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## Symposium

# Interactions Between Family and Peer Group and their Effects on Development in Adolescence and Beyond

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Life Study / Brandenburg Longitudinal Study


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# Family, peers, and hostile attitudes towards foreigners

The role of the parent-child relationship in the influence of parents and peers on hostile attitudes towards foreigners in adolescence and in early adulthood

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## Focus of the paper

- Transmission of attitudes towards foreigners from parents to child
- Potential moderating role of the parent-child relationship
- Interdependence of family and peer influences

## Frames of reference

- Theories and research on xenophobia/hostility towards foreigners
- Theories and research on the developmental psychology of adolescence, esp. with regard to the relationship to parents and peers

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## Hostile attitudes towards foreigners

- One of the core dimensions of pol. socialization; relevance for peaceful coexistence in democratic societies (Sullivan/Transue, 1999; Sherrod/Flanagan/Youniss, 2002).
- Multiple determinants and complex processes (Duckitt, 1994):
  - ▶ Family transmission of values, attitudes (Kracke/Noack/Hofer/Klein-Allermann, 1993; Urban/Singelmann, 1998; Grob, 2005; Gniewosz/Noack, 2006)
  - ▶ Parental child-rearing practices / styles of parenting (Hopf, 1993; Rippl, 2004)
  - ▶ Social learning from peers in school and in leisure time (Wiezorek/Fritzsche, 2007; Grob, in press)
  - ▶ (Relative) Deprivation, frustration-aggression; disintegration (Hopf, 1994; Heitmeyer, 1993, 1994)
  - ▶ (Formal) Education, cognitive complexity (Fend, 1994; Hopf, 1999; Noack, 2003)

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### Hostile attitudes towards foreigners (continued)

- Special role of family influences
  - ▶ Relative stability of hostile attitudes towards foreigners over the life course (Jennings/Niemi, 1974, Jennings/Stoker/Bowers, 2001; Fend & Grob, 2007)
  - ▶ Childhood and adolescence as formative phases for political socialization (Wasburn, 1994)
  - ▶ Parents in the “pole position”; first and most powerful socialization agents
  - ▶ Taken together: long term transmission of parental values and attitudes (Jennings/Stoker/Bowers, 2001; Fend & Grob, 2007)

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### Social development in adolescence (Fend, 1998; Steinberg, 2001; Collins/Laursen, 2004)

- Larger radius of action; need for autonomy
- Individuation and relative detachment from parents; bond kept up largely
- No general negative impact on the parent-child relationship
- More peer-activities; increased relevance of peers
- Parents remain important point of reference with regard to “adult” themes

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### „Successful“ or „effective“ parenting in adolescence (Collins, 1995; Fend, 1998; Steinberg, 2001; Collins/Laursen, 2004)

- Ability of the parents to adaptively hold a balance between autonomy-granting and control
- Transformation of the hierarchical relationship in childhood into a more egalitarian one
- Readiness and ability of the parents to continuously re-negotiate concrete issues as well as the relationship to the child
- Paradoxon: Granting autonomy helps keeping up the relationship and ensures parental influence.

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### „Successful“ or „effective“ parenting in adolescence (cont.)

- With regard to parental influence on the child’s development of values:
  - ▶ Poor parent-child relationship: less (open and free) communication, less trust, less time spent with the parents, less parental influence.
  - ▶ Poor parent-child relationship: possible increase of the influence of the peers
  - ▶ A higher level of autonomy granting by parents: higher influence on the long run
  - ▶ An overly high level of control and of autonomy restriction: reactance and refusal; loss of parental influence.

