (Link, 1987).

While standing in the tradition of Labeling Theory, the approach by Link and colleagues involves some important extensions. Firstly, the modified approach argues that interindividual differences in the perceived relevance and impact of societal labeling will determine the extent of negative consequences. Secondly, the modified approach regards threat as the ultimate reason for negative outcomes instead of arguing that negative consequences result from changes in labeled individuals' self-concepts (e.g., Matsueda, 1992; Zhang, 1997). Note that self-concept changes imply an internalization and thus acceptance of the negative views, whereas feeling threatened does not immediately suggest this. Thirdly, as

*stereotypes* per definition involve the differentiation between different groups (i.e., “us” and “them”; see Operario and Fiske, 2003), the focus on perceived societal stereotypes (i.e., metastereotypes) indicates that the labeling process can actually be understood as an intergroup phenomenon based on the distinction between the disadvantaged ingroup and the outgroup “society”. Specific predictions about reactions to threat in intergroup contexts can particularly be derived from research in the tradition of Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), which will be discussed in the next section.

### Social Identity Theory

According to SIT an important part of individual’s self-definition is derived from their membership in social groups. The central assumption is that every human strives for a positive self-definition, and thus a positive value of the social ingroup is important for one’s individual self-regard (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Negative stereotypes towards the ingroup that are (or are perceived to be) shared in society threaten an individuals’ need for positive self-regard (see Major and O’Brien, 2005; Branscombe et al., 1999). Previous research in the SIT tradition has outlined particular ways to deal with such threat, for instance, by confirming positive traits and disconfirming negative ones (Klein and Azzi, 2001), by helping the outgroup (van Leeuwen and Täuber, 2012), by leaving the devalued group (Ellemers et al., 1990), or by engaging in collective action to change the status quo (Becker, 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Importantly, however, all these reactions require certain promotive conditions, such as permeability of group boundaries to exit the group (Wright et al., 1990) or the perception of unstable and illegitimate status relations to engage in collective action (Ellemers, 1993).

If members of disadvantaged groups, on the other hand, see their low status as illegitimate but simultaneously as stable and inescapable, perceived negativity against their group might give them the impression they have “nothing to lose”; thus fuelling extreme

forms of behavior that favor the ingroup and derogate the outgroup (Scheepers, et al., 2006a; 2006b). Respective responses can even more be assumed, as stability and inescapability imply a low efficacy in regard to changing the disadvantaged status, which also has been shown to result in non-normative rather than normative actions (Tausch et al., 2011). Furthermore, pervasive negative views of the ingroup might elicit feelings of frustration, which in turn express themselves in heightened proclivity towards showing anti-social behavior (Berkowitz, 1968; 1989; Dollard et al., 1939).

Consistent with the foregoing, previous research has shown that negative metastereotypes towards a majority outgroup can increase the legitimization of negative behaviors towards that group (Kamans et al., 2009). With the current paper we aim to extend this research by focusing on the impact of negative metastereotypes on disadvantaged group member's delinquency-related attitudes and actual delinquent behaviors. We argue that members of the two groups examined (that is, incarcerated and undereducated adolescents, respectively) encounter societal conditions which facilitate "nothing to lose" impressions in them. Consequently, when group members perceive the "majority society" to hold pervasive negative views of their ingroup, they can be assumed to react with derogation. This derogation might take on extreme forms to the point where it is expressed through delinquent behavior, as delinquency stems from disobedience against the rules and norms of society (Andrews and Bonta, 1994; Hirschi, 1969). Based on this reasoning, we hypothesize a delinquency-enhancing impact of negative metastereotypes in the current research.

### The role of self-esteem

In the current research we hypothesize that self-esteem moderates the impact of metastereotypes on delinquency. More precisely, we assume that negative metastereotypes are especially likely to affect disadvantaged individuals' behavior if their self-esteem is high. Whereas low self-esteem individuals (LSE) should expect nothing else from society and see

the negative views as legitimate, high self-esteem individuals (HSE) should feel particularly offended by negative views of society and see them as illegitimate, because they contrast with their positive self-evaluations. In addition, recent research has demonstrated that HSE more readily express negative emotions like anger (Gaucher et al., 2012), while LSE generally act in a more self-protective manner (Baumeister et al., 1989; Heimpel et al., 2006). Thus, HSE in disadvantaged groups are particularly likely to express their discontent with negative views about the ingroup and react with extreme forms of outgroup derogation, that is, aggression and delinquency.

This corresponds with empirical evidence showing that high rather than low self-esteem is related to aggressive behaviors (Baumeister et al., 1996; Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Bushman et al., 2009). Particularly, Bushman and Baumeister (1998) showed that after facing an ego threat by being criticized (for having written an ostensibly bad essay), individuals who hold extremely favorable self-views (i.e., score high in narcissism) react especially aggressively against the provocateur. Assuming that negative metastereotypes towards the majority society will be considered as an identity threat, we hypothesize that HSE are more likely than LSE to behave aggressively and delinquently towards the source of threat, namely the majority society.

### The current research

The current research aims at broadening the knowledge of the negative consequences that negative metastereotypes can have in disadvantaged groups. The first study was designed to test our main hypotheses: We predict that holding negative metastereotypes towards the majority society leads to more delinquency-enhancing attitudes and behaviors (Hypothesis 1), and that this effect is positively moderated by self-esteem (Hypothesis 2). Study 2 aimed at further investigating the two hypotheses by using a different sample, focusing on actual

delinquent behavior as the outcome, and incorporating a different self-esteem measure than the one used in Study 1.

## STUDY 1 – INCARCERATED ADOLESCENTS

### METHODS

#### Sample

A total of 225 males were surveyed in two German juvenile prisons in the course of a larger research project, which is concerned with the experiences, opinions and attitudes of incarcerated male youths and adolescents. Their mean age was 19.5 years ( $SD = 2.04$ ; *Range* 14-25); the young men were imprisoned due to a variety of different offenses. The most prevalent delicts were robbery, theft, bodily injury and violation of the narcotics act. Their mean prison sentence was 1.82 years ( $SD = 1.12$ ; *Range* 0.17-9.50). 150 participants (67%) were German citizens, another 33 (15%) were Turkish citizens. All other nationalities comprised six or less participants.

#### Procedure

Data was collected by means of standardized interviews, which were conducted in juvenile prisons by trained student assistants. Most of the participants were in the beginning stage of their imprisonment (52 percent had been imprisoned for less than one month); the mean length of prior imprisonment was 2.85 months ( $SD = 3.49$ ; *Range* 0-25).

#### Measures

*Negative metastereotypes towards the majority society* were measured with six items, which had been cognitively pretested with a subsample of adolescents from the same research project. Participants were requested to think about the impressions that the majority society holds of juvenile delinquents: “The majority of society thinks that people like me are



inherently aggressive,” “...have no discipline,” “...will never get anywhere in life,” “...duck out of work,” “...have little in their heads,” and “...are antisocial.” Four-point response scales ranged from 1 (does not apply at all) to 4 (fully applies).

*Aggressiveness* was measured with eight items, which were based on the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss and Perry, 1992). Items examples are: “Sometimes I explode because of trivia,” or “I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.” Response scales consisted of four categories ranging from 1 (do not agree at all) to 4 (fully agree).

*Aggression in conflicts*: Besides measuring general aggressiveness, we wanted to have an account of our participants' propensity to behave aggressively in an adolescence-typical conflict situation. This was assessed by means of a scenario that was based on an evaluation study of the PiT violence prevention program (Lemmer et al., 2005; see also Labuhn et al., 2004). Participants were asked to imagine experiencing the following situation: “You are sitting on a bench in a park, listening to music from your MP3 player and waiting for a friend, with whom you want to meet up here. A guy, unknown to you and slightly older than you, comes strolling along and sits down beside you. He puts his arm around your shoulders and says: ‘Come on shorty, give me your MP3 player, or else something’s going to happen!’” Subsequently they were requested to rate the likelihood of responding with certain behaviors on four-point scales ranging from 1 (absolutely unlikely) to 4 (very likely), for instance, “I get up and go away without saying anything,” (*recoded*) or “I punch the guy.”

*Aggressive behavior*: In addition to the foregoing aggression measures we also wanted to have a measure of actual behavior. This was assessed by a single item: “How often did you engage in brawls lately?” The response scale went from 1 (never) to 4 (often).

*Negative attitudes towards the law* constitute a risk-factor for criminal conduct (Andrews and Bonta, 1994). They were measured by four items, which were based on the German “Fragebogen zur Prisionierung” by Ortmann (1987). Item examples are: “One should tell the truth in court, no matter what happens,” (*recoded*) or “It’s okay to break the law as long as no one is harmed.” Four-point response scales ranged from 1 (do not agree at all) to 4 (fully agree).

*Self-esteem* was measured with four items from the Rosenberg-scale (1965; sample items: “At times, I think I am no good at all” (*recoded*) and “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”). Four-point response scales ranged from 1 (do not agree at all) to 4 (fully agree).

## RESULTS

*Preliminary analyses.* Table 1 presents zero-order correlations and reliabilities for all measures. All scales showed satisfactory or good reliabilities.

<< TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

*Test of hypotheses.* The hypotheses were tested by means of structural equation modeling using latent variables with Mplus 6 (Muthen and Muthen, 2010). This method offers the advantage to control for the unreliability of the measured variables (Bollen, 1989). In scales comprising more than three items, item-parceling was applied to create manifest indicators. Indicators generated by item-parceling are more reliable than individual items and the estimation of fewer parameters is required (Little et al., 2002). The items were randomly assigned to one of two or three parcels. Each manifest indicator was allowed to load on one latent variable only; measurement errors were not allowed to correlate.

The impact of negative metastereotypes towards the majority society on delinquency-enhancing attitudes and behaviors (Hypothesis 1) was tested in Model 1 (see Figure 1). This model showed a good overall fit (cf. Hu and Bentler, 1999),  $\chi^2_{(45)} = 60.371$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $CFI = .986$ ,  $RMSEA = .039$ ,  $SRMR = .035$ . In line with our hypothesis negative metastereotypes positively predicted aggressiveness ( $B = .45$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .001$ ), aggression in conflicts ( $B = .41$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ), aggressive behavior ( $B = .40$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and negative attitudes towards the law ( $B = .23$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

<< FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

The moderating effect of self-esteem (Hypothesis 2) was tested in Model 2. For this analysis self-esteem and the latent interaction between metastereotypes and self-esteem were entered as additional predictors into the basic model. To estimate the fit of a model involving a latent interaction, there is no absolute fit index available. Instead, one can compare the relative fit (-2 Log-Likelihood) of the model involving only the main effects with a second model involving the main effects plus the interaction (Klein and Moosbrugger, 2000). Applying this strategy, we could not find a significant improvement of the model by entering the interaction term ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 7.31$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = .12$ ). However, one moderation effect, that is, self-esteem moderating the impact of negative metastereotypes on negative attitudes towards the law, approached significance ( $B = .27$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .058$ ; all other moderations  $p$ 's  $> .22$ ; see Table 2).

<< TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE >>

Simple slope analysis (Aiken and West, 1991) was applied to examine the marginally significant interaction in more detail. We found that negative metastereotypes only predicted

negative attitudes towards the law positively among adolescents with high self-esteem ( $B = .41, SE = .12, p < .001$ ), whereas there was no significant relationship among adolescents with low self-esteem ( $B = .07, SE = .15, p = .65$ ). Predicted means are depicted in Figure 2.

<< FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE >>

## DISCUSSION

Results of the first study demonstrate that negative metastereotypes towards the majority society predict different delinquency-enhancing attitudes and behaviors. Importantly, as the sample consisted of adolescents already imprisoned, there is thus evidence that metastereotypes potentially contribute to a *stabilization* of delinquent behavior patterns. This effect was principally found for all participants, regardless of differences in self-esteem. Only for one relationship, namely between negative metastereotypes and negative law-attitudes, a marginally significant moderation by self-esteem was found. Consistent with our second hypothesis this effect was only significant for HSE.

Although Study 1 gives a valuable first insight into the negative consequences of negative metastereotyping in disadvantaged adolescents, it is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, our dependent measures represent risk factors for continued delinquency in a sample of already convicted and incarcerated adolescents. However, we cannot clearly establish if negative metastereotypes have an impact on actual delinquent behavior, and we can also not establish if the same effects are true for at-risk adolescents who are not incarcerated. Secondly, although we used a well-established measure of self-esteem, we did not cover all relevant facets of this construct. Most importantly, we only assessed explicit but not implicit self-esteem. Explicit self-esteem refers to deliberate and controlled self-evaluations as measured by typical questionnaire scales, whereas implicit self-esteem refers to automatic self-evaluations as measured by indirect procedures (Back et al., 2009; Greenwald and

Farnham, 2000). Explicit self-evaluations are likely to be biased by demand characteristics, impression management, self-deception, and self-enhancement (Greenwald and Farnham, 2000). Moreover, a valid and reliable assessment of personality traits via self-reports requires that all individuals have an explicit mental representation of the trait in question. In other words, in order to measure self-esteem reliably and validly, behavioral tendencies that indicate one's self-esteem have to be introspectively accessible (cf. Asendorpf et al., 2002; Koole and Pelham, 2003). Implicit measures of self-esteem, on the other hand, do not require explicit self-knowledge and can be considered less biased by self-presentational concerns (Bosson et al., 2000; Fazio and Olson, 2003). Thus, the general absence of significant moderation by self-esteem might be due to methodological features of the explicit self-esteem measure we used. This might especially be true considering that subjects were surveyed in a face-to-face interview situation.

In Study 2 we aimed to address the mentioned limitations. Firstly, our sample consisted of educationally disadvantaged adolescents, who had no apparent criminal record. Secondly, we asked for actual delinquent behavior as our dependent measure. Thirdly, we used an established measure of individuals' implicit self-esteem, the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald et al., 1998).

## **STUDY 2 – EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED ADOLESCENTS**

In Study 2 we gathered data from a sample of educationally disadvantaged adolescents in vocational schools. Our participants visited special courses that aim at preparing pupils with exceptionally poor employment prospects for the labor market. These pupils had either failed to obtain the lowest degree in the German stratified school system (“Hauptschulabschluss”) and thus left school without any degree, or had obtained the degree but were subsequently unsuccessful with any of their apprenticeship applications. Most adolescents who participate in these courses come from families with a low socio-economic

status. Their low educational background is likely to be a source of marginalization and stigmatization (Gesthuizen et al., 2011; Solga, 2002). Thus, our negative metastereotypes measure referred to the impressions that the majority society holds of undereducated adolescents.

## METHODS

### Sample

Participants were pupils from four vocational schools in a middle-sized city in Germany. A total of 92 pupils were surveyed. Their mean age was 16.28 years (SD = 0.72; Range 15-18); 61 participants (66%) were male, 25 participants (27%) were female, and another six participants (7%) did not report their gender. 39 participants (42%) reported having received the “Hauptschulabschluss” (see above), 53 participants (58%) did not have a school-leaving degree. 66 participants (72%) were German citizens, another 13 (14%) Turkish citizens. All other nationalities comprised four or less participants.

### Procedure

Data collection was conducted in the classroom by means of a computer-based questionnaire. At least three experimenters were present at each occasion of data collection to reduce interferences. Participation was entirely voluntary; as an incentive, two cinema vouchers per course were raffled. The data collection took place in fall/winter 2010 in the course of a larger school research project.

### Measures

*Negative metastereotypes towards the majority society* were measured with the same six items as in Study 1. However, this time participants were requested to relate the items to educationally disadvantaged adolescents like themselves.

*Delinquency* was measured with 14 items from the “Delinquenz-Belastungs-Skala” [Delinquency Burden Scale] (DBS; Lösel, 1975), a frequently used German self-report scale for measuring actual delinquent behavior. Participants were asked how often they had committed certain legal transgressions during the last 12 months, for instance, “Beating someone up and injuring that person” or “Mugging or robbing someone.” Four-point response scales ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (four times or more).

*Implicit self-esteem* was measured with an Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald and Farnham, 2000), which was adapted by Schröder-Abé et al. (2007; see also Rudolph et al., 2006) to measure the implicit association between positive vs. negative attributes and the self. The self-esteem IAT measures the relative strength of associations between target stimuli (i.e., concepts related to the self vs. other people) and attribute stimuli (i.e., positive vs. negative concepts) by comparing response times on two double discrimination tasks (for details, see Schröder-Abé et al., 2007). Self-esteem IATs are among the most prominent implicit self-esteem measures, and their validity and reliability is well established (see Krause et al., 2011).

Some pupils had problems with this task, possibly due to the fact that the categorization became tedious after a while, and that they had a hard time reading the words on the screen. Those who had problems with the IAT were allowed to abort this part of the survey prematurely in order to prevent disturbances for the other participants in the same room. This somewhat reduced the sample size; in the end, 70 pupils (76%) had complete IAT data. IAT scores were computed according to a procedure suggested by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003).

## RESULTS

*Preliminary analyses.* Table 3 presents zero-order correlations and reliabilities for all measures. All scales showed good reliabilities.

<< TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE >>

*Test of hypotheses.* Because of the relatively small sample size, we used manifest variables for our analyses in Study 2. The proposed moderation by implicit self-esteem was tested by means of the PROCESS tool in SPSS (Hayes, 2012).

In a first step we tested our first hypothesis. The results of the regression are reported in the first column of Table 4. As expected, we found a significant positive relationship between metastereotypes and delinquency.

In a second step we tested the hypothesized moderation by implicit self-esteem. Both metastereotypes and implicit self-esteem were mean-centered prior to computing the interaction term in order to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991). The results of the moderated regression analysis are reported in the second column of Table 4. Most importantly, the interaction between metastereotypes and implicit self-esteem approached significance ( $B = .41, SE = .22, p = .060$ ). Because of the marginally significant coefficient, we looked at the moderation in more detail.

<< TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE >>

Simple slope analysis (Aiken and West, 1991) revealed that negative metastereotypes only predicted delinquency positively among pupils with high self-esteem ( $B = .32, SE = .10, p < .01$ ), whereas there was no significant relationship among pupils with low self-esteem ( $B = .06, SE = .10, p = .58$ ). Predicted means are depicted in Figure 3. Note that corresponding to



our predictions the highest delinquency resulted from a combination of high negative metastereotypes and high self-esteem.

<< FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE >>

## DISCUSSION

In our second study we examined the proposed delinquency-enhancing effect of negative metastereotypes towards the majority society in a sample of educationally disadvantaged adolescents. Extending Study 1, this time we used actual delinquent behavior as the dependent variable and implicit self-esteem as the moderator. Importantly, the latter enabled us to assess participants' self-esteem comparatively unbiased (Fazio & Olson, 2003). The findings of Study 2 largely confirmed our hypotheses. We found a significant main effect of negative metastereotypes on delinquency (Hypothesis 1). Thus, metastereotypes apparently also contribute to the *emergence* of delinquent behavior patterns in adolescents without an obvious prior criminal background. This effect, however, was only found among HSE (Hypothesis 2), although the interaction effect was only marginally significant.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current research investigated the impact of negative metastereotypes on delinquency in two disadvantaged groups: incarcerated adolescents and educationally disadvantaged adolescents in vocational schools. Particularly, we hypothesized that negative metastereotypes towards the majority society would enhance delinquency in these two groups. Furthermore, we predicted that this effect would be moderated by self-esteem. Whereas the first hypothesis received unambiguous support in both studies, empirical evidence regarding the second hypothesis was weaker, albeit consistent with our reasoning: Negative

metastereotypes are more likely to feed into delinquent behavioral tendencies when one's positive self-regard is high.

