Violences in schools: European trends in research

under the supervision of Cécile Carra and Maryse Esterle Hedibel
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Problem behaviour and prevention
The actual situation in Flanders, Belgium

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ABSTRACT

The description of problem behaviour in school education in Flanders and the integral approach to prevention of it are the central themes of this article. After having situated the in Flanders dominant criminological approach of field research and the commonly used concepts and notions of problem behaviour, we make a review of existing empirical quantitative studies in four steps. First we go deeper into (a) figures on ‘general well-being’ within the school system, to make in a next step (b) an analysis of official figures of juvenile delinquency in general and then to concentrate on (c) self-report studies of juvenile delinquency in general and (d) within school education.

KEY WORDS

Violence, delinquency, figures, statistics, school education, Flanders – Belgium, integral prevention, prevention pyramid.

1 Special thanks to Gie Deboutte, Hanne Op de Beeck and Diederik Cops for their valuable support.
BELGIUM, A FEDERALIZED COUNTRY\textsuperscript{2}

Belgium is a federalized country with a complex political structure\textsuperscript{3}. It is divided into three regions for territorial matters as economy, urbanization, employment policies for example (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia) and three communities for matters relating to the people as culture, youth, education (Flemish Community, the French Community and the German Community). In Flanders, the competencies of the Flemish Region and the Flemish Community are merged in the Flemish government. In contrast with other federal states, regional governments in Belgium have full power concerning their competencies, meaning that these legislations exist at the same hierarchical level as federal laws. The competency over educational matters is a community-based competency\textsuperscript{4}. This has resulted in the development of three different educational systems. Despite a lot of similarities between these systems (parents’ “free choice” of school, coexistence of several “educational networks” ...), they have been evolving towards bigger differentiation as a result of different policies. Equally, we can speak of different scientific cultures in both areas – Flanders being more influenced by Anglo-Saxon intellectual traditions whereas French-speaking Wallonia has been more influenced by the French debate and research perspectives.

These political and cultural differences affect the way problem behaviour and violence within the school environment is dealt with, resulting in different notions, priorities, and prevention and treatment programs developed within these systems.

In summary, because the name “Belgium” covers two co-existing but very different political, educational and scientific realities, we will present two distinct contributions, dealing respectively with Flanders and with the French Community.

\textsuperscript{2} This foreword is common for both this article and the article n°2: “Schools being tested by violence” of prof. Marie Verhoeven, who describes the French speaking part of Belgium.

\textsuperscript{3} For more information on the Belgian political structure, see http://www.diplomatie.be/en/belgium/default.asp; http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/index.jsp

\textsuperscript{4} The most important exception on this division is the determination of the age until which young people must attend education. This is a federal matter, for the moment being fixed at the age of 18.
INTRODUCTION

The description of problem behaviour in school education in Flanders and the integral approach to prevention of it are the central themes of this article. After having situated the in Flanders dominant criminological approach of field research and the commonly used concepts and notions of problem behaviour, we make a review of existing empirical quantitative studies in four steps. First we go deeper into (a) figures on ‘general well-being’ within the school system, to make in a next step (b) an analysis of official figures of juvenile delinquency in general and than to concentrate on (c) self-report studies of juvenile delinquency in general and (d) within school education.

This review brings us to a next step. We describe the importance of an integral and positive approach through the description of the prevention pyramid, a model for an integral prevention that is widely spread in the field of prevention in Flanders. In this way, this article wants to give an image of Flanders, as a particular region with an own identity in this field and with an own tradition of a positive and integral prevention. To conclude we make some recommendations for further research.

FLEMISH RESEARCH OF YOUTH’S PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOUR

CRIMINOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Research of youth’s problematic behaviour in general, and within the school context in particular, has a rather long tradition in Flanders. This tradition is strongly connected to the long history of criminological research in Belgium, in contrast to most other countries in Europe (e.g. the Catholic University of Leuven started with a criminology program in 1928). The three main Flemish universities of Leuven (http://www.law.kuleuven.be/linc/), Ghent (http://www.law.ugent.be/crim/) and Brussels (http://www.vub.ac.be/rg/), offer a full-fledged criminology program of four years. This study includes a combination of law, psychology and sociology. Different aspects of these scientific disciplines are integrated in order to specifically answer to criminological questions, whereas in other countries criminological questions are subjected to a specialization within another discipline. This means that in the field of youth delinquency, purely sociological or psychological studies only play a marginal role in this country.
We can distinguish three main fields in the criminological research on juvenile delinquency in general. The first is concentrating on mapping problem behaviour and youth delinquency. This is the main subject of this contribution. Below we will describe some figures and give an overview of quantitative research. As in many other countries, except for some smaller local research projects, figures providing information of problem behaviour strictly within the school context, are not available. The figures are about juveniles and their behaviour also in their free time, on the street, at home, etc.. As youngsters mainly spend their time within schools, general figures will also cover what happens within this educational context.

Next to this, different research projects of another type have been conducted in the last years. It concerns evaluation research of programs on bullying, violence, truancy, etc.. These programs are often financed by the Flemish or Federal Government. The results mainly lead to the conclusion of the need for an integral and positive approach. ‘Integral’ means not just attacking the problem child or the symptoms, but taking the larger (school) context into account. ‘Positive’ can be understood as supporting and stimulating a general positive climate in schools as an important part of the answer to problem behaviour.

The last part of research can be classified as action research with the aim to develop answers to this problem behaviour, starting from theoretical and empirical findings (Deklerck, J. & Depuydt, A. & Deboutte, 2001; Depuydt & Deklerck, 2005; Vettenburg, e.a. 2003; www.vista-europe.org). Most of this research is realized in an often strong interaction with the field. An example of a result here is the below described model of the prevention pyramid.

In Flemish quantifying criminological research, three main resources are being developed and used. The first resource consists of the official delinquency figures, as registered by the police. Since these figures mainly contain the product of police activities, and therefore do not provide an integral overview of youth delinquency, general self-report studies were developed to complete this picture. For Flanders, two self report studies are to be mentioned. The most recent one is the survey of the Youth Research Platform (JOP or Jeugdonderzoeksplattform) (Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave, 2007; www.jeugdonderzoekplattform.be). In this study, which was accomplished in 2005, 2503 youngsters from 14 to 25 years old were questioned about a variety of aspects of their lives, including involvement in delinquency. In an older (1998-1999) survey-based project called ‘Jongeren in Vlaanderen. Gemeten en geteld’ (JVGG) (De Witte, Hooge, Walgrave; 2000), information on delinquent behaviour of youngsters between 12 and 18 years

5 A new monitor will be published in 2010.
old was gathered. This research is not limited to the school environment but is oriented towards a larger field, with only some information on what is happening in schools.