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### Evidence about moderation of family transmission of values

- ▶ Some evidence for the intensity of communication (Jennings/Niemi, 1968; Fend, 1994; Jennings et al. 2001; Schmid, 2001; Grob, 2005)
- ▶ Mixed / controversial situation with regard to the quality of the parent-child relationship (Jennings/Niemi, 1968; Tedin, 1974; Brody/Moore/Glei, 1994; Kracke et al., 1994; Schmid, 2001; Grob, 2005)
- ▶ Interdependence of parental and peer influences: higher level of peer group integration is linked to lower levels of parental transmission (Rippl, 2004)

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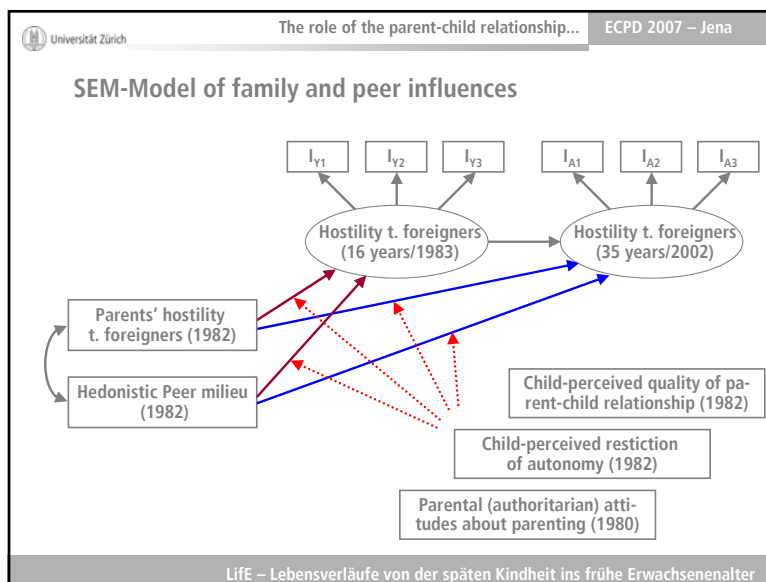
### Hypotheses

- ▶ In families where the child perceives a good relationship with the parents, the parental influence is higher and the influence of the peer milieu is reduced.
- ▶ In families where the child perceives adequate (non-excessive) control/autonomy restriction the parental influence is higher and the peer milieu influence is reduced.
- ▶ In families where the parents don't have highly authoritarian attitudes about parenting their influence is higher and the peer milieu influence is reduced.

### Additional research question

- ▶ Are there any differences between short- and long-term moderation effects?
- ▶ Does gender make a difference?

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### Data

- Life-Study (Lebensverläufe von der späten Kindheit ins frühe Erwachsenenalter)
  - ▶ Constance youth study (five waves 1979-1983, age 12 to 16; n per wave ≈ 2000; total n = 2892)
  - ▶ Follow-up study (2002, age 35; n = 1527)
- Multiple source longitudinal analysis samples
  - ▶ Child 15 y./1982 and 16 y./1983, and parents (1982): **n=508;  $t_2-t_1$ : 1 year**
  - ▶ Child 15 y./1982 and 35 y./2002, and parents (1982): **n=398;  $t_2-t_1$ : 20 years**

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### Instruments

Hostile attitude towards foreigners

- ▶ Parents 1982: Single item with 5 extensive answer categories; dichotomized
- ▶ Child at age 16/1983: Latent factor with 3 indicators\*; mean factor loading: .74
- ▶ Child at age 35/2002: Latent factor with 3 indicators\*; mean factor loading: .71

\*Sample item: „If at all possible, foreigners and guest workers should be sent back to their home countries“

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### Instruments (continued)

- ▶ Hedonistic peer milieu/leisure-time activity style (1982): Scale based on 3 items (intensity of smoking, drinking alcohol and frequenting amusement arcades); Alpha=.62
- ▶ Quality of the parent-child relationship as perceived by the child (1982): Scale based on 8 items; Alpha=.85 („I feel like I can talk with my parents about everything“)
- ▶ Child's perceived restriction of autonomy (1980): Scale based on 4 items; Alpha=.77 („My parents often don't allow me to do what I want to do“)
- ▶ Parents' liberal vs. authoritarian attitude about parenting (1980): Scale based on 8 items; Alpha=.78 („Even the best parents can't succeed without constant pressure“; „Children must learn to obey, even if they don't understand why“)