To our knowledge this study is the first attempt to transfer the basic ideas of the Modified Labeling Approach (Link et al., 1989) – namely, that perceptions of negative societal stereotypes about disadvantaged groups can alter the attitudes and behaviors of group members in a negative way – to the context of delinquency. Although previous research was able to show the link between labeling and delinquency (Bernburg et al., 2006; Farrington, 1977), and negative metastereotypes and the legitimization of antisocial behaviors by the ingroup (Kamans et al., 2009), the novel contribution of the current study is to combine both research areas and show a significant impact of negative metastereotypes on actual delinquent behavior. Given that delinquency can be understood as an extreme way of disobeying the rules and norms of the devaluing outgroup, our findings are consistent with other research showing that group members who perceive a stable, low status of the ingroup (and thus have “nothing to lose”) display the most extreme ingroup favoring and outgroup derogating behaviors (Scheepers et al., 2006a; 2006b).

With the current paper we extend previous research by investigating self-esteem as an important moderator. In line with research on self-esteem, narcissism, and aggression (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Bushman et al., 2009), as well as on self-esteem, emotion expressivity, and approach vs. avoidance behavior (Gaucher et al., 2012; Heimpel et al., 2006), we found that explicit (Study 1) and implicit HSE (Study 2) are most likely to engage in delinquent behaviors when experiencing negative metastereotypes; for LSE, on the other hand, negative metastereotypes were unrelated to delinquency.

One objection to our line of reasoning concerning self-esteem could be that previous research has demonstrated high self-esteem as an important buffer against negative consequences. For example, self-esteem has been shown to buffer demotivation (Brockner et al., 1987) and emotional distress (Brown, 2010) following failure or negative feedback. Yet,

we would argue that an important difference in our study is the perceived devaluation of the *whole ingroup* by the *majority society*, compared to negative feedback by an experimenter or an ostensible fellow participant on a specific task performance. One can imagine that being personally disregarded because of a particular group membership implies a more long-lasting, severe, and possibly inescapable impact on affected persons, as one's standing in society might have serious implications for one's life's journey (e.g., employment opportunities, social connections, etc.). Consequently, one important factor determining buffering vs. intensifying influences of high self-esteem could be the perceived capability of dealing with imposed threats. We reason that the threat posed by negative views of the majority society on the ingroup most probably provokes a feeling of incapability.

Notwithstanding the above, we acknowledge that differences in *individual* self-esteem might not be the only, or even the most promising moderator of the relationship between metastereotypes and delinquency. Particularly, measures of *collective* self-esteem (Luthanen and Crocker, 1992) could prove valuable, as negative metastereotypes should be most threatening for individuals holding highly favorable ingroup-views. Consistently, collective self-esteem is positively related to ingroup bias and outgroup derogation (Branscombe and Wann, 1994; Crocker and Luthanen, 1990). Future research should investigate whether the moderation effect is stronger for collective self-esteem and preferably incorporate both implicit and explicit measures.

### Limitations and outlook

The present study renders important new insights regarding the negative consequences of metastereotypes towards the majority society. Nevertheless, it is also subject to certain limitations. Most importantly all calculations are based on cross-sectional, correlative data. Accordingly the question of causality is still open to debate, and alternative explanations for the present findings, for instance negative metastereotypes as a justification

strategy for delinquent behavior, cannot be ruled out. Although there are good theoretical reasons for the causal directions we hypothesize, a final conclusion can only be reached by future research; in particular cross-lagged analyses based on longitudinal data.

A second limitation concerns the processes underlying and the broader circumstances facilitating the impact of negative metastereotypes on delinquency. Although we make a strong claim that (social identity) threat elicited by perceived negativity against the ingroup (e.g., Link et al., 1989; Major and O'Brien, 2005) drives the effect, this emotion was not measured in the research at hand. Furthermore, even though there is evidence that incarceration (Pager, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993) and an extremely low educational background (Gesthuizen et al., 2011; Solga, 2002), respectively, go along with a *stable* low societal status, this was also not empirically examined in the current research. Against the backdrop of the societal relevance of the reported findings, future research would do well to examine possible mediators (e.g., feelings of threat) and moderators (e.g., perceived stability of low status) empirically to get an idea of the processes and the facilitating conditions that play a role for the relationship between negative metastereotypes and delinquency.

### Conclusion

The current research demonstrates that negative metastereotypes towards the majority society have the potential to increase delinquent behavior in disadvantaged groups. In addition, this effect seems to be particularly strong for HSE. The latter is even more alarming, as disadvantaged adolescents with high self-esteem could actually be assumed to have the best prospects for successfully completing their vocational schooling.

Our results suggest that tackling negative perceptions about the way society regards disadvantaged groups is crucial. As previous research has demonstrated that intergroup contact improves perspective taking (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008), fostering exchange between groups of different status in society could be a helpful means. Also, the way popular media

depicts disadvantaged societal groups is likely to fortify both stereotypes by higher status groups and metastereotypes by lower status groups. A responsible selection of media content could possibly help to lessen the impacts described in the current paper.

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**Table 1:** Zero-order correlations and reliabilities (Study 1)

<i>Measures</i>	No. of items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Metastereotypes	6	$\alpha = .89$					
2 Aggressiveness	8	.32***	$\alpha = .76$				
3 Conf. aggression	4	.25***	.62***	$\alpha = .76$			
4 Aggr. behavior	1	.22**	.52***	.42***	-		
5 Neg. law attitude	4	.18**	.34***	.33***	.21**	$\alpha = .62$	
6 Self-esteem	4	-.08	-.09	.13	.01	.19**	$\alpha = .72$

Note: Conf. aggression = Aggression in conflicts, Aggr. behavior = Aggressive behavior, Neg. law attitude = Negative attitudes towards the law. Reliabilities are displayed in the diagonal;  $\alpha$  stands for Cronbach's Alpha. \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

**Table 2:** Unstandardized coefficients for moderated regressions probing the metastereotypes × self-esteem interaction

	DV: Aggressiveness	Conf. aggression	Aggr. behavior	Neg. law attitude
Metastereotypes (MS)	.45 (.08) <sup>***</sup>	.46 (.10) <sup>***</sup>	.40 (.12) <sup>**</sup>	.24 (.09) <sup>*</sup>
Self-esteem (SE)	-.06 (.09)	.23 (.14)	.06 (.13)	.31 (.10) <sup>**</sup>
MS x SE	-.03 (.13)	-.22 (.18)	.02 (.23)	.27 (.14) <sup>†</sup>

Note: Conf. aggression = Aggression in conflicts, Aggr. behavior = Aggressive behavior, Neg. law attitude =

Negative attitudes towards the law. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. †  $p = .06$  \*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$



**Table 3:** Zero-order correlations and reliabilities (Study 2)

Scale	Number of Items	1	2	3
(1) Metastereotypes	6	$\alpha = .91$		
(2) Delinquency	14	.28**	$\alpha = .90$	
(3) Implicit self-esteem	-	-.02	.14	$\alpha = .86$

Note: Reliabilities are displayed in the diagonal;  $\alpha$  stands for Cronbach's Alpha. \*\*  $p \leq .01$

**Table 4:** Unstandardized coefficients for regressions predicting delinquency

	Model 1	Model 2
Metastereotypes	.19 (.07)**	.18 (.07)**
Implicit self-esteem		.13 (.19)
Metastereotypes x Implicit self-esteem		.42 (.22) <sup>†</sup>

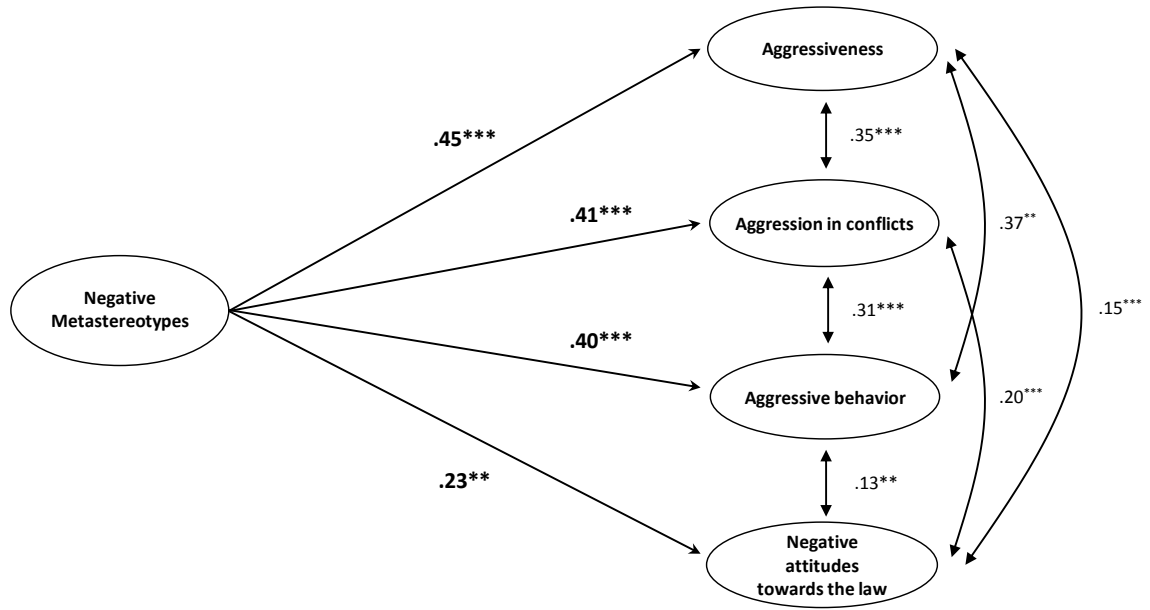
Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. <sup>†</sup>  $p = .06$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$

**Figure Captions:**

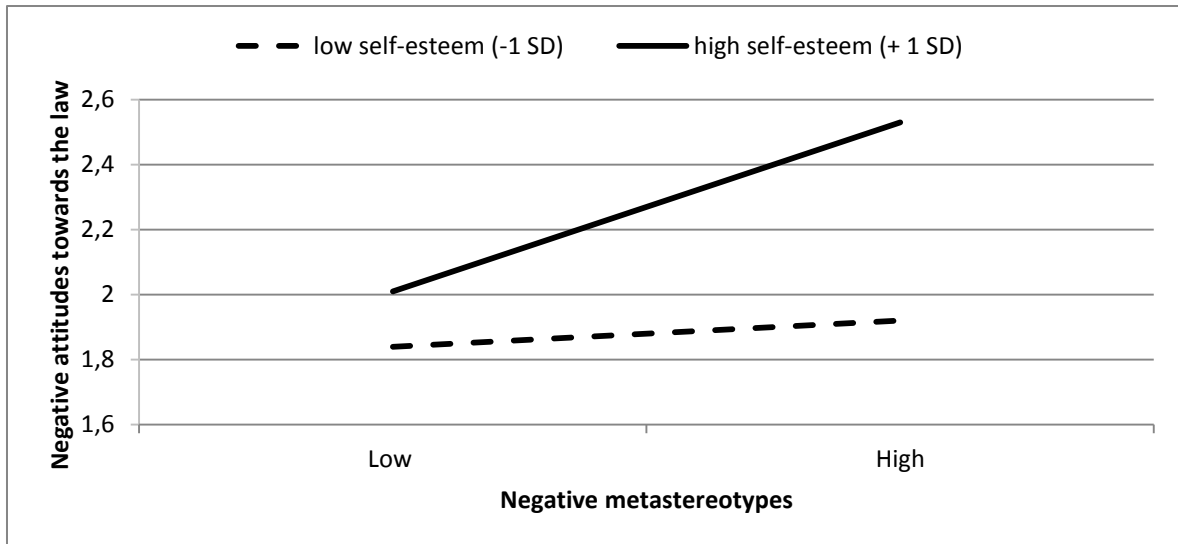
*Figure 1:* Unstandardized maximum likelihood coefficients for the structural equation model of negative metastereotypes predicting delinquency-enhancing attitudes and behaviors.

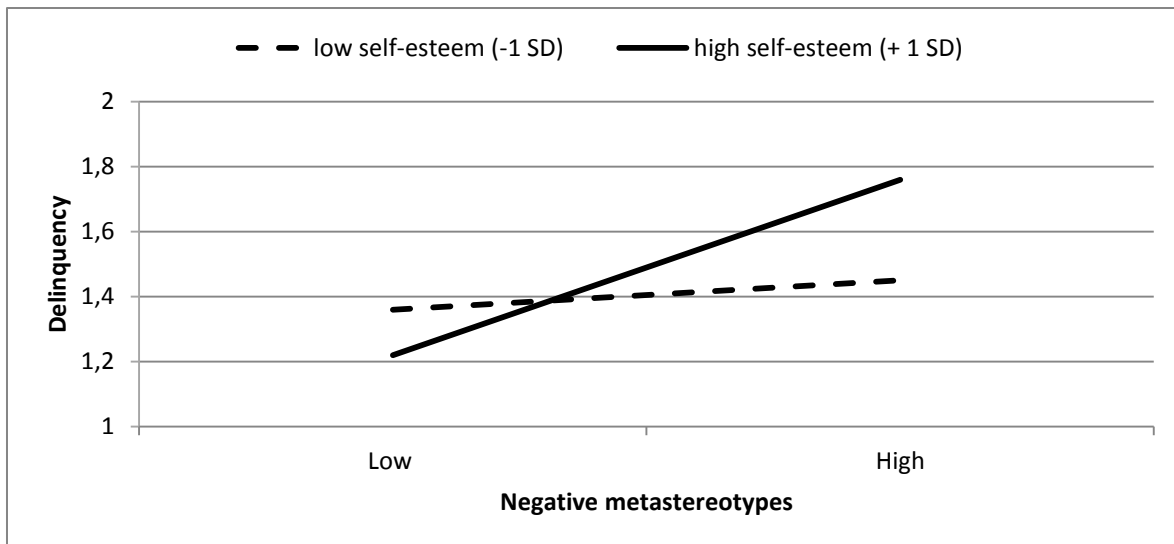
*Figure 2:* Simple slopes for the effect of negative metastereotypes on negative attitudes towards the law for low and high self-esteem (Study 1).

*Figure 3:* Simple slopes for the effect of negative metastereotypes on delinquency for low and high self-esteem (Study 2).



\*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$





**Manuscript #2:**

***Why Do Members of Disadvantaged Groups Strike Back at  
(Perceived) Negativity towards the Ingroup? Stereotyping and  
Expressions of Discontent***

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**Abstract**

This paper examined the implications of negative metastereotypes on stereotyped group members' reactions towards members of the privileged outgroup. We hypothesised that concerns over negative opinions that the dominant outgroup is expected to hold of the ingroup (i.e., metastereotypes) would undermine group members' perceptions of societal fairness, and that this effect would be mediated by members' recall of personal experiences of discrimination. We further hypothesised that views about societal fairness that are challenged in this way would lower proclivity towards normative protests but should heighten expressions of discontent in terms of non-normative actions (e.g., violent collective action, support for ingroup wrongdoings and aggression towards the outgroup). Results from two studies (Study 1, N = 50; Study 2, N = 132) provided support for these hypotheses and are discussed in light of legitimization theories and 'strike-back' hypotheses.

*Keywords:* Stereotypes, societal fairness, disadvantaged groups, collective action, social identity.



The last years saw remarkable instances of protest against social inequalities, like the Occupy Movement, the ‘Arab Spring’, and the autumn riots in London, to name a few. In the London riots in particular, young people from various disadvantaged backgrounds were seen revolting against what many described as unbearable societal circumstances (see Riddell, 2011; Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012) both in terms of their life outcomes and societal regard for them. Many in the popular media questioned the wanton destruction by these youths and described their actions as ‘needless, opportunistic, and completely unacceptable’ (e.g., UK’s Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg – see Sparrow, 2011). Others resorted to negative labels for those involved (e.g., criminals, chavs, thugs, etc., see “No excuses for this wanton criminality”, 2011; “The criminals who shame our nation”, 2011). Because people often try to present their ingroup in a favourable light (Klein & Azzi, 2001), one would have expected these youths to refrain from further riots in light of public disapproval. Instead, there were further expressions of discontent towards society. An interesting question is why these disadvantaged youths resorted to such disruptive behaviour.

One possibility might be that such societal disapproval of the ingroup reinforced existing beliefs about mainstream society’s negative regard and treatment of them, which in turn undermined their beliefs about societal fairness that then found expression in the actions they took. Thus, in the current investigation, we examine the link between negative metastereotyping and disadvantaged group members’ world-views and orientation towards (non-)normative expressions of discontent with the status quo. In addition, we consider the mechanism through which an effect of metastereotypes is passed on to world-views and subsequent (non-)normative actions and derive our predictions from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

*Metastereotypes and Perceived Societal Fairness*

Metastereotypes are beliefs about the impressions that outgroup(s) are expected to hold of the ingroup (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). For example, women might expect men to attribute the following labels to the ingroup: 'nagging', 'bitchy', or 'affectionate' (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011). Even the disadvantaged youths at the London riots might expect mainstream society to view them as *chavs*, *criminals* and *thugs*. Previous research has shown that these beliefs are often negative in content (Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998) and readily activated by powerless people (Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008), particularly when contemplating encounters with the outgroup (Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000).

We therefore reasoned that because people's appraisals of the world are often guided by stereotypes (Moskowitz, 2005), one might expect, too, that negative metastereotypes could have adverse implications for the way in which people *appraise* the world around them. Specifically, we propose that negative metastereotypes would be negatively associated with perceptions of societal fairness because such beliefs can increase the accessibility of *concrete* instantiations of ill-treatments one has personally received from the outgroup due to one's stigmatized group membership (Anseel, 2011). After all, holding negative views about a society that is dominated by the outgroup represents an indictment of this powerful entity and, because such accusations of wrongdoing can carry social penalties (in terms of further negative treatment and social isolations, Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006; Dodd, Guiliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001; Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Swim & Hyers, 1999) disadvantaged group members need to be sure that their views are based on 'facts'. That is, because metastereotypes are not directly verifiable (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997), and because inaccurate accusation of wrongdoing can have dire consequences for the self, recounting actual negative treatment one has

received from the outgroup might be one means of justifying a negative appraisal of society (Anseel, 2011). Indeed numerous evidence from the literature on reports of discrimination show that disadvantaged group members are generally reluctant to make accusations of unfairness unless they are certain such injustice has actually taken place (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003; Stroebe, Ellemers, Barreto, & Mummendey, 2009).