Both research projects, Youth Research Platform (Vettenburg et al., 2007) and the research project ‘Jongeren in Vlaanderen. Gemeten en geteld’ (2000) in which general data about youth delinquency were gathered, were recently developed under the impulse of new cooperation between different university departments. This, as a reaction to the existing disparity in Flanders in the field between different local projects with a lack of integrated approaches and problems in the development and validation of fundamental theories (Schillemans, 2004; Van Nuffel, 2003).

**CONCEPTS AND NOTIONS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR**

Talking about problem behaviour, different notions are used. In a strong connection with the Flemish language tradition they have a particular cultural background and cannot always easily be translated.

First of all, a distinction is made between *internalized* problem behaviour on the one hand, and *externalized* problem behaviour on the other. Where the former refers to problems like depression, suicidal ideation, anorexia, etcetera, the latter is used to describe behaviour like bullying, aggression, vandalism, violence, etcetera. Girls usually tend to express feelings of unease and a low self esteem through internalized problem behaviour, whereas their male counterparts in general tend to display externalized problem behaviour (Leer-kracht. Veer-kracht, 2006: 19-20). When talking about externalized problem behaviour different concepts are used6. Just like in other countries and regions, Flanders has its own terminology when talking about violence and juvenile delinquency in the practice of education, as well as in the field of scientific research.

“*Geweld*” or “*violence*” is a commonly used notion in scientific research. Although everyone “understands” the term, it is interpreted in various ways, from very narrow to very broad. Many definitions are circulating and often the notion of “violence” is mixed up with the concept of “aggression” (Patfoort, 1995; Van Welzenis, 2002; Smith, 2003). Both terms are popular in the practice of education. Another notion that is commonly used is the concept of “*antisociaal gedrag*” or “antisocial behaviour”. An often used definition of this kind of behaviour is proposed by Vettenburg, who makes a distinction between four categories: physical violence or threats against people (such as wounding, assault and bullying), other forms of

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antisocial behaviour (such as theft, vandalism, drug-taking), status-related offences (such as playing truant, going to cafes and dance halls, running away) and deviant school-related behaviour (deliberately being disruptive, arriving late, smoking in school, etcetera) (Vettenburg, 1999:33).

Another commonly used concept is “problematic behaviour” (Peeters, 1995; Deboutte, 2006). It is a very broad concept for all kinds of behaviour that causes problems in social interaction. It covers both interiorised and exteriorised behaviour, also outside the criminological field. It is therefore not easy to make a clear definition of this concept, but the advantage exists in its “interactive”, less stigmatizing quality. In this way, the offender is not pushed into a marginal position, but on the contrary receives possibilities for communication. This concept is preferred to that of “deviancy” of “incivilities”, because of its lower normative character. These last notions are more or less absent in the Flemish educational field.

On a scientific level, they are experienced as very normative and therefore problematic. The frame of reference, e.g. the law, the school regulations, or the normative consensus of what “normal behaviour” should be, and of which one is “deviating”, is very often not questioned, although many consequences can occur at this level (Depuydt, 1998; Deklerck & Depuydt, 2005). As a consequence, “respectless behaviour” is also often used within the educational field. It has been launched by A. Depuydt in her research on the implementation of the approach of “verbondenheid”, translated as “linkedness” (in English) or “reliance” (en Français) as a fundamental prevention of delinquency. Delinquency can be seen e.g. as what is described in the penal law codex, or as a general social appreciation or the norms of society. These norms fluctuate in space and time, for instance physical punishment is not practiced anymore, or in many countries smoking in public spaces is not allowed any longer. A. Depuydt started from a fundamental, existential, ethical approach, with a more absolute character than the permanently evolving rules, laws and regulations, or the continuously changing normativity of society. (Deklerck & Depuydt, 2005: IV, 83-85). Furthermore, this is a more fundamental ethical approach as “experiencing harm or damage”, which has an existential meaning (Deklerck, Depuydt & Deboutte, 2001). The positive element of this concept consists of its possibilities for a more fundamental ethical debate.

A specific notion that has raised a lot of attention is the concept of “pesten” or “bullying”. This term is very widespread in the context of school education as a daily reality in the interaction between pupils and in some cases also teachers or other personnel. It refers to a specific form of problematic behaviour (Deboutte, 1995; Deboutte, 2004; Leonard, 2006; Rigby, Smith &
Pepler, 2004) with an own reality, that is recognized by scientists, schools, the policy makers and in different prevention programmes.\(^7\)

At an international level we often forget that concepts are always interpreted in a cultural context. Some countries still accept parents to give their child a light smack to teach them which behaviour is wrong. Within their culture this is not considered a violation of social norms or laws and consequently will not be interpreted as violence, whereas for other countries with a zero tolerance towards this phenomenon, it will be seen as unacceptable and violent. So, even with clear definitions the contextualisation against the local cultural and social background needs to be considered (Smith (Ed.), 2003; Ortega, Sanchez, Van Wassenhoven, Deboutte & Deklerck, 2006).

**REVIEW OF RECENT EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

After having situated the specific background of criminological research tradition and the culturally rooted concepts of problem behaviour, now we go deeper into a review of recent empirical studies. We make four main steps. First, we give an overview of Flemish figures. We start with general figures of ‘well-being’ in school, based on self-report studies and official registrations by the Ministry of Education. Next to this, we go deeper into official registrations by the police, as well as the results of self-report surveys (JOP and JVGG) that specifically apply to youth delinquency in Flanders.

In a last step we go deeper into school settings. As for antisocial behaviour specifically conducted in the school setting, the results of a research project by Vettenburg & Huybregts (2001), and to a lesser extent, the results of self-report studies of Stevens & Van Oost (1994; 1995), the Central Board for Study and Career guidance (Vandersmissen & Thys, 1993) and the Flemish Institute for Scientific and Technological Assessment (Vandenbosch, Van Cleemput, et al., 2006), will be discussed.