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### Results

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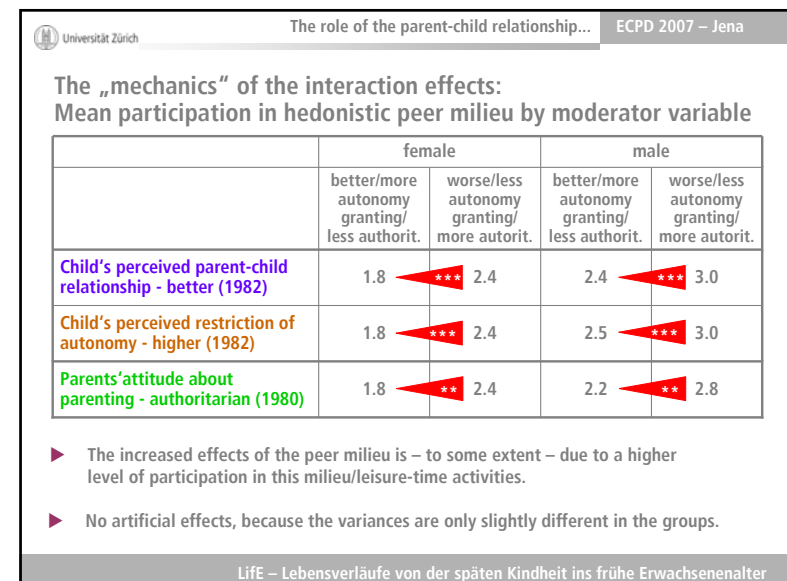
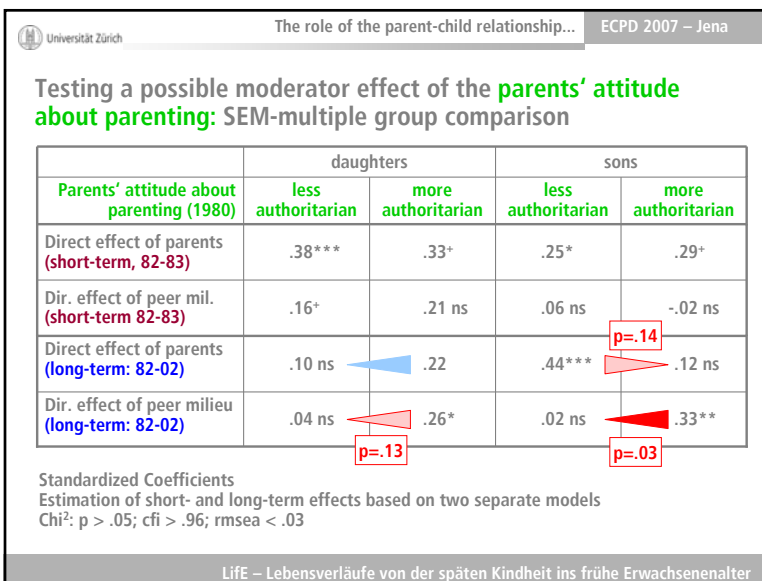
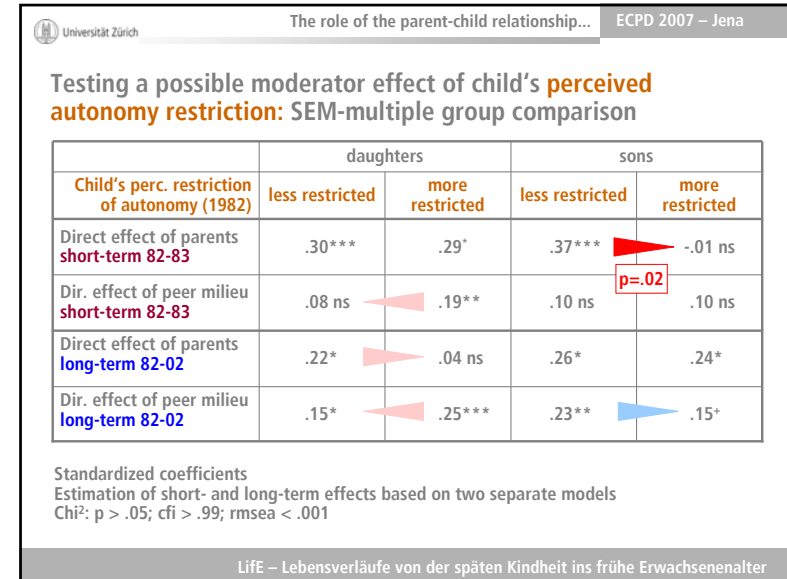
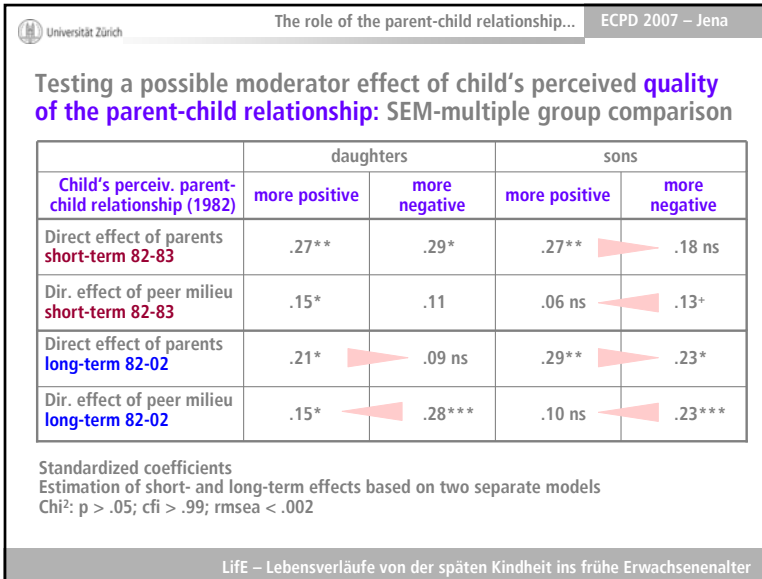
### Short and long-term effects of parents and peer milieu on hostility towards foreigners