As well as establishing the link between ingroup directed negativity (in the shape of metastereotypes) on the world-views of members of disadvantaged groups, we were also interested in establishing how such undermined views about society impact members' readiness to express their discontent with the status quo. The social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) offers specific predictions for members' reactions to ingroup directed negativity and we will reflect on these next.

### *Social Identity Theory*

According to social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) people belong to a variety of social groups that form important parts of their self-definition. As a result of this, negativity directed against the ingroup (such as negative [meta]stereotypes) can lead to serious negative consequences for group members (e.g., lowered self-esteem, Gordijn & Boven, 2009; and negative emotions of anger, Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002). Members, therefore, use a variety of actions to deal with these concerns. These actions can range from social creativity strategies, such as reevaluation of group attributes or downward comparison (Becker, in press) to assimilation into behaviours expected by the outgroup (Kamans, Gordijn, Oldenhuis, & Otten, 2009) to exiting one's devalued group altogether (Ellemers, van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990) - particularly when intergroup boundaries are permeable (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990).

Importantly, and of particular relevance to the current research, members can also use collective action as a means of conveying their discontent with ingroup directed negativity (Becker, 2012; Klandermans, 2002; Reicher, 2004; see also Rubin & Hewstone, 2004) because such actions may be considered effective means of bringing about desired changes for the ingroup (Hornsey et al. 2006; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Because negative metastereotypes pose serious identity challenges for members of powerless groups in particular (Lammers et al., 2008) one might expect that such concerns would engender an orientation towards expressing discontent with the status quo.

One key assumption derived from the SIT approach to collective action is that collective actions are intended to bring about desired changes to the status-quo (e.g., enhancing material outcomes of the ingroup or improving the image and status of the ingroup). To this end, and in line with the social identity management hypothesis derivable from SIT (e.g., Hopkins et al., 2007; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2011, 2012), one might expect increased use of socially acceptable (or normative) expressions of discontent and decreased proclivity towards aggressive and violent forms of protest the more one is concerned about (perceived) negativity towards the ingroup. Indeed, it has been suggested that people often disparage members who adopt the latter (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). However, while we reason that an orientation towards the use of socially acceptable expressions of discontent may be the preferred reaction to ingroup directed negativity *in general* (see van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2010), we propose a concurrent process in which perceived negativity towards the ingroup is likely to also increase an orientation towards *non-normative* expressions (see Tausch et al., 2011; Wright, 2001; Wright et al., 1990, for a differentiation of normative vs. non-normative collective action). Namely, to the extent that a heightened negative metastereotype awareness accentuates beliefs about *pervasive*

societal unfairness, one might expect such beliefs to heighten members' frustration, which would be related to a greater orientation towards the use of non-normative actions (e.g., aggressive behaviour towards the outgroup, support for ingroup wrongdoing and readiness to adopt disruptive/violent non-normative expressions of discontent – see Berkowitz, 1989).

In other words, the more one is aware of negative stereotypes about their own group held by the majority, the more likely one is to question one's beliefs about societal fairness, which should then increase the likelihood to regard normative expressions of discontent as *ineffective* in changing the status quo. Consequently, this strategy might be rejected and disruptive behaviour might be chosen instead (Tausch et al., 2011). After all, one is unlikely to stick to *normative* expressions of discontent when one doubts the fairness of society (Calabrese & Adams, 1990; Reijntjes et al., 2010; Tyler, 1990). These assumptions are broadly supported by the reciprocity hypothesis (Gouldner, 1960; see also Branscombe & Wann, 1996; Doosje & Haslam, 2005) and the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1969, 1989). Furthermore, within the social identity tradition, the 'nothing to lose' hypothesis (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006a, 2006b) underpins our arguments by proposing *extreme* forms of intergroup behaviour when hierarchical relations that confer an inferior status position to the ingroup are stable (see also Wright et al., 1990).

Although SIT supposes that ingroup directed negativity (such as awareness of negative metastereotypes) can mobilise collective action, research on system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994)—and related legitimization theories such as the just world belief hypothesis (JWB; Lerner, 1980)—ostensibly suggest the opposite, if at all any link. In line with JWB, for example, people blame victims of wrong-doing to re-affirm a belief in a fair society, and one might reason at the back of this assumption that members of

disadvantaged groups might resort to ingroup blame when concerns about the ingroup are raised – a mind-set that is unlikely to mobilize action (i.e., “we are probably deserving of their negative attitudes towards us so why should we complain?”). A similar assumption is derivable from system justification theory to the extent that members may be reluctant (rather than mobilized) to engage in collective action to preserve existing social order that confers inferior social image to the ingroup (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost et al., 2012).

While bold in their assumptions, perspectives derived from these legitimation theories are not necessarily incompatible with those from SIT since the former does not account for the *personal relevance* of the victims’ (e.g., the ingroup) plight to the attributor (i.e., members). This is especially important since ingroup directed negativity (such as negative [meta]stereotypes and treatment) are events outside of members’ sphere of control and therefore not easily excused (cf. Crocker, Cornwell, & Major, 1993; Mak et al., 2007). In short, to the extent that group level outcomes have personal relevance for the self (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and these outcomes challenge one’s world-view, one might therefore expect members to take an *active* rather than *passive* stance to the negativity directed towards the ingroup.

### *Summary of Hypotheses*

We predicted that an awareness of negative metastereotypes would be negatively associated with perceived societal fairness, and that this relationship would be mediated by recall of personal discrimination (Hypothesis 1). It was further expected that a world-view undermined in this way would be positively associated with a readiness to engage in non-normative expressions of discontent (in the shape of aggression towards the outgroup, support for ingroup wrongdoing, and an orientation towards violent protests),

but negatively associated with an orientation towards normative protests (Hypothesis 2). These hypotheses were examined in two studies among members of two different disadvantaged social groups in two European countries (Britain and Germany).

### Study 1

This study was designed to examine hypothesis 1, namely that negative metastereotyping would undermine perceived societal fairness via recall of personal experiences of discrimination. An ethnic minority sample was used in the current study given their disadvantaged position relative to native British people (the dominant outgroup; see Heath & Cheung, 2007).

### Method

#### *Participants and Design*

Fifty ethnic minority people who were temporary workers at a postal delivery service depot in Britain took part in this study (78% were men;  $M_{\text{age}} = 22.96$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.87$ ). Of this number, 34% self-identified as Indian, 8% as British Indian, 24% as Pakistani, 4% as British Pakistani, 16% as Asian, 6% as British Asian and 2% as British Philippine. The majority (62%) reported possessing higher-education degrees (such as higher national diploma, bachelors and masters degrees) as their highest educational attainment, whilst 30% reported having NVQ (national vocational qualification) or A Level as their highest qualification. The remaining 8% did not indicate their level of educational attainment. Ninety per cent were temporary workers (recruited via job agencies) while 10% were permanent members of staff. In this study, metastereotype negativity (the focal predictor variable) was measured, as were recall of personal

experiences of discrimination (proposed mediator) and perceived societal fairness (key outcome).

### *Procedure and Materials*

Participants were told the study was about “Attitude and perception of different social groups in this society” prior to completing the questionnaire administered by an ethnic minority researcher. Specifically, participants completed measures for the current study in the following order:

*Metastereotype negativity.* In line with the current focus on the *valence* rather than *specific* contents of the metastereotype, participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “The *impressions* that native British people hold of ethnic minorities are generally...” (1 = *very negative*, 7 = *very positive*; reverse scored).

*Recall of personal discrimination.* This was measured with a five-item scale adapted from Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, and Owen (2002): e.g., “I have personally been discriminated against due to my ethnicity” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .74$ ).

*Perceived societal fairness.* This was measured with a four-item scale adapted from Major et al. (2002): e.g., “Advancement in this society is possible for both ethnic minorities and native British people”; “The society is a fair place where ethnic minorities and native British people can attain high status” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .78$ ). These items have also been previously used to tap system justifying beliefs (e.g., O’Brien & Major, 2005; O’Brien, Major, & Gilbert, 2012). On completion participants were debriefed and thanked for taking part.



## Results

Table 1 depicts the bivariate correlations among variables in Study 1.

Bootstrapping procedures were used to examine the predicted indirect effect<sup>1</sup> of negative metastereotyping on perceived societal fairness via recall of personal discrimination. An indirect effect is established when the bootstrapped upper and lower limits of a 95% confidence interval (CI) do not contain zero. Preacher and Hayes' (2008) SPSS macro for performing indirect effect analysis was used. In this analysis, metastereotype negativity was specified as the focal predictor, recall of personal discrimination as the mediator and perceived societal fairness as the outcome variable.

### *Indirect effect of metastereotyping on perceived societal fairness*

Results from a bootstrapped 95% CI for the indirect effect of metastereotype negativity on perceived societal fairness revealed, as expected, that metastereotype negativity undermined perceived societal fairness, and this relationship was explained by members' recall of previous personal experiences of discrimination (see Table 2).

## Discussion

The reported findings provide initial support for our key assumption that negative metastereotyping undermines group members' perceived societal fairness via recall of personal experiences of discrimination. However, questions still remain about the utility of this model in predicting members' responses in terms of their readiness to express their discontent with the status quo. This issue will be addressed next.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that reference is made to associations, and we have adopted the term 'effect' here (and elsewhere) in line with established usage in process analysis to avoid confusion (see Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

## Study 2

This study was designed to extend the predictions of our metastereotype undermined world-view model to normative and non-normative *reactions* to ingroup directed negativity. Furthermore, and to generalize predictions derivable from our theorizing to other disadvantaged groups, we used a different intergroup context to that used in Study 1: participants were adolescents from a disadvantaged educational background who attended (pre-) vocational education schemes, whereas the outgroup was the ‘majority’ of higher educated groups in Germany. Specifically, participants attended one of two courses, named ‘Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsgänge’ (BvB) and ‘Berufsausbildung in einer außerbetriebliche Einrichtung’ (BaE). These courses are financed by local German job centers and aim to qualify low-educated adolescents with poor employment prospects for the labour market. Attendants refer to themselves as BvBler and BaEler, respectively. Such educational backgrounds are stigmatized in German society (Solga, 2002, 2004), and therefore ideal for our purpose.

## Method

### *Participants and Design*

One-hundred and thirty-two adolescents who attended (pre-) vocational education schemes in Germany participated in this survey (49% were men;  $M_{\text{age}} = 20.34$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.43$ ). Of this number, 23% did not have a school-leaving degree; 70% possessed the lowest school-leaving degree in the German stratified school system (‘Hauptschulabschluss’) and 7% possessed a secondary school certificate, which however does not entitle holders to attend university (‘Realschulabschluss’). In this study metastereotype negativity (focal predictor), recall of personal discrimination (mediator), perceived societal fairness (mediator), were again measured as in Study 1. In addition, we

also measured non-normative (including: aggression towards outgroup, support for ingroup wrongdoings and radical non-normative protest) and normative expressions of discontent (outcome variables).

### *Procedure and Materials*

Participants were told the study was about “Attitude and perception of different social groups in this society” prior to completing the measures. Questionnaires were administered by a researcher from Philipps-University Marburg, Germany. Given the small number of students in each suitable education scheme, we enhanced our sample size by recruiting from two comparable institutions (BvB and BaE, respectively). All instructions were in German and participants were asked to complete the following scales:

*Metastereotype negativity.* This was measured with a 2-item scale similar to the measure used in Study 1 that was also consistent with the focus on valence: “The *impressions* that the majority of society holds of BvBler/BaEler are generally...” (1 = *very negative/extremely unfavourable*, 5 = *very positive/extremely favourable*;  $r = .78$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The items were reverse scored to form an index of metastereotype negativity.

*Recall of personal discrimination.* Participants completed the same 5-item measure of recall of personal discrimination as in study 1 that was adapted to suit the current intergroup context ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

*Perceived societal fairness.* Participants completed the same four-item scale used in study 1 adapted to suit the current context ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

### *Expressions of discontent*

*Collective action.* To measure collective action, we provided participants with a scenario and then assessed their possible reactions with ten items. The scenario read:

“Imagine that politicians have taken the view that money could be saved by cutting government funding for schemes like BvB/BaE. According to a recent poll conducted by the ‘Frankfurter Sonntagszeitung’ [influential German Sunday newspaper] this is also supported by the majority of the German society. Now please imagine that a demonstration has been organized in the federal state of Hessen. BvBler/BaEler and further affected persons like you want to show society how they feel about the cutting of funding.”

Next, participants completed a 10-item scale of protest actions adapted from Tausch et al., (2011) using a 6-point scale (1 = *totally unacceptable*, 6 = *completely acceptable*). This scale has been previously used to tap normative and non-normative (violent) forms of collective action, and a factor analysis performed on the data from the current study confirmed a 2-factor structure corresponding to normative (4 items, e.g., “Participating in discussion meetings”;  $\alpha = .89$ ) and violent (6 items, e.g., “Throwing stones or bottles”;  $\alpha = .91$ ) protest actions<sup>2</sup>.

*Support for ingroup wrongdoings.* This three-item scale was adapted from Tausch et al. (2011) and modified to suit the sample of the current study. Items had to be answered on rating scales ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree: e.g., “In general I understand BvBler’s/BaEler’s reasons for the use of violence to achieve their aims” ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

*Aggression against the outgroup.* Participants were again requested to read another scenario prior to completing related items:

“Imagine that you have just finished your BvB/BaE course and you are standing in front of the building chatting with some classmates. After a while, you spot a man

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete list of items for normative and non-normative protests including their respective factor loadings.

wearing a suit and holding a briefcase passing by. When he sees you he clings tightly to his briefcase while changing to the opposite side of the road, and keeps looking at you in a strange way.”

Participants were then asked how likely they were to show six reactions (1 = *extremely unlikely*, 6 = *extremely likely*): e.g., “I will chase him away”, “I will pretend not to have seen him (reverse coded)” ( $\alpha = .77$ ). On completion participants were debriefed and thanked for taking part.

## Results

### *Main analysis*

Preliminary analyses revealed that the two disadvantaged groups did not differ in any of the measures and were therefore combined for the main analysis. Table 3 depicts bivariate correlations<sup>3</sup> for all the variables in this study. The hypotheses were tested by means of latent structural equation modelling using Mplus 6 (Muthen & Muthen, 1998-2012), as this method offers the advantage of reducing measurement error (Muthen, 2002). To further enhance the reliability of indicators, item-parceling was used when creating manifest indicators of the latent variables and a random assignment to one of two

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the moderate to strong correlations of the 3 variables measuring non-normative expressions of discontent, one might either argue that all 3 constructs are in fact one but not different dimensions of expressions of discontent or, at least, that the non-normative actions and aggression towards the outgroup are the same construct. For this reason we compared a model in which all 3 constructs represent different dimensions (3-factors) with one in which they load on the same factor (1-factor) and a 2-factor model, in which non-normative action and aggression towards the outgroup loaded on one factor while support for ingroup wrongdoings loaded on a second factor. Results from a confirmatory factor analyses revealed that the 3-factor solution fitted the data significantly better than the 1-factor solution ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(3)} = 146.082, p < .001$ ) and the 2-factor solution ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(2)} = 101.186, p < .001$ ).

parcels per scale was applied. Item-parceling is achieved by averaging across a number of items to form one parcel and this procedure has numerous advantages over the use of single items in SEM. For example, item-parceling also ensures higher communality of indicators, and a better approximation to normal distribution (Bandalos & Finney, 2001; Kishiton & Widaman, 1994; Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002).

Furthermore, models based on item-parcels are more parsimonious (as the estimation of fewer parameters is required), which makes item-parceling particularly suitable for a modest sample size like the current one (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Little et al. 2002). In addition, maximum-likelihood robust estimation method was used, which is recommended for sample sizes less than 250 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and is robust against violations to the normal distribution of data (Finney & DiStefano, 2006).

First, we aimed to replicate the findings of Studies 1 and analysed the indirect effect of metastereotype negativity on perceived societal fairness via recall of personal discrimination. Again, bootstrapping (5000 re-samples) was applied to test indirect effects for significance (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). As in Study 1, there was a significant negative indirect effect (see Table 2), indicating that negative metastereotypes were reliably positively associated with recall of discrimination, and the latter in turn was reliably negatively associated with perceived societal fairness.

Having established this, in a second step we tested our second hypothesis, namely the impact of metastereotype negativity on normative and non-normative collective action, individual aggression against the outgroup, and support for ingroup wrongdoings via recall of personal discrimination and perceived societal fairness. This was done by calculating a model, in which all four outcomes were simultaneously entered. The resulting model is depicted in Figure 1. Note that direct paths from negative metastereotypes to the outcomes were allowed to enable simultaneous exploration of both

direct and indirect effects of ingroup directed negativity. Following the recommendation of Bollen and Long (1993) and Hoyle and Panter (1995), the adequacy of our model was checked using a variety of fit indices. One of these indices is the Sattora-Bentler chi-square statistic which examines the discrepancy between the specified covariances of the hypothesized model and that of the sample covariance. A small value of chi-square statistic relative to its degree of freedom is generally seen as indicative of an adequately fitting model - although this index has been noted to be particularly sensitive to sample size (Kline, 1998). Thus, in addition to the chi-square statistic we followed Hu and Bentler (1999) who suggested that well-fitting models should have values larger than .95 for Comparative Fit Index (CFI), less than .06 for Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and less than .08 for Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The hypothesized model showed a good fit with  $\chi^2_{(74)} = 91.968$  ( $p = .08$ ), CFI = .978, RMSEA = .044 and SRMR = .057. As expected, we found significant positive indirect effects for the three-way-mediations predicting individual aggression against the outgroup, support for ingroup wrongdoings, and non-normative collective action (see Table 4). Increased metastereotype negativity was associated with greater proclivity towards all three extreme expressions of discontent: An effect that was sequentially explained by increased recall of personal discrimination and lowered beliefs in societal fairness. In addition, metastereotyping *negatively* predicted normative collective action via these mediators (see Table 4).

In line with van Leeuwen and Täuber (2012) and Marques and Yzerbyt (1988), there was a significant direct negative effect of metastereotyping on support for ingroup wrongdoings, and a positive one for normative collective action (see Figure 1): Effects that are opposite in direction to the hypothesized indirect effects, and therefore indicative of a suppression effect (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000). In other words, group

members are *generally* less likely to support wrongdoings of fellow members when concerns about negative metastereotypes are raised, and are *generally* likely to also adopt socially accepted ways of expressing discontent, *outside* of our hypothesized process (i.e., via recall of personal discrimination and perceived societal unfairness).

To strengthen our argument that metastereotype negativity affects the outcomes via recall of personal discrimination and perceived societal fairness in particular, two alternative models were tested. Based on the idea that perceived societal fairness could potentially affect the outcomes independent of recall of personal discrimination, in one model the relationship between both variables was restricted to zero (Model 2). In particular, Model 2 also allows a test of assumptions derivable from legitimation theories – at least the indirect effect of metastereotype negativity on the outcomes via perceived societal fairness. In a second alternative model, and based on the argument that perceived societal fairness has an impact on the outcomes that is independent of metastereotype negativity and recall of personal discrimination, we specified a model in which the relationship between metastereotype negativity and world-views was additionally restricted to zero (Model 3). Table 5 depicts the fit values of the two alternative models compared to our proposed model showing that both Model 2 and Model 3 were a poorer fit to the data than the hypothesized model (Model 1). Furthermore, and consistent with our reasoning that personal relevance is important for translating metastereotypes into expressions of discontent, all indirect effects via perceived societal fairness in Model 2 were non-significant (see Table 6).