The earliest study of antisocial behaviour in school settings, based on a self-report study of 1689 youth, was accomplished in 1988 (Vettenburg, 1988; see also Goris & Walgrave, 2002). However, since this is an older project, these results will not be reviewed in this contribution. Finally, some prevention models for antisocial behaviour in schools and recommendations for future research, will be given.

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\(^7\) As an important topic within problem behaviour in Flemish schools, some websites about it are worth mentioning: [http://www.apesten.net](http://www.apesten.net) and [http://www.kieskleurtegenpesten.be](http://www.kieskleurtegenpesten.be).
WELL-BEING AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

In Belgium, education is compulsory until the age of eighteen years. Although the majority of the pupils feels rather well in their school, there is only a minority that does not feel satisfied (Mertens & Van Damme, 2000; Huysmans, 2006). The PISA-research (OEDC, 2003) indicates that 33% of the Belgian pupils does not feel at home at school. Stevens and Elchardus (2001) mention that 11% of the pupils, aged 16-18 years, are in general feeling unhappy at school. 14% would like to change schools and at least 18% would prefer to leave school. According to the research of Mertens & Van Damme (2000), this is rather the case for technical and vocational orientations, although these findings are not confirmed in other studies. According to JOP-monitor 1, conducted in 2005 (Vettenburg et al., 2007), secondary pupils are generally satisfied with their education and the school they go to. Girls are more satisfied than boys, and no differences in school satisfaction exist between the three educational tracks (general, technical of vocational secondary education). Pupils repeating a year were less satisfied compared to the other pupils.

Some studies (De Groof, 2003; Smits, 2004; Vettenburg et al, 2007) have questioned the way secondary pupils perceive the relationship with their teachers. These results also suggest that Flemish pupils are satisfied with their teachers and how they are treated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De Groof (2003)</td>
<td>2427</td>
<td>37.6% (totally) agrees with this statement, 19.2% did (totally) not agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smits (2004)</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>54.6% (totally) agrees, 19.2% said they (totally) did not agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vettenburg et al.</td>
<td>1041</td>
<td>62.4% agreed the statement, only 11.0% (totally) did not agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Results of three studies on the statement “Most teachers take us seriously” among 14- to 18 year olds.

Despite the conclusion that pupils generally like going to school and perceive the relationship with their teachers as satisfactory, problem behaviour is not absent in Flemish secondary schools. It is generally accepted that chronic problem behaviour at school expresses itself in a combination of learning problems, behavioural problems, school fatigue and antisocial behaviour (Ghesquière & Grietens, 2006; Rombouts, 2000). When looking of the official registrations of ‘truancy’ as an extreme symptom of school fatigue

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8 The rather different results found in this study are probably due to the different research method that was used to collect the data. While in the study of De Groof (2003) the questionnaires were filled in classically, the other two studies used more individual methods (face-to-face in the study of Smits, a postal survey in the JOP-monitor).
and problem behaviour, there seems to be a small, but significant group of pupils showing this kind of behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Percentage of truants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Percentage of secondary pupils being more than 30 half days non-justified absent (Ministry of education, 2007)

*Source: Department of education, 2007*

The highest percentage is identified in part-time education (28.23%). In the full-time educational system, 3.45% of pupils in the vocational educational track are identified as truants, while the mean percentage of the full-time system only reaches 0.57%. These numbers suggest that there are some important differences between the different educational tracks. They also seem to suggest that this kind of behaviour is on the rise; an alternative explanation is that schools have become more aware of the problem, resulting in more adequate registrations. It thus seems that a general feeling of satisfaction goes with a small, but significant group of pupils not satisfied with school and showing problem behaviour. In the next part of this paper will be focused on the concepts and notions that are used in the study and description of this behaviour in Flanders.

**Official figures of violence and delinquency**

The reflection about concepts and definitions leads us to the question about the prevalence of this kind of behaviour in the Flemish educational system. Although this may seem to be a simple question of registration and interpretation, answering this question is not that easy. In this case, the level of registration is an important element: are the numbers the result of official records, self-report or victim surveys? Are these official records a consequence of police intervention? Is it about suspected persons or convicted offenders at the court level?

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9 These percentages are based on the numbers of the school year 2006-2007.
This figure demonstrates that the crime that is known by the official authorities provides by no means a real and reliable reflection of the total amount of criminal activity (see e.g. Linch & Addington, 2006). A lot of considerations can determine the non-reporting to the police\textsuperscript{10}. This is especially true regarding the so called “petty crime”. As this is the case with crime in general, it also holds for school delinquency. Violence, vandalism, verbal aggression, most cases of bullying, etcetera can be solved within the school context, in a formal or informal matter, e.g. by the intervention of the class teachers, the principal, or other responsible personnel, through peer mediation or group conferencing, by a cooperation between school and parents. For different reasons, e.g. the image of the school, to give the offender a ‘new’ or ‘last’ chance, etcetera, schools can decide not to report to the police. Self report studies and victim surveys (Debarbieux, 2004) can offer a solution to this dark number. Although for very serious cases as murder or rape self report will not be possible as offenders are not willing to report this, it is a very useful instrument for daily problem behaviour and petty delinquency. Comparison between self report studies is not always evident, because methodological differences (e.g. sample size, age group, by mail, classical or face-to-face) can influence the results (Eliaerts, 2007; Van Kerckvoorde, 1995; Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave, 2007) and present

\textsuperscript{10} The numbers at court or prosecutor’s level are even a worse indicator of the real amount of crime. Reasons such as no known offender, not enough evidence, no priority, etcetera can lead to the decision not to prosecute.
very different pictures of the same social reality11. Comparing figures between different surveys and between countries should take these basic elements into account. Considering these suggestions, it remains important to explore the problems in the field of violence and delinquency within the educational system. Gathering data is therefore very useful and important. Together with the data, enough information about the methodology, limits and possibilities of these data should be added. In Belgium only few statistics that are able to present a general overview of delinquency, bullying and problem behaviour in school are available. However, figures on juvenile delinquency in general can be given.