	all	daughters	sons
Direct effect of parents short-term 82-83	.28***	.30***	.27***
Dir. effect of peer milieu short-term 82-83	.15***	.14**	.11*
Direct effect of parents long-term 82-02	.22***	.15*	.29***
Dir. effect of peer milieu long-term 82-02	.21***	.22***	.18***

Standardized coefficients  
 Estimation of short- and long-term effects based on two separate models  
 Chi<sup>2</sup>: p > .05; cfi > .99; rmsea < .002

£ p<.01 for total effect of parents by gender in a separate bootstrapping-based model

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## Summary and Conclusions

- Significant short- and long-term influences of parents and a hedonistic peer milieu
- Theory conforming patterns, but only few significant effects.
  - ▶ Tendency to an inverse dependence of parental and peer influence
  - ▶ Factors that put a strain on the parent-child relationship tend to decrease the parents' influence and increase the influence of the peer milieu.
  - ▶ Authoritarian attitudes of parents don't affect their transmission power in the short but in the long run.

At the same time, the influence of the peer milieu increases somewhat.

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## Summary and Conclusions (continued)

- ▶ Tight autonomy restriction leads to immediate reactions of male youths: Reconstitution of threatened freedom by withdrawal and distance („reactance theory“; Brehm, 1966).
- ▶ Quality of parent-child relationship: consistent pattern but no generalization
- ▶ Properties of the content dimension; for the transmission of the party preference the parent-child relationship is a strong moderator.

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## Summary and Conclusions (continued)

- **Autonomy restriction: more sensitive reaction of the male young persons**
- **Overall parental influence on the sons remains high until the age of 35**
- **Parents who are interested in keeping some influence on their children on the long run, should strive for a good balance between autonomy granting, caring and control.**

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## Thank you for your interest!

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