## Discussion

Corroborating findings of Study 1, the results from the current study provide further support for our first hypotheses that negative metastereotyping is negatively



associated with group members' perceptions of societal fairness and that this effect is explained by recall of personal experiences of discrimination. Importantly, and extending the findings of Study 1, the current study also suggests a mobilizing effect of a metastereotype undermined world-view on proclivity towards non-normative expressions of discontent and a demobilizing effect on proclivity towards normative expressions. Specifically, variations in members' world-views were associated with greater orientation towards extreme, violent actions, while at the same time being associated with a lower orientation towards peaceful, socially accepted forms of protest.

### General Discussion

This research aimed to examine the influence of metastereotypes on the world-views of members of disadvantaged groups, and how this in turn might impact their use of normative and non-normative expressions of discontent with the status quo. Specifically, it was hypothesized that negative metastereotyping would challenge members' views about societal fairness: An effect that was predicted to be mediated by recall of previous personal experiences with discrimination. It was further predicted that fluctuations in members' world-view following metastereotype negativity would lead to an increased orientation towards the use of non-normative expressions of discontent and decreased proclivity towards the use of normative protests. Taken jointly, results from two studies conducted within two countries (Britain and Germany) using two different disadvantaged group samples provided support for our hypotheses.

The current findings that negative metastereotypes undermine members' appraisals of the world around them are consistent with other research in the area, showing that ingroup directed negativity can have adverse implications for self-appraisals (Gordijn & Boven, 2009; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011) and may impact views about

society more generally (Studies 1 and 2; see also Anseel, 2011). The current research extends these previous findings, however, by outlining the underlying process. It demonstrates that (negative) metastereotypes heighten the salience of the negative treatment one has encountered as a result of one's group membership, and that this has a correspondingly negative impact on one's views about the fairness of society. In short, the current contribution is the first to present a 'collective memory' model of world-view with its corresponding implications for expressions of discontent with ingroup directed negativity.

Consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004) results also showed that a downward fluctuation in members' views about societal fairness following negative metastereotypes was associated with an orientation towards non-normative protest actions but decreased normative actions (Study 2). Specifically, members appeared to generally abide by normative standards in society: They ordinarily were less supportive of negative behaviour from ingroup members with increasing levels of negative metastereotypic concerns (cf. Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). There was also no significant direct association between metastereotype negativity and aggression towards the outgroup as well as non-normative protest. These results are consistent with the impression management literature which indicates that members of low-status groups generally orient towards pro-social behaviours towards the dominant outgroup, presumably to try to persuade a change in their opinions of the ingroup (see also Hopkins et al., 2007; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2011, 2012). This interpretation is further supported by the finding that members *generally* oriented towards more normative expressions of discontent with heightened concern over negative metastereotypes. In other words, members ordinarily try to avoid actions that may further reinforce a negative image of the ingroup in favour of more

socially accepted behaviour.

Nonetheless, and even as our data finds empirical support for impression management, it does at the same time shed light on the chain of processes that may lead to the opposite reaction – namely, use of non-normative (or even counter-productive) expressions of discontent with negativity towards the ingroup. Specifically, we have argued that impression management motivations are likely to be absent when members are confronted with *pervasive* negativity directed towards the ingroup, which diminishes *hope* for upward mobility. Correspondingly, in both Studies 1 and 2, we find that increased levels of metastereotype negativity were related to increased recall of personal experiences of discrimination which then heightened a pessimistic view about society. Such pessimistic views about society are unlikely to present sufficient motivation to adopt normative ways of expressing discontent with the status quo, as members may be unconvinced about their efficacy (cf. van Zomeren et al., 2008). Indeed, research on the ‘nothing to lose’ phenomenon (Scheepers et al., 2006a) has shown that members who hold pessimistic views about the opportunities open to them simply *strike-back* at the source of their frustration. This view is in line with numerous theoretical formulations in the social sciences, e.g., the reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) and frustration-aggression hypotheses (Berkowitz, 1969, 1989; Dollard et al., 1939), to the extent that people channel negativity towards sources of provocation.

While our findings correspond with a social identity approach to collective action (e.g., Klandermans, 2002; van Zomeren et al., 2008) they are, at first sight, at odds with assumptions derived from legitimation theories (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner, 1980). Legitimation theories suggest *passivity* when concerns about the ingroup’s social standing are raised. Indeed, we find some evidence for this assumption in that the direct associations between metastereotype negativity and aggression towards the outgroup as

well as with non-normative (violent) expressions of discontent were not statistically significant – at least when the errors associated with measuring these constructs are accounted for (see Figure 1). Similarly, the indirect effects of metastereotyping on the four outcomes (in Study 2) via perceived societal fairness (a measure used to tap system justifying beliefs in previous studies) were also not statistically significant.

One might also argue that even the fact that perceived societal fairness was significantly negatively associated with all forms of non-normative expressions of discontent but positively related to an orientation towards more socially accepted expressions (which may not necessarily serve to undermine the system) supports the utility of system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994; see also Jost et al., 2012). Nonetheless, one might also argue from this latter point that expressing discontent at all, regardless of how normative it is perceived to be, could bring about change to the status quo and, rather than supporting the legitimization theories, actually raises questions about their universal application. Future experimental studies could therefore aim to examine these competing accounts for the relationship between metastereotype negativity/perceived societal fairness and normative expressions of discontent. That said, the current data indicates that our SIT derived account of expressions of discontent when concerns about ingroup directed negativity are raised fits the data significantly better than accounts derived from legitimization theories (see Table 5, Study 2).

### *Limitations and Outlook*

Although we have tested and found supporting evidence for the hypothesised relationships, we acknowledge that the correlational nature of the current data does not permit causal inferences to be made. However, we tested alternative accounts of the key underlying process in both Studies 1 and 2 and found that the preferred causal direction

was better. We also tested competing theoretically derived accounts of the key outcome variables in Study 2 and again found that our preferred model was better. That said, we are mindful that there may be several other plausible alternative models derived from other theoretical assumptions that have not been the focus of the current investigation. The current findings, therefore, represent an important first step towards unveiling the structural processes that lie at the heart of the debate between social identity (Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004) and system justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2012) accounts of collective action. Indeed the question is no longer whether ingroup directed negativity orients members towards collective action – we know it does (cf. Reicher, 2004). The question is also not whether system justifying beliefs are associated with inaction or actions that may not necessarily change the status quo – we know this is the case (cf. Jost et al., 2012; see also Table 3). However, the present contribution shows that system justifying beliefs are not *stable*, and can be deflated by pervasive negativity directed towards the ingroup.

Related to the foregoing, future research could aim to experimentally examine the relationships shown here. Such research could also aim to incorporate individual and contextual differences that might dictate when members react normatively and non-normatively to ingroup directed negativity, and to find out which members are particularly susceptible to taking action when system justifying beliefs are salient and which members are prone to the inaction assumption derivable from system justification theory (Jost et al., 2004). These questions are beyond the scope of the current study.

### *Conclusion*

This research showed that negative metastereotyping is linked to reciprocal negativity towards the perceived perpetrators: an effect that was explained by increased recall of

personal discrimination and lowered perceptions of societal fairness. These findings are especially important against the backdrop of recent instances of protest against social inequalities, such as last year's August riots in London. In particular, our results suggest that labelling of the disadvantaged youths in the London riots by the media might have provoked disruptive expressions of discontent towards 'society' rather than encouraging more peaceful and normative actions, precisely because such labels heighten attention to negative personal experiences as members of an underprivileged group and call into question beliefs about societal fairness.

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## APPENDIX 1

## Factor loadings of collective action items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Throwing paint bombs on public buildings	.904	
Attacking the police	.900	
Throwing stones or bottles	.866	
Blocking streets	.784	
Setting fire on buildings	.722	
Blocking public buildings	.697	
Writing flyers and creating banners		.906
Participating in discussion meetings		.855
Taking part in demonstrations		.771
Signing a petition containing demands on politics		.732

*Note.* Principal axis factoring; Promax rotation ( $Kappa = 4$ ); correlation of factors:  $r = .279$ . Factor loadings  $< .300$  are not depicted.



**Table 1.** *Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics of variables in Study 1.*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Metastereotype negativity	-0.34	1.36	1		
2. Recall of personal discrimination	2.89	1.13	.40**	1	
3. Perceived societal fairness	3.93	1.35	-.38**	-.58***	1

\*\*  $p \leq .01$  & \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 2.** *The indirect effect of metastereotype negativity (MN) on perceived societal fairness (PSF) via recall of personal discrimination (RPD), Studies 1 and 2*

	Study 1			Study 2				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Two-tailed p-value</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Two- Tailed p-value</i>		
Total effect of MN on PSF	-.37	.13	.008	-.12	.11	.280		
Total effect of MN on RPD	.33	.11	.004	.39	.11	.000		
Direct effect of MN on PSF	-.17	.13	.183	.09	.11	.400		
Direct effect of RPD on PSF	-.58	.15	.000	-.56	.12	.000		
	<i>Boot B</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>		<i>Boot B</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
			LL	UL			LL	UL
Indirect effect of MN and PSF via RPD	-.20	.08	-.372	-.054	-.22	.07	-.394	-.098
<i>Plausible alternative indirect effects</i>								
Indirect effect of RPD on PSF via MN	-.08	.07	-.276	.019	.03	.05	-.047	.138
Indirect effect of MN on RPD via PSF	.16	.07	.044	.335	.06	.07	-.082	.187

*Note.* Number of bootstrap re-samples = 5000 (observed  $ns = 50$  [Study 1], 132 [Study 2]). *B* = Unstandardized beta weights, *SE* = standard error. *Boot B* = bootstrapped indirect effect estimate; *Boot SE* = bootstrapped standard error for the indirect effect estimate; Bias corrected CIs are reported. These indirect effects emerged even when age and gender were accounted for in both studies. Our hypothesized indirect effect was also consistent across Studies 1 and 2 while the same was not the case for two other plausible alternative processes.

**Table 3.** *Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics of variables in Study 2.*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Metastereotype negativity	2,82	.97	-					
2. Recall of personal discrimination	1,98	1.13	.35***	-				
3. Perceived societal fairness	4,57	1.10	-.09	-.54***	-			
4. Individual aggression against the outgroup	2,25	1.09	.04	.13	-.44***	-		
5. Support for ingroup wrongdoings	1,80	1.11	-.27**	.09	-.52***	.60***	-	
6. Non-normative collective action	1,49	.96	.18	.19*	-.33**	.69***	.58***	-
7. Normative collective action	3,39	1.65	.28**	.05	.18	-.14	-.25*	.23*

\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$  & \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.** *The Serial Indirect effects of metastereotype negativity on expressions of discontent via recall of personal discrimination and perceived societal fairness (Study 2).*

	<i>Boot B</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Indirect effect of MN on OA via RPD and PSF	.07	.03	.032	.167
Indirect effect of MN on SIW via RPD and PSF	.09	.04	.038	.204
Indirect effect of MN on NNCA via RPD and PSF	.05	.02	.017	.123
Indirect effect of MN on NCA via RPD and PSF	-.05	.03	-.149	-.011

*Note.* Number of bootstrap re-samples = 5000. *Boot B* = bootstrapped indirect effect estimate; *Boot SE* = bootstrapped standard error for the indirect effect estimate; Bias corrected CIs are reported. MN = Metastereotype negativity; PSF = Perceived societal fairness ; RPPD = Recall of previous personal discrimination; OA = Individual aggression against the outgroup; SIW = Support for ingroup wrongdoings; NNCA = non-normative collective action; NCA = normative collective action.

**Table 5.** *Fit indices of the proposed model and two alternative models in Study 2.*

	$\chi^2$ (df)	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)
Model 1	91.968 (74)	.978	.057	.044	
Model 2	117.620 (75)	.947	.086	.068	17.570 (1)***
Model 3	118.120 (76)	.947	.088	.067	22.525 (2)***

*Note.* *df* = degrees of freedom.  $\Delta\chi^2$  = Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). \*\*\**p* < .001

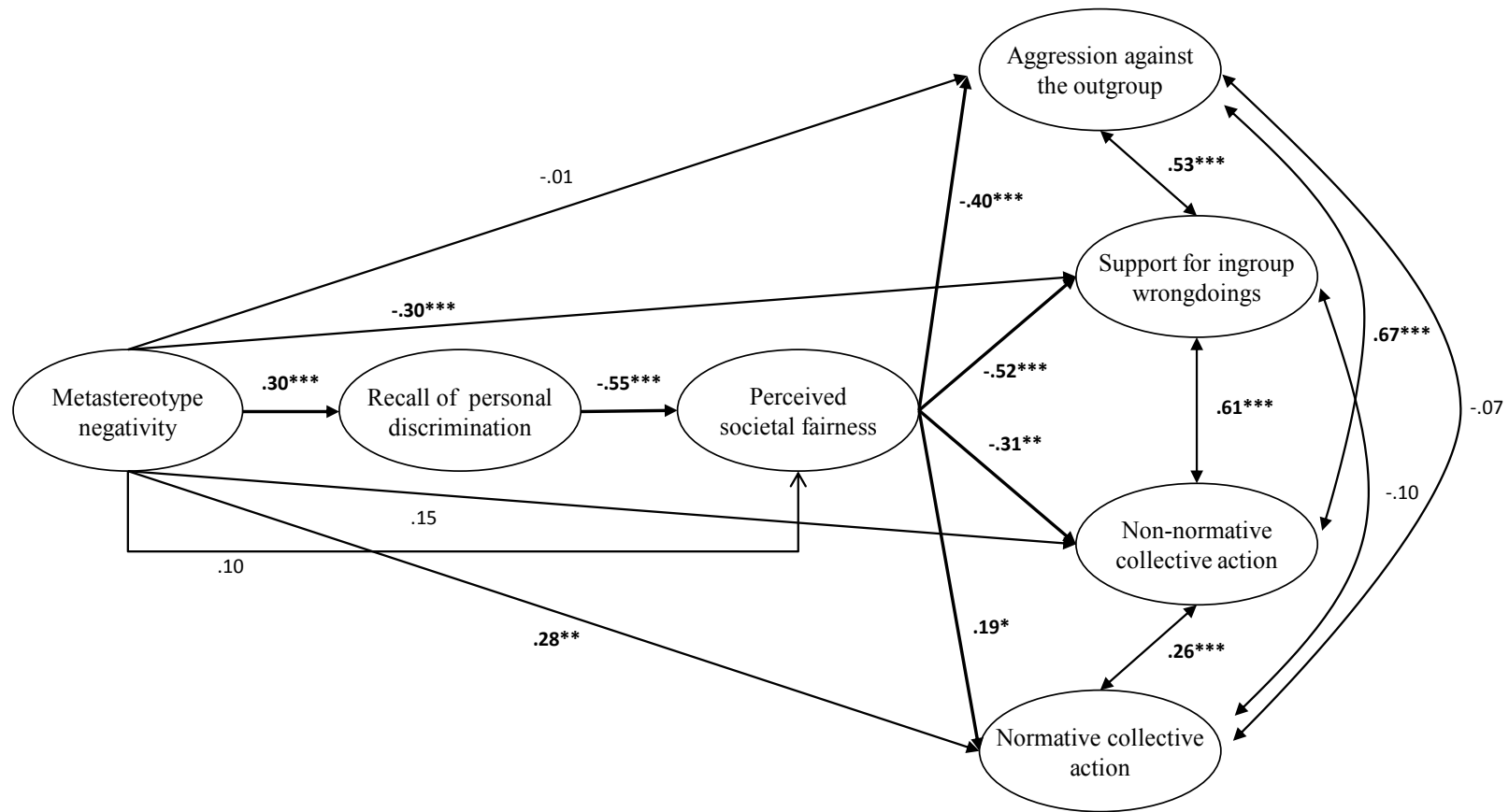
**Table 6.** *The indirect effects of metastereotype negativity on expressions of discontent via perceived societal fairness (Model 2, Study 2).*

	<i>Boot B</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Indirect effect of MN on OA via PSF	.02	.05	-.066	.126
Indirect effect of MN on SIW via PSF	.03	.06	-.100	.153
Indirect effect of MN on NNCA via PSF	.01	.04	-.044	.107
Indirect effect of MN on NCA via PSF	-.01	.04	-.130	.038

*Note.* Number of bootstrap re-samples = 5000. *Boot B* = bootstrapped indirect effect estimate; *Boot SE* = bootstrapped standard error for the indirect effect estimate; Bias corrected CIs are reported. MN = Metastereotype negativity; PSF = Perceived societal fairness; OA = Individual aggression against the outgroup; SIW = Support for ingroup wrongdoings; NNCA = non-normative collective action; NCA = normative collective action.

**Figure Captions:**

Figure 1. Structural equation model of metastereotype negativity affecting individual aggression against the outgroup, support for ingroup wrongdoings, and normative as well as non-normative collective action via recall of personal discrimination and perceived societal fairness: Standardized path estimates are presented.





***Manuscript #3:***

***Perceived Disintegration and Aggression: A Longitudinal Study with  
Low-Educated Adolescents***

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Submission date: October 16, 2012

**Abstract**

Social exclusion leads to aggression. In the past two decades this has been demonstrated both on an interpersonal and on a societal level. Besides that, recent violent uprisings, like the London riots in August 2011, have been linked to social exclusion in the media. However, so far there is a lack of longitudinal studies which examine the aggression-enhancing effect of societal-level exclusion (i.e., disintegration) in disadvantaged groups. The present research investigates the impact of perceived societal disintegration on aggression in a sample of  $N = 181$  adolescents with a low educational background by means of a two-wave longitudinal study. Structural equation analyses show that perceived societal disintegration enhances aggression, and that this effect is mediated by the extent of negative metastereotypes towards the majority society. Furthermore, the reverse path from aggression to perceptions of societal disintegration is also significant. We discuss the implications of these findings and highlight practical consequences.

**Keywords**

Disintegration, social exclusion, aggression, metastereotypes, cross-lagged

Social exclusion gives rise to aggressive responses. In the past decades, a multitude of empirical studies has shown this effect. So far, most studies have focused on *interpersonal* exclusion, demonstrating the aggression-enhancing effect in lab experiments (for a review, see Leary, Twenge, and Quinlivan 2006) or in school contexts with regard to peer rejection (for a review, see McDougall et al. 2001). However, several researchers have also considered the impact of *societal-level* exclusion, referring to the phenomenon as alienation (Calabrese and Adams 1990; Reijntjes et al. 2010) or disintegration (Heitmeyer and Anhut 2008). Corresponding with the latter research, violent uprisings, like the August 2011 riots in London, have been discussed with reference to social exclusion processes in the media (Topping 2011; Washington Post Editorial 2011). The link between societal forms of exclusion and aggression, however, has so far rarely been tested empirically, especially not in relevant samples such as samples of disadvantaged persons. What is more, longitudinal studies are as yet lacking. The current study aims at closing these very research gaps: We survey a sample of adolescents with a low educational background in a two-wave longitudinal study. Furthermore, we aim at extending previous research by empirically testing if negative metastereotypes towards the majority society mediate the aforementioned impact.