A recent study (Goedseels, Detry & Vanneste, 2007) of the number of criminal acts with a minor suspect being brought to the public prosecutor in 2005 revealed that at a nation-wide level in sum 45 722 cases were declared, of which 38 747 were cases declared with suspected minors. This implies that 55 minors on 1000 minors between 12 and 18 years old have committed a criminal act that was brought to the prosecutor’s level. Turned around this suggests that 95% of all minors have not been involved. Looking at the prevalence of the most serious forms of crime, these numbers state that only 1 on 100 000 minors was accused of homicide or manslaughter, 3 on 10 000 of robbery and only 1 on 10 000 of armed robbery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against goods</td>
<td>19526</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against persons</td>
<td>8120</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic-related crimes</td>
<td>6568</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td>5177</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against public safety</td>
<td>4684</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest category</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>45722</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Registered crimes at the prosecutor’s level for Belgium in 2005 (Goedseels, Detry & Vanneste, 2007)

11 For example considering carrying a pocket knife as a weapon or not, can drastically influence the number of pupils reporting carrying weapons and can give a very different picture in statistics.
These tables show the prevalence of criminal acts committed by minors that were discovered and brought to the public prosecutor in 2005. When the variable ‘gender’ is taken into account it could be easily stated that boys commit much more crimes than their female counterparts. Generally speaking, only 20% of the different forms of criminal acts are committed by girls. When the variable ‘gender’ is integrated, the study suggests that an increase of the prevalence of committing delinquent behaviour starts occurring at the age of 12, with the onset of puberty. This prevalence increases until the age of 16-17, but starts diminishing afterwards. Most juveniles gradually stop offending after the age of 17-18, a finding which is firmly grounded in numerous self report studies. Another important limitation of these official numbers is that they do not allow determining if these criminal acts are committed in the school context.

### Table 4. Registered crimes at the prosecutor’s level for Belgium in 2005 by gender (Goedseels, Detry & Vanneste, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against goods</td>
<td>14853</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>3836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against persons</td>
<td>7220</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>1812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic-related crimes</td>
<td>4688</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>1780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td>3967</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against public</td>
<td>3913</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34641</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>9158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self report studies on delinquency in general

The figures of two self report studies, the first survey of the Youth Research Platform (JOP) and the survey that was accomplished for the research ‘Jongeren in Vlaanderen. Gemeten en geteld’ will be presented here. Because of methodological differences of both surveys, we should be careful in comparing these figures, which you find both in the diagram below.
These figures show that “severe” youth delinquency is a rather marginal phenomenon. Fare dodging (25.5 % according to JVGG, 32.7% according to JOP), theft (23.4% according to JVGG, 15.5% according to JOP) and vandalism (20.7% according to JVGG and 14.7% according to JOP) are being committed the most. Violence (12.6% according to JVGG, 6.1% according to JOP) and carrying a weapon (12.7% according to JVGG and 4.0% according to JOP) are rather marginal phenomena. The large difference between JVGG and JOP considering the rates of violence and carrying a weapon can be explained by a difference in formulation of the questions. In JVGG was asked if the pupils had been involved in a fight. In JOP was asked if they had beaten up someone so badly that this person was injured. If the criterion of causing injury in the JOP-research would have been left out, the violence rates in this database might have been higher. Furthermore, in JOP, the question about carrying weapons very distinctly excluded the possession of a pocket knife. If pocket knifes were included in the question, the rates of weapon carrying might have been higher.

Except for truancy, these figures do not apply specifically for the school setting. They could have taken place outside schools, during leisure time, on the road, at home, etcetera. As well, the information about violence is limited, since no details on the kind of violence are provided.
This diagram shows that boys are generally more involved in delinquency than girls (a difference that is significant, $\alpha=0.01$). However, gender differences vary according to the type of delinquency. Again, this gender aspect is not to be reduced to the school environment. These figures give an overall view of the prevalence of delinquency in Flanders. They particularly show that the “problem” of youth deviance should not be overestimated. However, as noted earlier, the way in which the questions were formulated in the questionnaires has an influence on the results. We should thus be careful to make general conclusions about crime rates and developments in Flanders. Finally, we can not generalize these figures to the French speaking part of Belgium.

**Self-report studies on problem behaviour in school education**

In 2001, Vettenburg & Huybregts reported the results of their research of antisocial behaviour in schools, based on self-report of 4829 pupils from 95 different Flemish schools. The following data are based on their report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delinquency</th>
<th>1998/1999 (JVGG)</th>
<th>2006 (JOP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fare dodging</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence (in JOP: with injuries as a consequence)</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying a weapon (in JOP: pocket knife is excluded)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running away from home</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug selling</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Gender aspects of self-reported delinquency (%) in Flanders (Burssens, 2007; Goedseels, Vettenburg et al., 2000)
Most antisocial acts are reported by 10 to 15% of the sample, except for vandalism, which seems to occur less often (Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001:127). This table also shows that boys report more antisocial behaviour in school than girls, a difference that is significant ($\alpha=0.01$). The sex difference is specifically high for vandalism at school, boys do this three times more often than girls (Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001:128).

### Table 7: Gender aspects of deviant behaviour in schools (%)
(Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts</th>
<th>Boys (N=2360)</th>
<th>Girls (N=2426)</th>
<th>Total (N=4786)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disturbing class on purpose</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting bold against teacher</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbing classmates</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying classmates</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism at school</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most antisocial acts are reported by 10 to 15% of the sample, except for vandalism, which seems to occur less often (Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001:127). This table also shows that boys report more antisocial behaviour in school than girls, a difference that is significant ($\alpha=0.01$). The sex difference is specifically high for vandalism at school, boys do this three times more often than girls (Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001:128).

### Table 8: Age aspects of deviant behaviour in schools (%)
(Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts</th>
<th>12 (N=691)</th>
<th>13 (N=856)</th>
<th>14 (N=637)</th>
<th>15 (N=824)</th>
<th>16 (N=702)</th>
<th>17 (N=758)</th>
<th>18 (N=243)</th>
<th>+18 (N=93)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disturbing class on purpose</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting bold against teacher</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbing classmates</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying classmates</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism at school</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that antisocial behaviour in school also differs by age. Most antisocial acts are being committed until the age of 16. From the age of 17, the prevalence of all antisocial acts (except truancy) declines (Vettenburg & Huybregts, 2001:128).