### Research on interpersonal social exclusion

In recent years there has been intensified research on the effects of a phenomenon, which is commonly referred to as social exclusion (e.g., Maner et al. 2007; Twenge et al. 2001), ostracism (e.g., Warburton, Williams, and Cairns 2006; Williams 2001; Williams 2009), or social rejection (e.g., Ayduk, Gyurak, and Luerssen 2008; Leary et al. 2006). This research is largely based on the core assumption that there is a fundamental human need to belong, which might have developed during evolutionary history due to the importance of belonging to a social group in order to secure the individuals' chances to survive (Baumeister

and Leary 1995; Buss 1990; Williams 2009). Correspondingly, recent findings indicate that humans possess an *ostracism detection system*, which helps them to respond to signs of social exclusion very quickly (Williams 2009; Williams and Wesselmann 2011).

However, while there is consensus on the existence of a high sensitivity for social exclusion, there is less clarity about the consequences of being socially excluded. Some research suggests that individuals tend to show prosocial behavior as a response to exclusion. For example, Maner and colleagues (2007) demonstrated across six experiments that socially excluded participants were more interested in making new friends, preferred to work with others rather than alone, saw other people in a more positive light and allocated more reward to new partners. Similarly, Williams, Cheung, and Choi (2000) found that participants were more likely to conform to incorrect judgments of a new group after having been excluded in a ball-tossing game. On the other hand there is a growing body of literature suggesting that individuals respond to social exclusion with antisocial behavior (for a review, see Leary et al. 2006). For example, Twenge and colleagues (2001) showed that excluded participants were more likely to damage another person's chances of getting a job and blasted another person with a higher level of aversive noise. Correspondingly, Warburton and colleagues (2006) found that participants who experienced ostracism in a virtual ball-tossing game and additionally had no control over unpleasant noise, allocated more hot sauce to a target person who ostensibly did not like hot food. Further support for aggression-enhancement as a reaction to exclusion comes from correlational studies examining peer rejection (for a review, see McDougall et al. 2001). For instance, in a longitudinal study, Kupersmidt, Burchinal, and Patterson (1995) showed that peer rejection was a powerful predictor of aggression and delinquency.

How can this apparent contradiction between prosocial and antisocial reactions be solved? Williams (2001) argues that four fundamental human needs can potentially be

threatened by ostracism: belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence. In his temporal need-threat model Williams (2009) reasons that the specific reaction to ostracism depends on which of the basic needs have been threatened, and which the individual consequently is motivated to fortify. If individuals focus on fortifying the former two (the *inclusionary needs cluster*), prosocial responses should result. On the other hand, if individuals focus on fortifying the latter two (the *power-provocation needs cluster*), antisocial responses should result. We will come back to this differentiation in a later section and discuss, why we predict aggressive behavior to result from social exclusion in the current study.

### Research on societal exclusion

The research reviewed so far was concerned with the effects of interpersonal social rejection, i.e., exclusion by peers or by ostensible other participants in computer games. We argue, however, that besides feeling excluded by (a group of) individuals, one can also feel excluded by society at large. Consistently, in their analysis of 15 school shooting incidences, Leary and colleagues (2003) deliver first evidence that rejection and exclusion from society and its institutions might play a role in terms of occurring aggression. In one of the incidences, for example, the perpetrator was suspended from school prior to the shooting, and it is known that Eric Harris, one of the Columbine shooters, was rejected from the US-Marines shortly before the massacre. Both school and the army can be considered as exemplary societal institutions. Further evidence for an aggression-enhancing effect of separation or estrangement from society is demonstrated by research on alienation. While the alienation construct likewise contains the notion of weak social ties (the *social estrangement* dimension; e.g., Mau 1992), it is more inclusive than interpersonal rejection, ostracism or exclusion, by comprising feelings of *powerlessness* (inability to control one's own goal

achievement), *normlessness* (refusal to accept societal restrictions), and *meaninglessness* (inability to see purpose in one's life and work) (see Calabrese and Adams 1990; Dean 1961; Mau 1992). As for empirical evidence, Calabrese and Adams (1990), for example, showed that alienation is connected to juvenile delinquency; and Reijntjes and colleagues (2010) demonstrated that alienated youth were especially likely to respond aggressively if they were confronted with acute peer rejection. The disintegration approach (Heitmeyer and Anhut 2008) is one more approach which directly links exclusion on a societal level with individual aggression. According to this perspective societal integration takes place on a *socioemotional* dimension (emotional and expressive relationships between people), an *institutional* dimension (opportunities and willingness for institutional and political participation), and a *social-structural* dimension (participation in society's material and cultural goods). Disintegration on any of these dimensions is hypothesized to contribute to a greater proneness towards violence (see Heitmeyer and Anhut 2008).

It should be noted that one explanation for the amplification of aggression by alienation and disintegration, respectively, can be derived from Williams' temporal need-threat model (Williams 2009). In terms of alienation, the subdimensions of powerlessness and meaninglessness are clearly linked to the power-provocation needs cluster, i.e., control and meaningful existence, and perceiving these needs to be threatened is hypothesized to result in antisocial behavior. The same is true for disintegration, where especially shortcomings in the institutional and social-structural dimension are likely to contribute to threatened power-provocation needs. More specifically, seeing no opportunities to participate in the political discourse and in political decision-making processes will probably lead to thwarted control needs, whereas insufficient participation in society's goods, e.g., negative prospects of employment and resultant poor access to consumer goods, will likely generate thwarted needs for a meaningful existence.

Besides the explanation by thwarted needs, further psychological mechanisms underlying the impact of interpersonal exclusion on aggression have been discussed and lead to the same predictions (for an overview, see Leary et al. 2006). We assume that many of these approaches can also be applied to exclusion on a societal level, thus explaining the aggression-enhancing effect of societal exclusion above and beyond the influence of thwarted needs. For example it has been argued that aggression might be shown in order to exert social influence (Felson 1978; Tedeschi and Felson 1994). Following on this, one might speculate that disintegrated individuals act aggressively because they want to convey the general impression that they are no easy targets of rejection and whipping-boys, respectively. In addition, individuals might utilize aggression in order to retaliate or take revenge for having been excluded from society (Leary et al. 2003; Zadro 2011). Furthermore, exclusion on a societal level might lead disadvantaged persons to withdraw from their more advantaged peers and associate with other devalued individuals (Adams and Evans 1996; Bernburg, Krohn, & Rivera 2006; Goffman 1963). From such associations, antisocial group norms are likely to develop, which contribute to further aggressive behavior. On the one hand, respective individuals will no longer feel committed to the rules and values of the society that rejects them and keeps them from “conventional” opportunities (Bernburg et al. 2006; Sutherland 1947; Warr and Stafford 1991), on the other hand, holding those norms in high esteem which dissent from the ones prevalent in society might be a way to create a maximum differentiation between the ingroup and the outgroup of majority society (Turner et al. 1987).

Summing up, we have good reasons to expect antisocial rather than prosocial outcomes of (perceived) exclusion from society.

### The current research

Our aim in the current study is to explore the effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression in more detail. Specifically, we reason that perceived exclusion on a societal level has an impact above and beyond that of mere interpersonal rejection. To test this empirically, we concentrate on aspects of powerlessness and meaninglessness in our measure of societal disintegration. To our knowledge, so far there has never been a longitudinal study which tested the relation of these exclusion-aspects with aggression involving participants who belong to a disadvantaged societal group. Thus, we hope to extend previous research in an important way.

In addition to demonstrating the effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression, we want to examine a possible mediating process. Particularly, we predict that the perception of societal disintegration will lead to an attribution process in disadvantaged individuals. Persons who feel disintegrated will be prone to find out why they are excluded from conventional opportunities in society. As a result, the respective individuals will probably perceive a negative view of people like themselves in society, i.e., negative metastereotypes. Metastereotypes refer to “a person's beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about his or her own group” (Vorauer, Main, and O’Connell 1998). In the study at hand the (low) educational background of our subjects serves as the categorization-feature for the ingroup, whereas the majority of society constitutes the outgroup. Consistent with our above-mentioned assumptions, previous research has demonstrated that “the powerless” engage in more activation and application of metastereotypes (Lammers, Gordijn, and Otten 2008). In addition, research has shown that members of stigmatized groups are more inclined to attribute social rejection (Mendes et al. 2008) and ostracism (Goodwin, Williams, and Carter-Sowell 2010) to discrimination and prejudice than members of non-stigmatized groups.



Negative metastereotypes, in turn, will further amplify aggressive responses. Consistent with this assumption, research on rejection sensitivity indicates that the effect of perceived rejection on aggression is mediated by the readiness to attribute harmful intent to the sources of rejection (Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson 1993; Levy, Ayduk, and Downey 2001). Furthermore, the attribution to negative views in society might contribute to further resignation concerning opportunities for reinclusion into mainstream society. Individuals who feel ostracized by society and consequently think that society judges them simply on the basis of negative images will not be confident about their chances of integration. Thus, aggression might become an even more feasible option to restore their thwarted power-provocation needs (Williams 2009; Williams and Wesselmann 2011; Zadro 2011). In addition, individuals without hope for reinclusion might also be less prone to adhere to societal norms that normally inhibit aggressive behavior. This, again, can fuel aggressive responses (Reijntjes et al. 2010; Twenge et al. 2001). It should be noted that the latter impact, i.e., the effect of negative metastereotypes on aggression, represents a self-fulfilling prophecy: individuals perceive that they are seen in a negative light by the majority society and eventually show the corresponding behavior. Again, this proposition is in line with findings of previous research showing that stigmata in general (Jussim et al. 2000) and metastereotypes in particular (Kamans et al. 2009) can become self-fulfilling.

Based on this line of reasoning we developed two hypotheses, which we want to test in the current study:

1. Perceived societal disintegration predicts aggression.
2. The effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression is mediated by negative metastereotypes towards the majority society.

To test the aforementioned hypotheses in an affected group, we recruited a sample of German adolescents with a low educational background for the current study. This sample consisted of adolescents without a school-leaving degree or with Hauptschulabschluss (secondary general school certificate; lowest degree in the German stratified school system) as well as young persons, who were completing an apprenticeship for a job, which is commonly associated with a low educational qualification (for instance chef, warehouse logistician, painter, etc.). It can be assumed that this category of people is confronted with societal disintegration and stigmatization, respectively, due to their low educational background (see European Commission 2007; Solga 2002; Solga 2004). Correspondingly, research has demonstrated that less-educated people are more likely to face stigma and discredit on the labor-market (Gesthuizen, Solga, and Künster 2008; Solga 2004), are confronted with an increased risk of in-work poverty and less well-being (European Commission 2012), and are more strongly affected by shortcomings in the domains of income, living conditions, necessities of life, and social relations (Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos 2002).

## METHODS

### Sample

At time-1, a total of  $N = 314$  pupils were surveyed. The mean age was 17.91 years ( $SD = 2.18$ , Range 15-27); 188 (59.9%) were male, 125 (39.8%) were female, and one person (0.3%) did not report his/her gender. Participants either attended a full-time school where parts of the lessons are related to practical work (Berufsfachschule,  $n = 134$ ) or a part-time school involving dual vocational education and training (Teilzeit-Berufsschule,  $n = 180$ ). Nineteen persons (6.1%) stated that they had not yet attained a school-leaving degree, 216 (68.8%) already had a Hauptschulabschluss (see above); the remaining 79 pupils (25.1%)

indicated that they had attained a Realschulabschluss or a similar secondary school certificate. The large majority ( $n = 272$ , 86.6%) were born in Germany, and 267 (85.0%) were German citizens. Forty-seven were of a different nationality, the largest group being Turkish citizens ( $n = 35$ ).

At time-2, one year later, we were able to recruit 181 (57.64%) of the original 314 pupils for the second wave of data collection (59.1% male). Among these, 161 (89.0%) were born in Germany, and 151 (83.4%) were German citizens. The mean age was 17.73 years ( $SD = 2.20$ , Range 15-27). T-tests concerning all variables of interest (i.e., perceived societal disintegration, negative metastereotypes, and aggression) indicated that the 181 participants with complete datasets did not differ significantly from the 133 participants who only completed the first wave of data collection (all  $p$ 's  $> .28$ ). Thus, drop-outs can be regarded as non-systematic.

### Procedure

Data collection was conducted in the classroom by means of questionnaires. Following a short introduction the questionnaires were distributed to the whole class at the beginning of a lesson and collected again at the end of the lesson. Participation was entirely voluntary, and written consent was obtained from the pupils and their parents (if students were younger than 18). As an incentive for participation, two cinema vouchers per class were raffled at the time of each wave of data collection. The first wave took place in late winter 2010, the second wave in late winter 2011; in each case approximately one month after participants had received their semi-annual grade reports. The relevant scales for the study at hand were part of a larger questionnaire, which was used in the course of a school research project concerning the development of pupils in vocational schools.

## Measures

*Perceived societal disintegration* was measured with four items, which were based on disintegration items by the research group around Heitmeyer and Anhut (2000). The scale comprised the following four items: “People like me are worth less than others in German society”, “With my background I will have problems when looking for work”, “For people like me leading a normal life is made difficult” and “In our society, people like me are not offered any chances”. The items were answered on four-point answer scales ranging from 1 (do not agree at all) to 4 (fully agree).

*Negative metastereotypes towards the majority society* were measured with six items, which had been cognitively pretested in a sample of 13 adolescents with a low educational background. Participants indicated how they think the majority society views people with their educational background. The resulting scale consisted of the following items: “The majority of society thinks that people like me are inherently aggressive”, “...have no discipline”, “...will never get anywhere in life”, “...duck out of work”, “...are unintelligent” (literal translation: “...have little in their heads”) and “...are antisocial”. The items were to be answered on four-point answer scales ranging from 1 (does not apply at all) to 4 (fully applies).

*Aggression* was assessed by means of a conflict scenario<sup>1</sup>. The scenario and related items were based on the evaluation study of an anti-aggression program (Prävention im Team, conducted by Lemmer, Neumann, and Wagner 2005) and on scenarios used by Labuhn and colleagues (2004). Participants were asked to imagine experiencing the following situation: “You are sitting on a bench in a park, listening to music from your MP3 player and waiting for a friend, with whom you want to meet up. A guy, unknown to you and slightly older than you, comes strolling along and sits down beside you. He puts his arm around your shoulders and says: ‘Come on shorty, give me your MP3 player, or else something’s going to happen!’”

Then they were requested to rate the likelihood of responding with each of the following behaviors on four point answer scales ranging from 1 (absolutely unlikely) to 4 (very likely): “I get up and go away without saying anything (recoded)”, “I tell the guy to get lost or he’ll get punched”, “I punch the guy”, and “I get up, tell the guy to leave me alone and go away (recoded)”.

## RESULTS

### Preliminary analyses

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and internal consistencies for all manifest measures. In line with our hypotheses all variables correlated positively. All scales showed satisfactory or good reliabilities.

<< TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

### Strategy of data analyses

All analyses were computed by means of structural equation modeling using latent variables with Mplus 6 (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2010). This method offers the advantage to control for reliability of measures (e.g., Muthén 2002). Item-parceling was applied to create manifest indicators for the longitudinal analyses; items were randomly assigned to one of two (perceived societal disintegration, aggression) or three parcels (negative metastereotypes towards majority society). Indicators generated by item-parceling are more reliable than individual items and the estimation of fewer parameters is required. Hence, item-parceling is especially suitable for relatively small samples, like the one considered in our longitudinal analyses (Little et al. 2002). Each manifest indicator was only allowed to load on one latent

variable. In the cross-sectional models, measurement errors of the two recoded items in the aggression measure were allowed to correlate; in the longitudinal models measurement errors of corresponding indicators were allowed to correlate over time (Little et al. 2007). Fit indices were evaluated based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations. They argue that values larger than .95 for Comparative Fit Index (CFI), less than .06 for Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and less than .08 for Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) indicate a good fit.

### Cross-sectional analyses

In the first step we tested hypothesis 1, i.e., the effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression, cross-sectionally with the time-1 sample<sup>2</sup>. As predicted, the effect was positive and significant ( $b = .25, SE = .12, \beta = .14, p < .05$ ). In the second step we tested the proposed mediational model with the time-1 sample. Standardized path coefficients are displayed in Figure 1. The model fit was good with  $\chi^2_{(73)} = 161.160 (p < .001)$ , CFI = .971, RMSEA = .062 and SRMR = .041. As expected perceived societal disintegration had a positive effect on negative metastereotypes ( $b = .86, SE = .12, \beta = .50, p < .001$ ), which in turn predicted aggression ( $b = .19, SE = .08, \beta = .19, p < .05$ ). The direct effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression was not significant any more ( $b = .07, SE = .14, \beta = .04, p = .62$ ). To test for significance of the indirect effect, bias-corrected bootstrapped estimates were calculated (5000 bootstrap samples). An indirect effect is considered significant, if the 95 percent confidence interval does not include zero (Shrout and Bolger 2002). We found that the indirect effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression via negative metastereotypes towards majority society was significant ( $b_{ind} = .17, SE = .07, CI_{95\%} = .04/.33$ ). Thus, we found evidence for our proposed model in the cross-sectional data.

<< FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE >>

To substantiate our second hypothesis, i.e., that negative metastereotypes are the mediator, in a next step we omitted the direct effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression and compared this model (Model 0) with two alternative models. In one of these disintegration mediated the effect of aggression on metastereotypes (Model 1). In a second alternative model aggression mediated the effect of metastereotypes on disintegration (Model 2). Table 2 presents the fit values for the three models showing that the hypothesized model (Model 0) fits the data better than both Model 1 and Model 2.

<< TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE >>

### Longitudinal analyses

*Loading invariance over time.* Before analyzing longitudinal data it is important to establish that the indicators of interest represent the same underlying constructs over time. In order to analyze and interpret covariance relations there should at least be “loading invariance” (Little et al. 2007). The latter is typically tested by comparing the fit of an unconstrained model, in which the relations of indicators and constructs are allowed to vary over time, with a more restricted model, in which the loadings of the indicators are equated across time. In the study at hand, loading invariance was tested by means of multiple group comparison with Mplus 6 (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2010). We followed the procedure outlined by Little et al. (2007) by first calculating an unconstrained and then calculating a restricted model for our three constructs of interest. We found that the restricted model did not differ significantly from the unconstrained model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 17.63$ ,  $df = 11$ ,  $p = .091$ ). Thus, our indicators represent the same underlying constructs at both times of measurement.

*Longitudinal test of hypotheses.* In order to examine the longitudinal relationships between perceived societal disintegration, negative metastereotypes towards majority society, and aggression, we computed a set of cross-lagged models. At first we estimated the cross-lagged effects of perceived societal disintegration and aggression. Standardized path coefficients for the resulting model are presented in Figure 2. The model showed a good fit of  $\chi^2_{(16)} = 10.708$  ( $p = .827$ ), CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 and SRMR = .020. We found that both perceived societal disintegration time-1 predicted aggression time-2 ( $b = .31$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and aggression time-1 predicted perceived societal disintegration time-2 ( $b = .28$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

<< FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE >>

To test mediation with two waves of data collection Cole and Maxwell (2003) recommend a pair of longitudinal tests: Both the effect of the predictor time-1 on the mediator time-2 should be estimated while controlling for mediator time-1, and the effect of the mediator time-1 on the outcome variable time-2 should be estimated while controlling for outcome variable time-1 (see also Little et al. 2007). Following these recommendations we estimated the cross-lagged effects of perceived societal disintegration and negative metastereotypes as well as negative metastereotypes and aggression in one model. Standardized path coefficients for the model are presented in figure 3. The model showed a good fit of  $\chi^2_{(68)} = 101.854$  ( $p < .01$ ), CFI = .983, RMSEA = .052 and SRMR = .062. Consistent with our hypotheses, perceived societal disintegration longitudinally predicted perceived negative metastereotypes towards majority society ( $b = .31$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ), whereas the reverse path was not significant ( $b = .04$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $\beta = .05$ ,  $p = .59$ ). The



same picture appeared for the second half of the model. Here, the cross-lagged path from negative metastereotypes to aggression was significant ( $b = .19, SE = .05, \beta = .25, p < .001$ ), but not the reverse path ( $b = .09, SE = .08, \beta = .08, p = .25$ ). Again, we tested for significance of the indirect effect by using bias-corrected bootstrapping (5000 bootstrap samples). We found that the indirect effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression via negative metastereotypes towards majority society was significant ( $b_{ind} = .06, SE = .03, CI_{95\%} = .01/.16$ ). Therefore, our mediation hypothesis is also confirmed longitudinally.

<< FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE >>

## DISCUSSION

Empirical findings from the field of interpersonal relations show that social exclusion, social rejection, or ostracism can result in aggression (Leary et al. 2006; McDougall et al. 2001; Williams and Wesselmann 2011). Furthermore, different researchers have argued that exclusion on a societal level, i.e., alienation or disintegration, has similar effects (Heitmeyer and Anhut 2008; Reijntjes et al. 2010). However, longitudinal studies examining this hypothesis in disadvantaged societal groups had yet to be presented. The study at hand is able to close this very research gap.

In a sample of educationally disadvantaged adolescents we demonstrate both cross-sectionally and longitudinally that perceived societal disintegration results in an amplification of aggression. This finding resonates with results from previous studies and can properly be explained by considering Williams' (2009) temporal need-threat model in combination with disintegration theory (Heitmeyer and Anhut 2008) and research on alienation (e.g., Calabrese and Adams 1990), respectively. In addition, further explanations for the aggression-enhancing impact of perceived societal disintegration seem reasonable. Aggression might be used as a

demonstration of not being an easy target of rejection (Felson 1982) and as a way of taking revenge for perceived devaluation (Zadro 2011). Besides that, aggression-enhancing norms in the peer-group of excluded individuals could foster the execution of aggressive behavior (Bernburg et al. 2006; Sutherland 1947).

Concerning the process of perceived societal disintegration affecting aggression, we are able to establish negative metastereotypes towards majority society as an important mediator, again both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. The more educationally disadvantaged adolescents perceive to be disintegrated, the more they also see themselves devalued by society and as a consequence, the more aggression they report. This mediation is in line with research on metastereotypes, demonstrating that powerless societal groups are especially prone to expect being judged on the basis of negative stereotypes by powerful outgroups (Kamans et al. 2009; Lammers et al. 2008). Furthermore, it corresponds with findings that social exclusion is attributed to discrimination and prejudice in stigmatized groups (Goodwin et al. 2010; Mendes et al. 2008). We interpret our results as evidence that individuals who perceive that they are societally disintegrated engage in an attribution process, eventually reaching the conclusion that people like them are stigmatized by society.

Attributing societal exclusion to negative views in society, on the other hand, implies a harmful intent of the perceived perpetrators, in this case mainstream society. Previous research has demonstrated that a respective attribution to harmful intent might enhance aggression (Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson 1993; Levy et al. 2001). Additionally, the perception of a fundamental devaluation by society lets the prospect of a successful reintegration recede into the distance. This might contribute to the anticipation of chronic ostracism, which is connected to more serious violence (Leary et al. 2003; Williams 2011). Moreover, it may also contribute to less adherence to societal norms inhibiting aggressive

behavior, as individuals without hope of reintegration might feel they have nothing else to lose (Leary et al. 2006; Twenge et al. 2001).

It should be noted that besides the longitudinal effect of perceived societal disintegration on aggression, we also found the reverse path to be significant, namely the cross-lagged effect of aggression on perceived societal disintegration. Again, this finding corresponds with research on peer rejection, showing that aggressive children tend to be the most rejected (Bolger and Patterson 2001; Dodge et al. 2003; Pope, Bierman, and Mumma 1989). However, as aggression predicts perceived exclusion *from society* in the current study, there must be further processes involved. Possibly adolescents displaying heightened levels of aggression get negative feedback from their environment, not only from peers but also from teachers and parents. They are probably cautioned that their behavior is inappropriate and will cause them trouble in the future, such as poor prospects on the job market. Thus, the increased perceptions of societal disintegration could be a result of prevailing feedback. Most importantly however, the finding of a significant reverse path has crucial implications, as it indicates the existence of a vicious circle: Individuals feeling disintegrated become more aggressive, which in turn contributes to further perceptions of societal disintegration. Thus, to reduce aggression, it is all the more important to break this vicious circle at some point.

### Limitations and future research

We believe that the present study renders important new insights concerning the effects of social exclusion on a societal level. To our knowledge, this is the first study which directly addresses the longitudinal relations of perceived societal disintegration and aggression. Thus, we are able to contribute significantly to the field. Nevertheless, the study is also subject to certain limitations. First, we acknowledge that measuring aggression in a hypothetical conflict scenario is not the same as measuring actual aggressive behavior.

Scenarios, however, have successfully been used to measure aggression before (e.g., Krahé and Möller 2004; Lemmer et al. 2005; O'Connor, Archer, and Wu 2001), and research has shown that results from psychological studies on aggression largely correspond with “real-world” findings (Anderson and Bushman 1997). Moreover, the situation portrayed in our conflict scenario was specifically designed to be realistic for adolescents and its validity has been demonstrated in recent research (Author 2012). Additionally, it included the threat of victimization and hence power-loss, which is particularly relevant when considering the relationship between social exclusion and antisocial behavior (Williams 2009; Williams and Wesselmann 2011). However, the question whether aggression following perceived societal disintegration is directed towards specific targets cannot be clarified with the current research. In our case, participants were asked to imagine a situation, in which an individual of unspecified group membership posed a threat to them. As previous research has debated aggression to be a means for taking revenge after exclusion (e.g., Leary et al. 2003; Zadro 2011), it would be especially interesting to examine responses towards ingroup vs. outgroup targets in future studies on societal disintegration.

A second limitation concerns the sample of the present study. One might argue that these adolescents are not considerably disadvantaged, since they visit special schools which prepare them for the labor market. Supporting this argument, the mean values of our disintegration measure were below the scale midpoint at both times of data collection (see Table 1). The fact is, however, that low educated people do face stigmatization and disadvantage on the job market (European Commission 2012; Gesthuizen et al. 2008; Solga 2004), and on the basis of our data we cannot decide with certainty whether these values are really due to limited feelings of disintegration or rather due to item difficulty. Additionally, we predict *even stronger* effects the more a group feels disadvantaged and the higher the level of perceived disintegration is (e.g., Calabrese and Adams, 1990). Future research will have to test this assumption. Particularly studies with objectively excluded samples, such as prison

inmates, long-term unemployed, or psychiatric patients, could shed further light on the negative consequences of perceived societal disintegration.

### Conclusion

Perceived societal disintegration is an important cause of aggression in adolescents with a low educational background. The present research demonstrates this effect longitudinally and furthermore unveils negative metastereotypes towards majority society as a mediating factor. Concerning basic research, these findings add to the existing knowledge about the negative effects of social exclusion and involved processes. On an applied level, our results offer a better understanding for the causes of aggressive behavior and thus seem suitable for explaining violent phenomena, like the August 2011 riots in London. Furthermore, they highlight two important factors, which can be targeted in order to reduce aggression: First, it is important to provide adolescents with opportunities for societal integration, such as chances on the job market and prospects for leading an independent way of life. Second, negative perceptions about the way society regards (educationally) disadvantaged groups should be tackled. This could, for example, be achieved by fostering exchange between societal groups of different status, or by making sure that media content does not portray disadvantaged groups in a way that confirms widespread negative stereotypes. Intervention appears even more important, as we additionally found a positive effect of aggression on perceived societal disintegration, which points to the risk of a vicious circle if no action is taken.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In a recent study, Author (2012) used the same scenario to measure aggression in a sample of incarcerated adolescents. They reveal a substantial correlation of this measure ( $r = .62$ ) with a short version of the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss and Perry 1992), thus confirming its validity.

<sup>2</sup> To check for possible gender differences in the hypothesized effects, we additionally calculated all cross-sectional and longitudinal models reported below with gender as a moderator. No significant moderations were found. Therefore we collapsed our data across gender.

## AUTHORS' NOTE

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**Table 1:** Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Internal Consistencies

Scale	Number of Items	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Correlations					
			Time-1			Time-2		
			(11)	(12)	(13)	(21)	(22)	(23)
(11) Time-1 Disintegration	4	1.75 (.56)	$\alpha = .76$					
(12) Time-1 Metastereo.	6	2.08 (.90)	.47***	$\alpha = .96$				
(13) Time-1 Aggression	4	2.45 (.77)	.13*	.20***	$\alpha = .75$			
(21) Time-2 Disintegration	4	1.71 (.63)	.46***	.27***	.32***	$\alpha = .83$		
(22) Time-2 Metastereo.	6	1.91 (.81)	.37***	.48***	.31***	.51***	$\alpha = .96$	
(23) Time-2 Aggression	4	2.45 (.71)	.35***	.39***	.62***	.29***	.38***	$\alpha = .66$

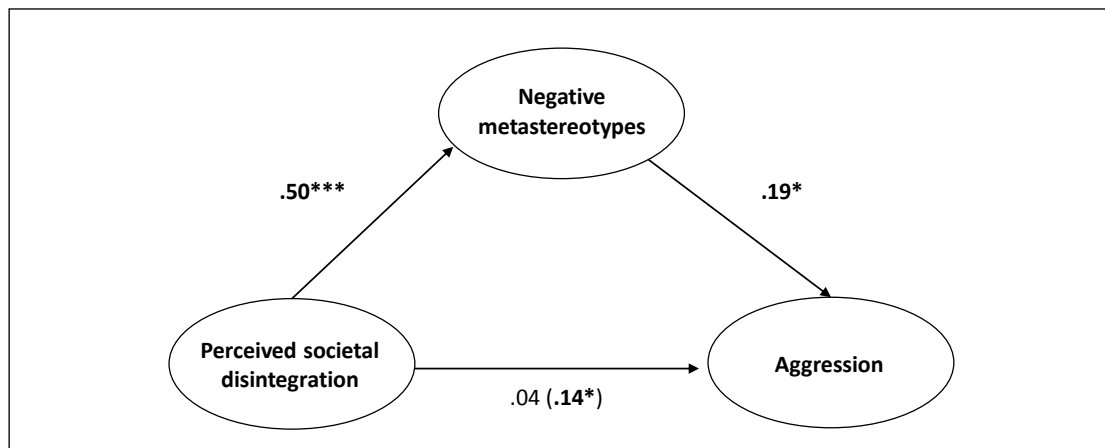
*Note:* Metastereo. = Negative metastereotypes towards majority society, Disintegration = Perceived societal disintegration. *N* = 314 for correlations between time-1 variables, *N* = 181 for correlations involving time-2 variables. \**p* < .05 \*\**p* < .01 \*\*\**p* < .001

**Table 2:** *Fit indices of the proposed model and two alternative models (cross-sectional)*

	$\chi^2_{(74)}$	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 0	161.413***	2.181	.971	.041	.061
Model 1	167.398***	2.262	.969	.059	.063
Model 2	224.613***	3.035	.950	.142	.081

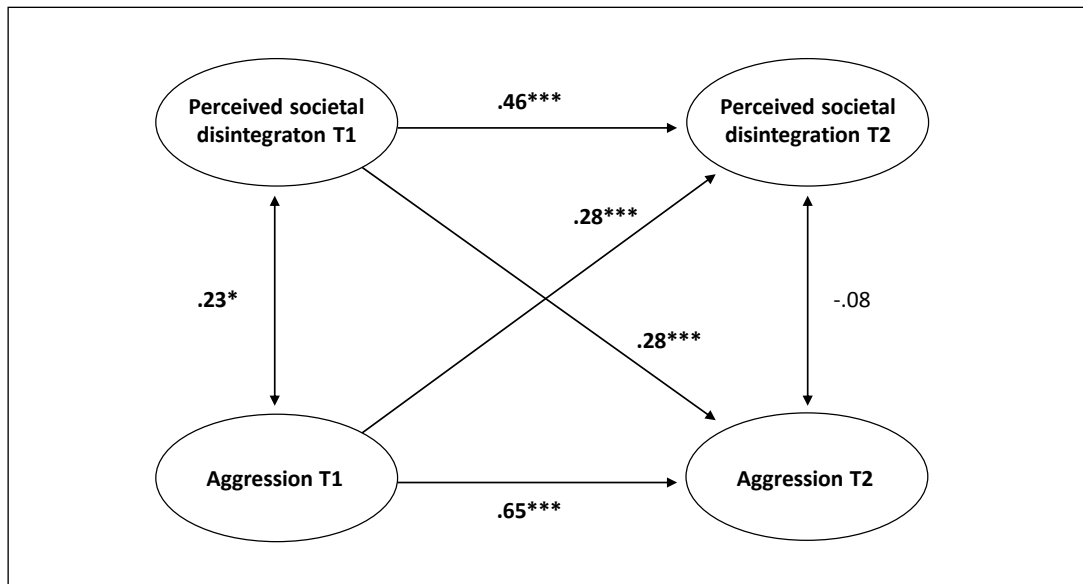
Note: *df* = degrees of freedom. \*\*\*  $p < .001$





**Figure 1:** Standardized maximum likelihood coefficients for the structural equation model of cross-sectional effects of perceived societal disintegration on aggression

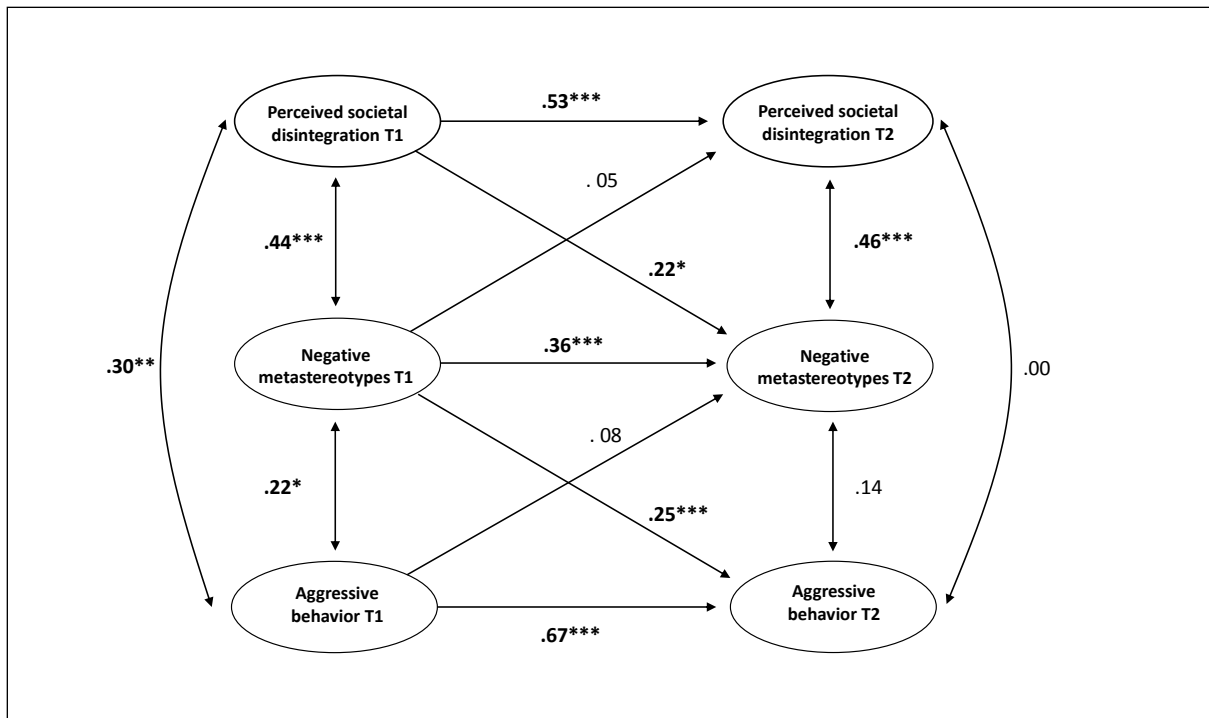
Note:  $R^2 = .19$  for aggression. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$



**Figure 2:** Standardized maximum likelihood coefficients for the structural equation model of cross-lagged effects between perceived societal disintegration and aggression

Note:  $R^2 = .59$  for aggression T2;  $R^2 = .35$  for perceived societal disintegration T2. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$



**Figure 3:** Standardized maximum likelihood coefficients for the structural equation model of longitudinal mediation by negative metastereotypes towards majority society

Note:  $R^2 = .58$  for aggression T2;  $R^2 = .30$  for perceived societal disintegration T2;  $R^2 = .28$  for negative metastereotypes T2. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## APPENDIX

Items in German as presented to the participants and English translations

*Perceived societal disintegration*

Items as presented in German	English translation
1. Leute wie ich sind in der deutschen Gesellschaft weniger wert als andere.	1. People like me are worth less than others in German society.
2. Mit meiner Vergangenheit werde ich später Probleme bei der Jobsuche haben.	2. With my background I will have problems when looking for work.
3. Menschen wie mir wird es schwer gemacht, ein ganz normales Leben zu führen.	3. For people like me leading a normal life is made difficult.
4. Menschen wie mir werden in unserer Gesellschaft keine Chancen eingeräumt.	4. In our society, people like me are not offered any chances.