Except for sex and age, Vettenburg and Huybregts (2001) found in their research that the most important predictors of antisocial behaviour in schools are school fatigue, earlier problems in school, problematic behaviour outside of the school, a tolerant attitude towards violence, the bond with parents (a strong bond with prosocial parents prevents antisocial behaviour in school, a strong bond with antisocial parents encourages it), the bond with peers (a strong bond with prosocial peers prevents antisocial behaviour in school, a strong bond with antisocial peers prevents it) and the connection between the school and the student (Hay, I., & Ashman, A. F., 2003; Hirschi, 1969).
Other, older, self-report studies focus specifically on the prevalence of bullying in Flemish schools. In 1993, the Central Board for Study and Career guidance questioned 1054 pupils from 12 to 18 years old (high school students). The results of this study show that 18 per cent of high school students are victim to bullies, of which 2.6 per cent said to be bullied very badly (Vandersmissen & Thys, 1993). In 1994, Stevens & Van Oost questioned 10 000 students between 10 and 16 years old about bullying and being bullied. In primary schools, 15.9 per cent of the pupils reported to bully others regularly, 23 per cent reported to have been the victim of bullying. In secondary schools, these statistics are respectively 12.3 per cent and 15.2 per cent (Stevens & Van Oost, 1994, 1995). In accordance with the research of Vettenburg & Huybregts (2001), both these studies found a decrease in bullying behaviour with age, and boys bullying more often than girls.

Finally, in 2006, the Flemish institute for Scientific and Technological Assessment (viTWA) questioned 636 primary school children and 1416 high school students about cyber bullying. This questionnaire also included a couple of questions about “traditional” bullying, which showed much higher rates of bullying than the older studies. 49.3 % admits they have bullied others over the last three months, 78.6% report having witnessed bullying. 10.4% reports having been bullied over the last three months. A tiny minority said they have been both a victim and a bully (Vandenbosch, Van Cleemput et al., 2006).

**THE PREVENTION PYRAMID, A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS**

The review above brings us to a next step. In Flanders there is a growing tradition of an integral and positive approach (see a.o. www.vista-europe.org) to tackle problem behaviour. Policymakers and schools, as well as many organisations working in the field of school education, are aware that problem behaviour is a complex phenomenon, and that not only life course events and the social context of the children or youngsters (Harter, 1999) but that also the context of the school plays an important role (Debarbieux, 2006). Punitive schools can e.g. provoke or strengthen problem behaviour, whereas democratic, pupil oriented schools can realize the opposite. To map this contextual approach, the prevention pyramid, a widely spread model in Flanders, is an instrument for analysis and policy making. It will be presented below.
AN INTEGRAL APPROACH

Interaction between research, policy makers, school education and the criminological field in general, has lead to the largely accepted opinion that a simple punitive reaction to “the problem child” is not the best answer. A larger perspective is necessary. In order to reduce deviant behaviour in school, symptoms of the general functioning of the system, such as the societal pressure on adolescents; educational models and methods; the quality of communication in, and the democratic functioning of, a school; pedagogical styles of the teachers, etcetera, should be addressed as a way of a positive prevention (Deklerck, 1996; Galloway & Roland, 2004). With this term is meant that, instead of reacting defensively against problematic behaviour with, for example, punitive measures, (De Cauter, 1990; Munthe, Solli, Ytre-Arne & Roland (Eds.), 2004; Cornell, 2006) problematic behaviour should be prevented by creating challenging opportunities for youth.

Against this background, the “prevention pyramid” was developed (Deklerck, 1996; Deklerck, 2006). This preventive model answers to the actual complex variety of prevention measures, going from “repressive” and “punitive” to “oriented towards general well-being and social support”. Diverse prevention measures to problem behaviour in general, and violence in particular, are therefore included in this model, which is used in Flanders as an assessment instrument for schools12 (see e.g. the province of Limburg (Dienst Welzijn en Gezondheid van de Provincie Limburg, 2006). The model puts focus on the preventive quality of general well-being and organizes preventive measures into four levels. This categorization is based on the degree of problem orientation: How strongly does the problem manifest itself and how clearly do the measures highlight the problem? The levels are complementary, they all contribute more or less to a positive social climate and they are all necessary for an integrated prevention policy.

FOUR PLUS ONE LEVELS

The prevention pyramid consists of five levels. These are numbered 0 to 4. Four of them are to be considered as “action levels”, in which a number of initiatives are developed and accomplished. The zero level refers to the general political, ecological, sociological and economical context that is influencing the different action levels and the policy people and schools can work out. It is not an action level. The top four levels (levels 1 to 4) provide a general overview of all possible crime prevention measures. It here concerns the level of curative measures (level 4), the level of specific prevention measures (level 3), the level of the general (level 2) and the level of fundamental prevention (level 1). The levels differ from each other in their degree of problem orientation. The higher we climb the greater becomes this problem orientation. This problem orientation constitutes the basic criterion for categorising crime prevention measures into different categories, and the point of departure for organising these measures.

Level 1: fundamental crime prevention

Level 1 represents ‘fundamental crime prevention’ or a policy that promotes the general quality of life. It is often forgotten in discussions of crime prevention. Nevertheless, it is basic to achieving a good result from any other prevention measure. It in general concerns areas such as social policy, emancipation policy or welfare work in the broad sense of the word, good school organisation, possibilities for recreation and leisure, ombudsman services, minimum wage, measures to combat environmental pollution and degeneration, medical care, procedures political involvement, the protection...
of nature, social subsidy policy, providing sufficient recreational zones, and others. The links with the problem of crime are more and more indirect. Measures at this level are oriented positively. Their purpose is an improvement in the basic climate of society. At this level of crime prevention we depart from a direct causal link between measures proposed and criminal facts. Applied to school education, the first level consists of the improvement of the general climate within schools. This level is oriented towards the improvement of the general well-being of everyone in the school and the democratic functioning of the school. These measures, that are usually part of the basic policy of the school, have an important preventive effect although they can be considered as general school politics.

The point of departure for level 1 is thus not a formulation of any problem, nor does it provide a problem-oriented answer. We can view it as an offensive, positive strategy in the sense of creating a pleasant, peaceful environment, good working conditions, smooth communication and decision making. It is a framework in which the higher levels can better thrive. In the example of vandalism in the bicycle shed in a school, it means lessening the need for aggression because people feel better, and less need for formal control due to less aggression. The focus is thus no longer exclusively or primarily directed to problem groups (e.g. hooligans, drug addicts) or problem situations (e.g. football stadiums before or after the match, nightlife districts), but to the societal framework as bearer of problem areas. Measures at this level have an indirect preventative effect. They, however, influence directly the general quality of life of the society and in this way provide a basis for more directed crime prevention policy.

**Level 2: general crime prevention**

At this level of general crime prevention we think for example of limiting violence and aggression in the media, projects around after-school reception for high-risk groups, organising interesting leisure activities or creating special work opportunities for high-risk youth, youth work in underprivileged neighbourhoods, projects around neighbourhood redevelopment, around poverty, community work, training in non-violent solutions to conflicts, limiting the speed of motor vehicles, fan-coaching hooligans, payment with credit cards, decreasing the production of materials that damage the environment, the sale of low alcohol beer or forbidding glass and sharp objects at large gatherings, re-directing the energy that currently goes into the cocaine harvest in Latin America, relaxation training for addicts to tranquillisers (yoga, relaxation, autogenous training), etc.

In level 2, when a problem occurs, prevention measures are taken that are oriented towards social well-being, such as amelioration of the infrastructure, non violent communication, gender and interculturality, etc.. The answer is
positive and reduces the problem orientation. The problem orientation at level 2 (general crime prevention) is thus clearly different than level three (specific crime prevention) and level 4 (curative measures). Level 2 has as point of departure the problem but it formulates non-problem oriented answers that indeed have a preventative effect. The same example of vandalism in a bicycle shed (problem) then receives an answer in the form of a closer location, in public view, better lighting and better maintenance (non-problem oriented answers with a preventative effect). In this way it becomes more difficult to steal or vandalise bicycles (preventative effect), and the bicycle shed at the same becomes a more pleasant location for the users. The risk of crime is no longer accented and thus feelings of fear and insecurity disappear or lessen. Measures at this level have a directly preventative effect, yet this is not their only or primary purpose. In addition to pursuing goals of prevention (especially in the sphere of primary prevention), we can also note some more societal goals, dependant upon their position in the helping, emancipating sphere. Some developments in the financial-economic sphere (such as payment with credit cards) also have a preventative effect and as such may also be promoted within a policy of crime prevention. The example of “improved coordination of public transport with pub closing times” also illustrates this. This also has a preventative value and moreover it represents a service to the public. Although problem analysis remains the point of departure, answers are sought that are not directly related to the problem and thus do not contain the risk of highlighting, confirming and reinforcing the problem as such and certain groups, zones and situations. The point of departure is that the constructive intervention into, or the dealing with, environmental factors creates a climate in which criminal behaviour becomes impossible, is less able or unable to thrive. Measures on level 1 and 2 can be the same, but the point of departure is different. Level 2 starts from the analysis of a preventative need, and level 1 doesn’t.

Level 3: specific crime prevention

Level 3 (specific crime prevention measures) concerns measures directly intended to prevent specific crimes. The analysis as well as the answers formulated remain problem oriented. It concerns a direct approach to crime. These measures can be technical-preventative in nature (e.g. electronic surveillance), targeted intervention in the infra(-structure) (e.g. safes), or of an organisational nature (e.g. drawing up a safety plan).

Within this level fall various measures such as information concerning drugs, camera surveillance of high-risk zones, police patrols, security audits in firms, alarm systems, campaigns concerning theft, police surveillance and other measures that increase the chance of getting caught, locks, burglary protection, security agents, alcohol checks for forbidden weapons or drug smuggling, targeted sensitisation of high-risk groups, access management and
control, security services, guarding money transports, projects around burglary prevention, around vandalism or sexual aggression, or providing problem-directed information to educational institutions by the police concerning drugs or weekend traffic accidents after the use of alcohol. In crime prevention, this group of measures spontaneously receives the most attention. Intervention at this level deals directly with a specific problem that one wishes to prevent or limit. The point of departure is a certain problem. The intent is to tackle this problem. It here concerns a countermove. These measures are thus also problem oriented, both in their analysis and their approach. If they succeed, they have a specific and directly preventative effect. And this is also the primary purpose of such intervention.

The directly preventative level 3 has the same problem orientation as level 4. Its point of departure is the problem and in addition it formulates problem-oriented answers. The example of vandalism at a bicycle shed (problem) leads e.g. to the answer to this in the form of using locks and cameras. The problem analysis (bicycle theft) thus here receives a problem-directed answer. The presence of locks and cameras does not cause users to forget the problem, but rather emphasises it. They are always reminded of the risk attached to this place. This can place a burden on the social climate and reinforce feelings of insecurity.

**Level 4: curative measures**

Level 4 (curative measures) is the most specific. It is the last (top) step in the crime prevention pyramid. It also forms the last series of measures that always are situated on the border between the preventative and the curative. It concerns repairing and limiting damage once something bad has happened and learning from it for the future. With respect to drug related crimes it concerns arresting and sentencing the makers of synthetic drugs, the drug dealers, cleaning up the drug network and possibly the detention and detoxification (ambulant and in centres) of the addicts. This level also includes the registration, reporting, investigation and prosecution of crimes. In addition, here are located reparation and restitution by financial and other means to the victim such as in forms of victim-offender mediation. Therapy and guidance for the offender are also here (either within or outside the prison setting). Also help for the victim needs to be offered here. Local and state police and sometimes also the office of the public prosecutor have an important role here. Yet many other institutions or persons can play a smaller role such as the initial reception of or discussion with the victim, support in reporting to the police, looking into the possibilities for the intervention of insurance.

Quick intervention in acute situations (e.g. arresting a hooligan, rounding up a band of thieves) can prevent the situation from becoming worse and
thus have a preventative function. Detaining offenders can prevent a relapse. Dealing with a victim’s fear or therapy for the offenders, the restoration of societal relations and networks through forms of restorative law, etc. can have preventative significance. The degree of problem orientation is the greatest at this curative level because it is here that the problem takes place. The analysis of the situation and the approach are problem oriented. At this level we must search for a good solution and the prevention of a worsening by quick and proper action.