*Negative metastereotypes towards majority society*

Items as presented in German	English translation
<i>Der Großteil der Gesellschaft denkt, dass Menschen wie ich...</i>	<i>The majority of society thinks that people like me...</i>
1. ...von Natur aus gewalttätig sind.	1. ...are inherently aggressive.
2. ...keine Disziplin haben.	2. ...have no discipline.
3. ...es im Leben zu nichts bringen werden.	3. ...will never get anywhere in life.
4. ...sich vor Arbeit drücken.	4. ...duck out of work.
5. ...wenig im Kopf haben.	5. ...are unintelligent. (Literally: ...have little in their heads.)
6. ...asozial sind.	6. ...are antisocial.

*Aggression*

Items as presented in German	English translation
1. Ich stehe auf und gehe weg, ohne etwas zu sagen.	1. I get up and go away without saying anything
2. Ich sagen dem Typen, dass er verschwinden soll, sonst "fänge" er sich eine.	2. I tell the guy to get lost or he'll get punched
3. Ich verpasse dem Typen eine.	3. I punch the guy
4. Ich stehe auf, sage dem Typen, dass er mich in Ruhe lassen soll, und gehe weg.	4. I get up, tell the guy to leave me alone and go away

## **2. Final discussion**

As outlined in the introduction, delinquency, violence, and aggression have serious societal consequences; not least because they contribute to huge economic losses (McCollister, French, & Fang, 2010). The phenomenon of youth violence in particular has recently dominated public debates in several European countries (see, for instance, Becker, Brandt, Kaiser, Neumann, & Scheuermann, 2011; Reicher & Stott, 2011; Telegraph View, 2011). Importantly, one prominent explanation for this phenomenon in the public debate is the increasing exclusion and marginalization of disadvantaged social ranks in modern societies (e.g., European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010; Heitmeyer, 2011; Topping, 2011). Against this background, and with reference to Labeling Theory, Social Identity Theory, social exclusion approaches, and related research, the current thesis set out to examine a construct that has previously received little attention in the explanation of antisocial behavior: *negative metastereotypes*. These are easiest defined as beliefs about the impressions that outgroup members hold of one's ingroup (Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998).

The main hypothesis of the current thesis was that negative metastereotypes towards the "majority society" (i.e., "I believe that the majority of society views people like me through the lens of negative stereotypes") have the potential to enhance antisocial behavior in disadvantaged groups. Across three manuscripts comprising five studies in total my co-authors and I found ample evidence for this effect. Across different samples – namely, incarcerated adolescents, low educated adolescents, and ethnic minority people – negative metastereotypes consistently predicted higher levels of antisocial behavior, such as aggression, delinquency, support for ingroup wrongdoings, or disruptive protest behavior. These findings are consistent with previous research by Kamans, Gordijn, Oldenhuis, and

Otten (2009), who demonstrated that negative metastereotypes can increase the legitimization of aggression and delinquency committed by the ingroup. However, the findings presented in the current thesis extend those of Kamans et al. (2009), most notably by demonstrating an effect on actual delinquency (Manuscript #1), by providing longitudinal evidence (Manuscript #3), and by adding moderators, mediators, and predictors to the picture (Manuscripts #1-3).

By consistently showing an increasing effect of negative metastereotypes on antisocial behavior, the current thesis builds a bridge between research in the tradition of Labeling Theory (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Furthermore, it seizes the fundamental idea of the Modified Labeling Approach by Link, Cullen, Struening, ShROUT, and Dohrenwend (1989), namely that beliefs about negative societal views on one's labeled ingroup lead to problematic behaviors, and transfers it to the criminological context. Additionally, in Manuscript #2 even a *decreasing* effect of negative metastereotypes on peaceful, socially accepted protest behavior is shown. This new finding is most alarming, given that peaceful protest should be an important and accepted means to stand up for one's rights in democratic societies; and especially so for individuals from disadvantaged social ranks.

As mentioned above, besides giving evidence of the impact of negative metastereotypes on antisocial behavior, this thesis was also able to establish specific moderators and mediators of the impact as well as predictors of metastereotypes. Regarding moderation, Manuscript #1 showed in two studies that the positive relationship between negative metastereotypes and delinquency is strongest for persons who are high in self-esteem. For persons holding low self-esteem, by contrast, no significant relationship emerged. Although I acknowledge that the interactions in both studies only "approached

significance”, in consideration of the small sample size particularly of Study 2 the effects nevertheless appear interesting and meaningful. The findings are in accordance with research on the role that self-esteem plays for aggression. Specifically, Bushman and colleagues (e.g., Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Bushman et al., 2009) show that individuals with highly favorable self-views react most aggressively after facing an ego threat. In the same way, those participants in Manuscript #1 holding high self-esteem reported most antisocial behavior as a consequence of perceiving a negative evaluation by the outgroup “majority society”. My explanation for this is that respective negative evaluations *from the outside* must be particularly threatening and offending for persons, who evaluate *themselves* positively. Thus, such individuals might be particularly likely to strike back. In contrast, for persons with little positive self-regard these negative outside evaluations do not stand in contrast to their self-evaluation and consequently do not come as a surprise. Thus, they generally have less reason to react to negative views they perceive society to have about them. Moreover, even if both individuals holding high and low self-esteem were equally offended by negative metastereotypes, those high in self-esteem would be more likely to actually express their anger (Gaucher et al., 2012).

Importantly, Manuscript #1 contained two different measures of self-esteem: an explicit one in Study 1 and an implicit one in Study 2. Results indicate that the moderation by implicit self-esteem is more reliable than the moderation by explicit self-esteem. This nicely resonates with arguments put forward by Greenwald and Farnham (2000), who propose that explicit self-evaluations are more likely to be biased than implicit ones, for instance, by impression management or demand characteristics. Moreover, a reliable inquiry of personality traits with explicit measures requires that these traits are actually accessible in the self-concept for all respondents (Asendorpf, Banse, & Mücke, 2002); while this is no

requirement for implicit measures (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Thus, the findings of Manuscript #1 clearly promote the future use of implicit measures – like the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) – when self-esteem should be measured reliably in disadvantaged groups.

Regarding mediation, Manuscript #2 allows some valuable insights: although the zero-order correlations of negative metastereotypes with four different pro- and antisocial outcomes, respectively, did not provide unequivocal support for the hypotheses (see also 2.1. Open questions), indeed an enhancing effect on antisocial and a decreasing effect on socially accepted behavior was demonstrated when two serial mediators were considered. Namely, metastereotype negativity was negatively related to perceptions of societal fairness, because it increased the recall of previous discrimination experiences. Respectively depleted perceptions of fairness in society, in turn, were related to increased proclivity towards aggression against the outgroup, support for wrongdoings committed by the ingroup, and disruptive forms of protest behavior. Additionally, depleted perceptions of fairness were related to a decreased acceptance of peaceful protest behavior as a means of fighting for one's rights.

Importantly, the mediation by recall of previous discrimination experiences indicates that *personal relevance* might be important for the translation of negative metastereotypes into antisocial behavior. This is particularly interesting in view of recent research, which explicitly separates metastereotypes of one's group from metastereotypes of oneself as a group member (e.g., Méndez, Gómez, & Tropp, 2007) and demonstrates that especially the latter, that is, personalized metastereotypes, can contribute to problematic behaviors (Kamans et al., 2009). Furthermore, the mediation by depleted perceptions of societal fairness strengthens the argument that the *stability* of one's disadvantaged position bears



relevance, as already discussed in detail in the introduction. The measure of perceived societal fairness particularly incorporated beliefs about possibilities for advancement and about equal opportunities in society. Thus, the mediation demonstrates that metastereotypes may strengthen the impression of disadvantaged group members that their low status is stable and inescapable and that they are caught in a “nothing to lose” situation. As already discussed, such impressions have been shown to contribute to outgroup derogation (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006a, 2006b). Similarly, in criminological theory the lacking prospect of reintegration into the community has been linked to the risk of reoffending in ex-offenders (Braithwaite, 1989). Likewise, in research on social exclusion the lacking prospect of social acceptance has been linked to aggressive responses (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Zadro, 2011).

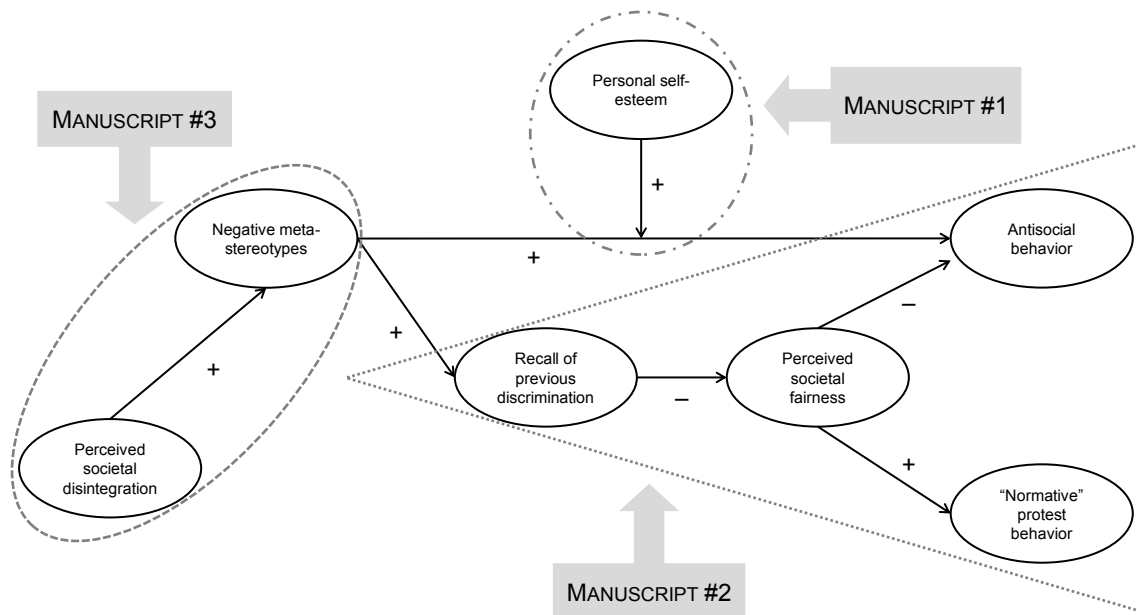
Appraisals about the stability of one’s disadvantaged status in society are also likely to feed into perceptions of societal disintegration, which are demonstrated as a predictor of negative metastereotypes in Manuscript #3. The more low educated adolescents felt disintegrated, the more they believed the majority society to evaluate their group on the basis of negative stereotypes. Furthermore, by means of longitudinal indirect effect analysis (Cole & Maxwell, 2003) negative metastereotypes were shown to be a mediator of the impact of disintegration on antisocial behavior.

Most importantly for the bigger picture, in Manuscript #3 there is thus first evidence for a predictor of negative metastereotypes: people who experienced that their ingroup is pushed to the margins of society expressed more beliefs about negative stereotypes against their group by the majority society. This corresponds nicely with ideas about the influence of stigmatization or low status on metastereotyping (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Vorauer, 2006) and research showing that being in a powerless vs. powerful position prompts the activation of

metastereotypes (Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). Furthermore, it gives first ideas how negative metastereotypes might be countered. Consistent with recent public debates (e.g., Heitmeyer, 2011; Topping, 2011), intensified attempts towards societal integration of disadvantaged individuals and social groups seem most promising.

### 2.0.1. The bigger picture

As already outlined in the introduction, I reason that the findings of the three presented manuscripts can nicely be integrated into a general framework. Assembling the evidence in one model, I propose that in disadvantaged social groups perceived disintegration from society enhances negative metastereotypes towards the advantaged majority society. Negative metastereotypes, in turn, lead to a greater accessibility of previous discrimination experiences due to the own group membership and, via this path, to reduced perceptions of societal fairness; eventually resulting in increased antisocial and decreased socially accepted behavior. Besides this *mediating* chain, the relationship between negative metastereotypes and antisocial behavior is also *moderated* by individual self-esteem, in a way that high self-esteem increases the effect. The resulting model is depicted in Figure 1. It is important to note, however, that the model only summarizes the findings of different studies in different contexts. Thus, a claim about its general validity cannot be made at this point, and of course a statistical proof of the whole model has not been brought forward so far.



**Figure 1:** Graphical representation of the main findings across three manuscripts.

*Note:* Antisocial behavior is an umbrella term for different aggression- and delinquency-related outcomes. Manuscripts #1 and #3 also provided evidence for the direct impact of metastereotypes on antisocial behavior; Manuscript #2 additionally involved the effect of metastereotypes on recall of previous discrimination.

Before turning to a discussion of open questions as well as implications of my results in the remainder of this thesis, I would particularly like to emphasize the special samples surveyed in the three presented manuscripts at this point. These consisted of members of evidentially disadvantaged groups in society, which were approached in a “natural” environment. Often enough social psychological research makes use of (comparatively easy to obtain) student samples to test its theoretical assumptions. Although I acknowledge the value of much of this work and appreciate the findings thus revealed, in my view research in truly affected groups is urgently required too. This is the only way to examine the processes under question in their naturally occurring context and to compare if they turn out the same as in the university lab. Thus, the external validity of research is a key issue. With obtaining data from actually disadvantaged and for researchers relatively hard-to-access societal

groups in prisons and in (special) vocational education classes I hope to achieve a reasonable level of external validity for the evidence I present.

## 2.1. OPEN QUESTIONS

Although I believe that this thesis renders new insights into the development of antisocial behavior in disadvantaged groups, I am aware of certain open questions that remain. As each manuscript is concluded by a thorough discussion of its findings including limitations, in the following I will only focus on issues that become recognizable in the big picture and/or have not been discussed before. These issues range from “manuscript-specific” (zero-order correlations in Manuscript #2) to “across-manuscripts” (understanding of social groups in the current thesis).

### 2.1.1. Zero-order correlations in Manuscript #2

Whereas Manuscripts #1 and #3 consistently showed positive correlations of negative metastereotypes and antisocial behavior, in Manuscript #2 (Study 2) the respective correlations were near zero or in one case even negative. Only when recall of discrimination experiences and perceived societal fairness were considered as mediators, the enhancing effect of negative metastereotypes on antisocial behavior was found. In my opinion the reason for these differences lies in the metastereotype measures used: while in Manuscripts #1 and #3 responses to *specific* negative metastereotypes were obtained, a rather *global* appraisal of society’s views on their ingroup was requested from participants in Study 2 of Manuscript #2 (i.e., “The impressions [...] are generally negative vs. positive”). Thus, it is possible that the metastereotype items of Manuscripts #1 and #3 were more deeply

processed and also had a greater personal relevance to the participants, as they probably answered based on their personal experiences. A global assessment of metastereotype valence, in contrast, might be given quicker without comparable consideration. Supporting this argument, Manuscript #2 demonstrates that once negative metastereotypes attain *personal relevance*, that is, lead participants to recall personal experiences with discrimination in the past, they do likewise predict antisocial behavior. Against this background, focusing more on the role that personal relevance of metastereotypes plays in determining their (negative) consequences appears as a fruitful direction for future research (see also Méndez et al., 2007; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2012).

#### 2.1.2. Disintegration vs. perceived societal fairness

As might have become evident from the discussions above, the constructs “perceived societal disintegration” and “perceived societal fairness” conceptually overlap in that they both incorporate the relationship between a disadvantaged individuals’ ingroup and society. Yet, in Manuscript #2 negative metastereotypes predicted perceived societal fairness while in Manuscript #3 they were predicted by perceived societal disintegration. An explanation for these seemingly contradicting findings could be the slightly different content of the constructs. While the disintegration measure used in Manuscript #3 focused on the subjective *actual state* of disintegration in society (Anhut & Heitmeyer, 2005; Schröder, Conrads, Testrot, & Ulbrich-Hermann, 2000), the measure used in Manuscript #2 rather surveyed the perceived opportunities for mobility of one’s group in society, that is, the *possibility to change* one’s disadvantaged status (Major et al., 2002). In terms of content, it is thus possible that actual appraisals of being disintegrated increase negative metastereotypes towards the majority society – possibly as the result of an appraisal

process, that is, of the search for explanations for one's disintegrated status – and that negative metastereotypes, in turn, deplete hopes for changes to the status quo.

Notwithstanding the above, from a statistical perspective one has to conclude that the two manuscripts also differ in strength of methods: While there is longitudinal evidence in Manuscript #3, there are only cross-sectional data available in Manuscript #2. Thus, in the latter case the causal order of variables cannot be entirely clarified for the time being. Consequently, future research should examine if negative metastereotypes causally predict perceived societal fairness by incorporating experimental or longitudinal designs. Furthermore, research could help to reason out whether the constructs of perceived societal disintegration and perceived societal fairness can empirically be separated and thus implicitly test the above-mentioned explanation by different content of the constructs.

### 2.1.3. Self-concept changes vs. threat

In line with the “looking-glass self” metaphor of Symbolic Interactionism (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934) and also with classic considerations of prejudice (Allport, 1954), a noteworthy proportion of recent studies associated with Labeling Theory postulate that labeling alters individuals' self-concepts (e.g., Bartusch & Matsueda, 1996; Brownfield & Thompson, 2005; Matsueda, 1992). Based on this notion, the chain from labeling to delinquent behavior is seen as follows: actual negative appraisals by others (e.g., “troublemaker”) are reflected by the target individual and integrated into his/her self-appraisals. From this process, a “troublemaker” self-concept develops eventually, which in turn contributes to behavior consistent with the self-concept, that is, delinquent behavior (Matsueda, 1992). Importantly, an essential part of this process is the *internalization* of the appraisals of others, and thus of the label.

In contrast, contemporary conceptualizations of stigma do not refer to internalization when considering the implications of devaluation by others – they even explicitly refuse this reference (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Rather, they see threat and coping attempts as driving forces in shaping negative consequences (e.g., Major & O’Brien, 2005). From this perspective, altered attitudes and behaviors result from coping responses to the threat elicited by stigmatization; an argument that can also be found in the Modified Labeling Approach explaining the maintenance of mental illness (Link et al., 1989). Importantly, research on the consequences of negative metastereotypes has not focused on internalization either. Instead, it has generally rested on the assumption that affected individuals *reject* the negative views and consequently might face anxiety or image-concerns (e.g., Klein & Azzi, 2001; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012). Even Kamans et al. (2009) – who actually do find that participants tend to *act in line* with the negative stereotypes they believe the majority outgroup to hold about them – do not explain this outcome by internalization, but rather as a strategic “way to maintain the distance between ingroup and outgroup” (p. 843).