**Level 0: the societal context**

This level should be seen as the context. Within the pyramid it is not seen as an action level. This is the wider societal framework, society in its different dimensions, the societal-organisational dimension and ordinary life. The higher levels are firmly anchored in the wider societal context. Crime prevention policy (implemented at levels 1 to 4) cannot be seen apart from the societal, social and ecological context. This ‘level 0’ is the bedding. With the means and limitations that arise from this context one must initiate preventative campaigns, develop a crime prevention policy. Prevention policy occurs within this broader societal context and thus can never be seen apart from this. The political and economic policy implemented, the presence of natural and cultural riches, the situation in this world, current conceptions of morals and ethics concerning what is and is not of value, the degree of institutionalisation influence the criminal and crime prevention policy (and vice versa). This context conditions the possibilities of implementing a crime prevention policy in a positive or a negative way. The collective will to collaboration on the part of the citizen, the subsidy policy on the part of authorities, technological developments, etc. are examples here. The appeal to crime prevention can be an important signal for the quality of this societal environment. Crime prevention measures at the higher levels will not be effective if serious problems are present at this level. Policy makers, in other words, should implement a policy that supports the targeted crime prevention measures. And likewise crime prevention measures must be implemented that have a connection within this societal context and which influence this favourably.

**'Problem orientation' as principle of the pyramid**

Thus problem orientation forms the central criterion for categorising crime prevention measures.

This can be schematically represented as follows:
This approach makes possible the enlarging of crime prevention approaches that are too narrow to positively oriented measures, to the promotion of the quality of life and the societal context in general. It concerns here not a choice between the different levels (not 'either-or', but 'both'). It concerns a balance between the different levels with as point of reference the total societal quality. The levels are linked and require each other. It concerns an integral approach (see below).

**FURTHER EXPLANATION**

**Hierarchy**

The model contains a hierarchy. It is a continuum of continuously more specific crime prevention measures. The construction of more basis-oriented levels of prevention always precedes the more specific prevention levels. In the movement through prevention levels from 0 to 4 there is increasing attention for continuously more specific, targeted crime prevention measures. Or the other way around, in moving through levels 4 to 0, there is a decreasing attention for specific preventative interventions, in favour of an increasing attention for the general quality of life. Each level must be strong enough to build another on top of it. The base is the global societal context. If this is functioning sufficiently, it operates in a fundamentally preventative manner. It is a first requirement before moving to a more specific crime prevention policy. Specific crime prevention measures can thus become more directed and still remain in proportion. Thus specific crime prevention measures (level 3, e.g. frequent police patrols, sensitisation around burglary prevention) in a neighbourhood that has significantly deteriorated and that has high unemployment makes little sense if work is also not done to improve the basic quality of life in this neighbourhood (levels 0, 1 and 2, e.g. using improvement programs, welfare work, social and economic neighbourhood development) that in turn cannot be seen apart from the functioning of the wider society to which this neighbourhood belongs (level 0, e.g. unemployment as a result of economic recession).
Positive versus negative orientation

The general and fundamental levels 1 and 2 are other in nature than the specific prevention and curative levels of 3 and 4. The first levels strive for a better quality of life, a healthy social climate (positive orientation). They are oriented to a positive goal such as democratic decision making, minority rights, improved living conditions, etc. The latter levels are problem oriented (negative orientation). They are directed to crime, the protection against such and tackling it. Here a given problem is at the centre, a negative fact the needs to be avoided or combated (e.g. camera surveillance to protect against theft, private security services to protect against burglary or damage, police patrols to protect against vandalism, etc.) We can speak of a negative orientation. This brings us to the general, basic tension in the field of prevention. A balance must be sought between these negative and positive orientations, with special attention to the positive orientation. A too one-sided problem-oriented approach to crime prevention can be counterproductive.

Policy feedback

Systematically maintaining crime data can provide much information concerning the implementation of crime prevention policy. This can take the form of figures and statistics, but also that of experiential data. Figures and statistics are provided mostly at level 4. These can provide information about the different levels where crime prevention measures need to be taken. In this way feedback from the different levels can be fed back into policy.

A wave of burglaries in a certain neighbourhood can lead to measures at the different levels. These can range from, for example, a temporary intensification of police patrols, an information campaign about burglary protection (level 3), to the installation of better street lighting and better methods of dealing with roaming youth in the evening (levels 2 and 1).

Forming attitudes and structural measures

The horizontal division of the crime prevention pyramid into different levels ranging from a general to a specific prevention approach to problem areas must be supplemented by a vertical division. Here we find considerations concerning forming attitudes, changing the mentalities among the groups concerned to complement the structural measures (cf. diagram “horizontal and vertical division”). These two groups of measures must be implemented as complements to each other at the different levels (from 1 to 4).

With attitude formation we think of, among others, information and sensitisation campaigns via the media, advertising campaigns, lectures, talks, meetings, involving the citizen in political decision making via an open policy
with possibilities for involvement and discussion, a personal approach to the target groups involved, increasing involvement, ombudsman services, etc.

Under structural measures we can make a distinction between organisational (e.g. uniform crime prevention regulations, alarm procedures, surveillance regulations, disaster plans, etc.) and technical measures (this includes a broad range of measures such as physical and architectural protection in high-risk zones by cameras, electronic security, access control, adequate lighting, etc.). The installation of extra lighting in a dark parking lot can be a structural measure but so can the improvement of the road infrastructure for bicyclists and the installation of solid, safe bicycle sheds, as well as major investments in green parks, the drastic reduction of disposable packaging, forbidding the sale and possession of weapons, the creation of more work opportunities, training programmes in education concerning learning to deal with conflicts and assistance in reconverting the cocaine farmer's industry.

Crime prevention policy should promote the synergy between measures in the area of attitude formation and structural measures. A one-sided accent on one of the groups of measures usually ends in the failure of the crime prevention measures taken. For example it makes no sense to forbid youth to come into contact with drugs (attitude) if there is no meaningful alternative offered.

**Integral approach**

If a society is undergoing an increase in unrest, fear, insecurity and crime, policy makers must investigate the problem fields at the different levels. This can range from political and economic policy (level 0), welfare policy (levels 1 and 2) to the organisation and operation of the police and the courts (levels 2, 3 and 4). Measures at the specific prevention levels (3 and 4) are here perhaps insufficient.

Without a thoroughgoing analysis of the underlying levels, the threat is real that one is only treating symptoms while the macro-environment that creates, maintains and reinforces these problems is left untouched. Such a policy quickly becomes pernicious. A policy that wishes to decrease the level of these problems must thus look to a broad spectrum of measures at the different levels, with an eye to a positive orientation and to a balance between structural measures and attitude formation (cf. above). It concerns here an integral approach.