What to make of these diverging perspectives? Do “threat and rejection” really have to contrast with “internalization”? First of all, I have to point out that neither of the constructs was directly measured in the current thesis, thus I cannot provide empirical evidence for the one or the other position. Conceptually, in the introduction and the manuscripts my argumentation is rather based on the idea that members of disadvantaged groups feel threatened or offended by the perceived negative views of the majority and that they intentionally show antisocial behavior to derogate the outgroup and reciprocate the experienced negativity, respectively. In my view the prediction that negative metastereotypes enhance antisocial behavior can therefore be derived without referring to

internalization of outside evaluations. However, I am also of the opinion that the two aforementioned perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One promising way to integrate them seems to consider the two processes in a temporal sequence. Initially, perceived negative stereotypes might be experienced as a threat or offense by members of disadvantaged groups and thus be rejected; a consequence could be the intentional derogation of the outgroup. If perceived negative stereotypes persist, however, they might in the long run also be increasingly internalized. This might eventually result in a “deviant” self-concept; as expressed in Gordon Allport’s (1954) famous conclusion, “One’s reputation, whether false or true, cannot be hammered, hammered, hammered into one’s head without doing something to one’s character” (p. 142). Based on this idea of an adjusted self-concept, the negative attributes might ultimately even be evaluated positively by the affected individuals themselves, as they form an important part of their identity, and might be upheld as norms of appropriate behavior. Such a process, of course, would again give rise to increases of antisocial behavior (Megens & Weerman, 2010; Sutherland, 1947; Warr & Stafford, 1991).

#### 2.1.4. Understanding of social groups

In this thesis I argue that perceived societal stereotypes about disadvantaged individuals’ *social group* can result in antisocial responses. One could object, however, that given the presented samples and my construction of the metastereotypes measures, at least in some cases I do not really study coherent and distinct groups. This argument might be less true for the sample of incarcerated adolescents in Manuscript #1, as research has postulated the existence of a criminal social identity among delinquents (e.g., Boduszek & Hyland, 2011) and shown social identity development in prisoners (Reicher & Haslam, 2006). Likewise, the



groups in Manuscript #2, namely ethnic minority people (Verkuyten, 2005) and participants in special vocational education courses<sup>1</sup>, can be considered as sufficiently clearly defined to be perceived as a coherent ingroup.

But what about the low educated adolescents in Manuscripts #1 (Study 2) and #3? Here, participants were requested to think about stereotypes the majority society holds about people with their (low) educational background and the items read “The majority of society thinks that *people like me...*” Indeed, the group was defined less clearly and the boundaries remained somewhat vague for these samples. However, in keeping with the seminal postulations of Social Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) I argue that establishing a contrast between those people sharing a categorization feature with oneself (i.e., the educational background) and a distinct category of people (the “majority society”) is enough to produce intergroup salience, namely to emphasize categorization into in- and outgroup (see also Brewer, 1979). This should even more be the case, as participants were asked to indicate the degree of *negative stereotypes* that “the others” hold about “people like themselves”, hence accentuating a conflicting relationship of the two groups (cf. Wagner & Ward, 1993). Additionally, the salience of participants’ group membership was further enhanced by the fact that the categorization feature that defined the ingroup, that is, the comparatively low educational background of participants, was a socially devalued one (see Crocker et al., 1998). As a result, I conclude that the intergroup context in each manuscript was sufficient to rely on measures that focus on the participants’ ingroup.

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminary discussions with teachers and pupils from special vocational education courses revealed that participants identified with the groups BvB (Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsgänge) and BaE (Berufsausbildung in einer außerbetrieblichen Einrichtung), respectively.

## 2.2. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This thesis started with a quote from Gordon Allport (1954) stating that the expectations and negative evaluations by other people are likely to leave their mark on affected persons. Consistently, in three manuscripts my co-authors and I have demonstrated that negative metastereotypes, namely the perception of negative views of one's disadvantaged ingroup in society, can alter the behavior of individuals in a way that it results in enhanced antisocial behavior. More specifically, across different samples it was shown that negative metastereotypes increase aggression, delinquency, negative attitudes towards the law, legitimization of antisocial behaviors committed by the ingroup, and disruptive protest behavior. Moreover, Manuscript #2 even provided evidence for a possible decreasing effect on socially accepted protest behavior. In view of the facts and figures presented in the introduction and recent public debates on youth violence, the societal importance of these results becomes apparent.

The findings of this thesis nicely go together with theoretical arguments as well as empirical findings from a variety of different disciplines and research areas. As outlined in the introduction, the three most important sources of inspiration were Labeling Theory (Becker, 1963), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and research related to the phenomena of social (Williams, 2009) as well as societal exclusion (Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2008). By combining different research areas the current thesis demonstrates how to build bridges between disciplines and how to profit from the insights of each field. Until now, there seems to be room left for improvements in this regard. For instance, during my occupation with this research I experienced that social psychology does only take little notice of labeling processes when studying the phenomena of aggression and delinquency.

On the other hand, criminological research does not seem to bother too much with intergroup processes when examining the emergence of crime.

My hope is that future research will benefit from a closer collaboration between disciplines. And of course, there are many research questions left for future research, some of which precisely become evident when considering the presented findings. For example, threat as an emotional component and stability as a (perceived) structural component have often been referred to in the introduction and the manuscripts; however, these concepts were not directly measured in the studies at hand. Future research could draw on this and examine the role of both concepts in the relationship between metastereotypes and antisocial behavior, possibly considering their role as both moderators and mediators. Additionally, the strength of ingroup identification could be a further construct of interest. Individuals who are strongly committed to their ingroup (i.e., high identifiers) should be particularly affected by perceived devaluation of the ingroup, as this threatens or challenges an important part of their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Consistently, previous research has demonstrated that individuals who strongly identify with their group tend to react strongest to ingroup devaluation, for instance, with outgroup derogation (see Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Wagner & Ward, 1993). Against the background of the findings of Manuscript #1, particularly *collective self-esteem* (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) seems promising as a moderator, as both self- and other-evaluations collide about the same issue, namely the ingroup.

In the preceding section (2.1.3.) the open question of internalization of negative other-evaluations and resulting self-concept changes was already discussed. Future research could explore these issues empirically by focusing on the development of self-concepts in disadvantaged groups over time. In particular, multi-wave longitudinal studies would be

suitable to examine if perceived negative views from the outside will manifest themselves in self-evaluations at a later point in time; and also if the meaning and valuation of these aspects changes over time<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, of course experimental settings are also suitable to explore the causality of effects and underlying processes in more detail. Recent studies presented promising ways to manipulate metastereotypes vs. control condition (e.g., van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012) and negative vs. positive metastereotypes (e.g., Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011).

The issues raised so far outline theoretical implications and suggestions for future research. Yet, as antisocial behavior does have important societal consequences (and also costs; cf. Introduction), I would particularly like to dedicate the conclusion of this thesis to practical implications. Given the negative consequences they can have, obviously the foremost conclusion is that changing negative metastereotypes could prove particularly beneficial. But how can negative metastereotypes be tackled? From Manuscript #3 it became evident that they are influenced by perceptions of societal disintegration. It follows that increased efforts have to be made to provide sufficient chances for disadvantaged individuals and groups in society, and to make participation in society more accessible for them (cf. Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2008). Thus, for example, increased possibilities of exercising political participation, more recognition for lower status jobs (such as blue-collar work), or treatment of ex-offenders in a “reintegrative shaming” manner (cf. Braithwaite, 1989) appear advisable.

An additional goal should be to remedy the negative stereotypes that are prevalent in society about disadvantaged groups. Within social psychology, research related to the

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<sup>2</sup> Having said this, especially if the meaning of concepts possibly changes across points of measurement, it is utterly important to test if the *measurement models* in longitudinal designs stay the same over time. Manuscript #3 gives a good example how to deal with this potential problem by means of latent structural equation modeling.

Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) prominently demonstrates that stereotypes are not only individual beliefs about certain (out-) group characteristics, but are also prevalent as *collective representations* consensually shared in society (see also Asbrock, 2010; Asbrock, Nieuwoudt, Duckitt, & Sibley, 2011). Important sources contributing to the development and maintenance of such collective stereotypes are, for instance, language, social norms, and the mass media (Stangor & Schaller, 2000). Because of its dominance and its overarching availability in modern societies, I particularly see potential for change in the mass media. In the German context, one just needs to take a quick look at popular TV shows, such as “Die Super Nanny”, “Frauentausch”, or “Mitten im Leben”, to understand how stereotypes about people with a low socio-economic background are conserved. This impression is supported by recent elaborate empirical studies, for example showing that unemployed people are depicted as generally incompetent and in need of help in the German print media (Sielschott, 2010). Consequently, people in authority in the media business could contribute to reductions of stereotypes – and possibly also metastereotypes – by a responsible selection of media content.

Notwithstanding the above, previous research has also demonstrated that metastereotypes tend to be overly pessimistic by overestimating the negativity of evaluations by the outgroup (see Sigelman & Tuch, 1997; Yzerbyt, Judd, & Muller, 2009). Therefore, it appears very promising to bring different social groups (of different societal status) into contact as a means to learn about the others’ actual perspective – which is in the best case much more positive than one would have expected. Consistently, a plethora of research has shown that intergroup contact helps to reduce prejudice and improve attitudes between groups (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). As Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) point out, one mechanism involved in this process is perspective taking; a

mechanism, which is likewise deemed as very important in metastereotype formation (Frey & Tropp, 2006). Following the idea of intergroup contact research, for example recent programs in German prisons aim at bringing prison inmates into exchange with groups from the world outside the prison walls, such as pupils from public schools. Although I think every precaution should be taken that respective exchanges are not experienced as visits to a zoo or adventure park, I see an important potential here to reduce stereotypes by getting to know the other as an individual with his/her own history, emotions, thoughts, and plans for the future, instead of seeing him/her only as the typical outgroup member. If both interaction partners succeed in understanding the other's perspective, then not only stereotypes but also metastereotypes are likely to be changed.

### 2.3. THE BOTTOM LINE

Previous research has shown that people give thought to the views that others hold of them as members of specific groups (Vorauer et al., 1998; Pinel, 1999). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that people tend to expect negative views when anticipating to be judged by outgroup members (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Yzerbyt et al., 2009). Adding to this, across three manuscripts my co-authors and I provided evidence that such negative metastereotypes have the potential to enhance antisocial behavior in disadvantaged groups. Against this background, maybe everyone (and particularly the advantaged ones) should from time to time ask him- or herself, "What are the pictures that I have in my mind when thinking about disadvantaged groups in society?" And even more importantly, maybe everyone should from time to time call these pictures into question.

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## ***Zusammenfassung***

Seit vielen Jahren beschäftigen sich unterschiedliche (sozial-) wissenschaftliche Disziplinen mit den Phänomenen Aggression, Gewalt und Delinquenz. Dass diese Themen besonders im Jugendalter eine hohe Relevanz haben, zeigen die derzeit hitzig geführten Debatten zur Jugendgewalt in verschiedenen Europäischen Ländern – zum Beispiel im Zuge der „U-Bahn Schläger“ Vorkommnisse in Deutschland (vgl. Becker, Brandt, Kaiser, Neumann, & Scheuermann, 2011) oder der als „London riots“ bekannt gewordenen Ausschreitungen in Großbritannien im August 2011 (vgl. Reicher & Stott, 2011). Als eine Erklärung für entsprechende Ereignisse wird die zunehmende Ausgrenzung benachteiligter sozialer Gruppen und Schichten in modernen Gesellschaften herangeführt (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010; Heitmeyer, 2011). An diese Erklärung anknüpfend, war ein Ziel der vorliegenden Dissertation, den Einfluss sogenannter „negativer Metastereotype“ gegenüber der Mehrheitsgesellschaft auf Aggression und Delinquenz in benachteiligten Gruppen zu untersuchen. Metastereotype können als Überzeugungen darüber verstanden werden, welche Stereotype über die eigene soziale Gruppe in einer Fremdgruppe bestehen (Vorauer, Main & O’Connell, 1998). Im Kontext der vorliegenden Dissertation ist dies zum Beispiel die Überzeugung eines jugendlichen Inhaftierten, dass die Gesellschaft außerhalb der Gefängnismauern jugendliche Straftäter allgemein für disziplinlos oder dumm hält.

Im Rahmen meiner Dissertation wurden Daten in insgesamt drei gesellschaftlichen Gruppen erhoben: Inhaftierte im Jugendstrafvollzug, bildungsbenachteiligte junge Menschen und Mitglieder einer ethnischen Minderheit. Die zentrale Hypothese war, dass negative Metastereotype gegenüber der Mehrheitsgesellschaft sich in benachteiligten Gruppen aggressions- und delinquenzverstärkend auswirken. Diese Hypothese gründet sich auf Überlegungen der kriminologischen Labeling-Theorie (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951), welche

annimmt, dass gesellschaftliches „Abstempeln“ von Menschen als kriminell langfristig zu mehr Kriminalitätsneigungen der betroffenen Personen beiträgt. Passend zum Konzept der Metastereotype wird in neueren Ansätzen zur Labeling-Theorie davon ausgegangen, dass sich insbesondere Überzeugungen der Betroffenen über abwertende gesellschaftlich verbreitete Vorstellungen über ihre „abgestempelte“ Gruppe negativ auswirken (vgl. Link, Cullen, Struening, Shrout & Dohrenwend, 1989). Daneben liegen auch Befunde aus der sozialpsychologischen Forschung in der Tradition der Sozialen Identitätstheorie (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) vor, die eine Steigerung von Aggression und Delinquenz als Reaktion auf negative Metastereotype vermuten lassen: So konnte gezeigt werden, dass die wahrgenommene Abwertung der Eigengruppe zu gewalttätigen Formen von Protest beitragen kann (z.B. Tausch et al., 2011) und dass es besonderes dann zu extremen Formen der Fremdgruppen-Abwertung kommt, wenn die eigene Benachteiligung als stabil und unausweichlich erlebt wird (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje & Manstead, 2006; Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990). Gleichfalls belegt Forschung zum Phänomen der sozialen Exklusion (Williams, 2009), dass Ausgrenzung ohne die Aussicht auf Reintegration mit gewalttätigem Verhalten einhergeht (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Leary, Twenge & Quinlivan, 2006).

Die vorliegende Arbeit besteht aus insgesamt drei Manuskripten, in denen jeweils die genannte Hypothese getestet wurde. Darüber hinaus verfolgte jedes Manuskript weitergehende Fragestellungen: In Manuskript #1 wurde zusätzlich untersucht, ob persönlicher Selbstwert den Zusammenhang zwischen negativen Metastereotypen und antisozialem Verhalten moderiert. Die Annahme war hier, dass der Zusammenhang besonders stark bei Personen mit hohem Selbstwert ausgeprägt ist (vgl. Bushman et al., 2009). In Manuskript #2 wurden Mediatoren für den Einfluss von Metastereotypen auf verschiedene Aggressionsmaße getestet. Insbesondere sollte erforscht werden, ob eine



verstärkte Erinnerung an persönlich erlebte Diskriminierung und eine aus diesem Grund verminderte Wahrnehmung gesellschaftlicher Fairness den Effekt von Metastereotypen auf Aggression erklären können (vgl. Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2012). In Manuskript #3 wurde schließlich untersucht, ob das Ausmaß an negativen Metastereotypen durch wahrgenommene gesellschaftliche Ausgrenzung vorhergesagt wird, und ob Metastereotype ihrerseits den Einfluss von wahrgenommener Ausgrenzung auf aggressives Verhalten medieren (vgl. Lammers, Gordijn & Otten, 2008; Mendes, McCoy, Major & Blascovich, 2008).

Die Hypothesen dieser Arbeit konnten in insgesamt fünf Studien bestätigt werden. Mittels einer Stichprobe von N = 225 Inhaftierten im Jugendstrafvollzug wurde in Manuskript #1 gezeigt, dass negative Metastereotype bezüglich der Mehrheitsgesellschaft verschiedene delinquenzbezogene Maße vorhersagen, wie etwa Aggressivität oder eine negative Einstellung zum Gesetz. In einer zweiten Studie mit N = 92 bildungsbenachteiligten SchülerInnen fand sich ferner, dass negative Metastereotype auch mit selbstberichtetem Begehen von Straftaten zusammenhängen und dass dieser Zusammenhang nur für Personen mit einem hohen impliziten Selbstwert signifikant ist. In Manuskript #2 wurde mittels einer Stichprobe von N = 50 Personen einer ethnischen Minderheit in Großbritannien demonstriert, dass negative Metastereotype die wahrgenommene Fairness der Gesellschaft senken, weil sie die Erinnerung an persönliche Diskriminierungserfahrungen erhöhen. In einer zweiten Studie mit N = 132 bildungsbenachteiligten Jugendlichen wurde zusätzlich gezeigt, dass die beiden genannten Konstrukte den verstärkenden Einfluss von negativen Metastereotypen auf verschiedene problematische Verhaltensweisen (z.B. auf Aggression) medieren. Ebenso medieren sie den vermindernden Einfluss von negativen Metastereotypen auf friedliches Protestverhalten. Schließlich wurde in Manuskript #3

anhand einer längsschnittlich befragten Stichprobe von  $N = 181$  BerufsschülerInnen aufgezeigt, dass wahrgenommene gesellschaftliche Desintegration (vgl. Heitmeyer & Anhut, 2000) sich verstärkend auf negative Metastereotype gegenüber der Mehrheitsgesellschaft auswirkt. Außerdem konnten negative Metastereotype als längsschnittlicher Mediator des Effekts von wahrgenommener Desintegration auf Gewaltverhalten bestätigt werden.

Insgesamt weisen die Ergebnisse der drei Manuskripte auf die Relevanz von negativen Metastereotypen bei der Entstehung und Beibehaltung aggressiver und delinquenter Verhaltensmuster hin. Damit legen sie auch nahe, dass eine Reduzierung negativer Metastereotype als wirksame Strategie zur Gewalt- und Kriminalitätsprävention genutzt werden könnte. In der vorliegenden Dissertation wird zum Beispiel Intergruppenkontakt als eine Möglichkeit diskutiert, die Sichtweise der jeweils anderen Gruppe besser kennenzulernen und dadurch Stereotype und Metastereotype abzubauen (siehe Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008). Darüber hinaus deuten die Befunde zum Einfluss wahrgenommener Desintegration darauf hin, dass benachteiligte Gruppen in unserer Gesellschaft mehr (Aufstiegs-) Chancen, etwa durch verbesserte Arbeitsmarktintegration, und mehr Wertschätzung erfahren sollten. So können Gewalt und Delinquenz wirksam bekämpft werden.

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### *Ausgewählte Vorträge*

- Issmer, C., Stellmacher, J., Gollwitzer, M. & Wagner, U. (2012). *Explaining aggressive and delinquent behaviors of disadvantaged adolescents: The impact of negative metastereotypes*. Präsentation auf dem 17. Workshop Aggression, Luxemburg, 15.-17. Juli 2012
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- Issmer, C., Stellmacher, J. & Wagner, U. (2011). *The aggression-enhancing effect of perceived social stigmatization*. Präsentation auf dem 16. Treffen der European Association of Social Psychology. Stockholm, Schweden, 12.-16. Juli 2011
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## ***Erklärung des Autors***

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich meine Dissertation „Explaining aggressive and delinquent behaviors of disadvantaged adolescents: The impact of negative metastereotypes“ selbstständig, ohne unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt habe und mich dabei keiner anderen als der von mir ausdrücklich bezeichneten Quellen und Hilfen bedient habe.

Die Dissertation wurde in der jetzigen oder einer ähnlichen Form noch bei keiner anderen Hochschule eingereicht und hat noch keinen sonstigen Prüfungszwecken gedient.

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(Ort, Datum)

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Christian Issmer

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