The crime prevention pyramid can contribute to the criminological discussion concerning where crime prevention begins and ends. It is not necessary here to look for possible conflicts between the different levels, but
rather to the linking of the different levels back to level 0. In this way very diverse crime prevention measures can make sense if they are meaningful within a general policy of promoting the quality of life. The pyramid shows that prevention measures in school should not strictly focus on level three and four by, for example, camera surveillance or sanctioning difficult students. The perspective of prevention can be broadened to a more integral approach (all levels) with an accent on positive measures (level one and two). In this way, direct and indirect answers to violence can be employed more appropriately (O’Moore & Minton, 2006; Blaya, 2006; Galloway & Roland, 2004).

FUTURE RESEARCH

This leads us to a last step in this contribution after the the description of the research, the review of empirical data and the model of the prevention pyramid. As mentioned before, Belgium is a small but complex federalized country, with different policies and research traditions in the northern (Flemish speaking) and southern (French speaking) part of the country. Although Flanders has a long history of criminological research in the field of juvenile problem behaviour and youth delinquency, this research used to be scattered all over the region. Research projects that were set up to tackle this disparity are not limited to the school environment but oriented towards a larger field, with only some information on what is happening in schools.

Therefore, the collection of specific data about violence and deviant behaviour in schools at a regional level should be encouraged. In doing so, European standards for data gathering should be followed, in order to allow comparison with other countries and regions.

Furthermore, investments in longitudinal research at a European level should be made. These data should not only be used for knowledge, but also lead to scientific and practical answers to the following questions. “Which programs will effectively tackle violence and bullying?” “How can we contribute to the implementation and evaluation of best and promising practices in our region and at a European level?”

Secondly, as shown in the paragraph about well-being in schools, the Ministry of Education is registering truancy figures. Although this is a positive initiative, the registration should become more specified (different forms of truancy should be identified) and these figures should be used to construct an integral education- and school policy that includes prevention, problem-solving and the promotion of well-being in schools.
Finally, anthropological-sociological issues considering definitions should also receive some attention. International comparison shows differences in local terminology that cannot be translated. Concepts of violence should be described and contextualized against the cultural background in which they are used. Clarification of definitions and concepts is important in order to construct a European scientific language and to interpret country bound figures in a correct way.
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SCHOOLS BEING TESTED BY VIOLENCE
INTELLIGIBILITY MODELS, RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ACTION IN THE
FRENCH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM

VERHOEVEN MARIE, GIRSEF, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN
SHERHADLIOGLU ELIZ, GIRSEF, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN

ABSTRACT

This contribution analyses the manner in which the scientific field and the political debate take shape in the field of "violence" and "deviance » in schools in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. After having catalogued the sparse quantitative data available, the article reviews the main research conducted within three disciplines (social psychology, sociology, criminology). Four models of intelligibility of violence in schools have emerged, referring back to different social action and deviance concepts. The last part compares these models to proposals that provide the structure of public action in education (both in terms of the content of decrees and through the experiences recorded in the field).

KEY WORDS

School violence, deviance, Belgium (French-speaking community), theoretical models of violence, social integration, symbolic violence, deviant career, public action in education.
BELGIUM, A FEDERALIZED COUNTRY

Belgium is a federalized country with a complex political structure\(^2\). It is divided into three regions for territorial matters as economy, urbanization, employment policies for example (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia) and three communities for matters relating to the people as culture, youth, education (Flemish Community, the French Community and the German Community). In Flanders, the competencies of the Flemish Region and the Flemish Community are merged in the Flemish government. In contrast with other federal states, regional governments in Belgium have full power concerning their competencies, meaning that these legislations exist at the same hierarchical level as federal laws. The competency over educational matters is a community-based competency\(^3\). This has resulted in the development of three different educational systems. Despite a lot of similarities between these systems (parents’ “free choice” of school, coexistence of several “educational networks” ...), they have been evolving towards bigger differentiation as a result of different policies. Equally, we can speak of different scientific cultures in both areas – Flanders being more influenced by Anglo-Saxon intellectual traditions whereas French-speaking Wallonia has been more influenced by the French debate and research perspectives.

These political and cultural differences affect the way problem behaviour and violence within the school environment is dealt with, resulting in different notions, priorities, and prevention and treatment programs developed within these systems.

In summary, because the name “Belgium” covers two co-existing but very different political, educational and scientific realities, we will present two distinct contributions, dealing respectively with Flanders and with the French Community.

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\(^1\) This foreword is common for both this article and the article n°1: “Problem behaviour and prevention” of prof. Johan Deklerck.


\(^3\) The most important exception on this division is the determination of the age until which young people must attend education. This is a federal matter, for the moment being fixed at the age of 18.
STRUCTURING THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH AND KEY CONCEPTS

A review of data and of the scientific literature in the French-speaking Community (CFB) leads us to emphasise, at the outset, to what extent the structuring of this field of research differs from that observed in Flanders. First of all, if we had to identify a discipline that predominates in this issue, it would undoubtedly be social psychology. Then, scientific cultures - on each side of the linguistic border differ: in CFB, the social sciences have always been open to thought trends that structure scientific debate in France, and less receptive to inputs based on Anglo-Saxon traditions (to which Flemish researchers are more sensitive). It is in this context that we can come to terms with the presence of sociological research in the field of violence and deviance in schools, marked by a “Durkheimian” tradition (concerns about social integration) or by a “critical” reading of the school institution (analysis of social reproduction processes). Finally, it should be noted that in CFB as elsewhere (Carra, Faggianelli, 2003), research in this field often has a “finalized” character since its aim consists in identifying explanatory factors or models likely to provide guidance for political action.

As regards the notions applied in this field of research, we will see that they are many and that they vary fairly significantly according to the approaches. In this article, we will endeavour to pay attention to methods used to establish how the limits of the concept of "violence" are identified. These limits vary from one discipline to the next and focus on different reality perception levels. Four points structure this contribution. After having quickly listed the sparse data on the issue in the CFB (I), we shall undertake a review of the main research carried out in this field, organized from three major disciplinary perspectives (II). In a third phase, we will try to identify four “type” analysis models which structure this field of research (III). The last part of the article briefly addresses the links between the scientific field and public action (IV).

4 Il faut noter qu’en dépit du caractère médiatiquement et politiquement « chaud » des thèmes de la violence et de la déviance à l’école, la recherche universitaire menée sur ces questions est plus réduite que ce qu’on pourrait imaginer.
VIOLENCE AND DEVIANCE IN SCHOOLS: SCATTERED DATA

The scarcity and inaccessibility of data relating to education in the French-speaking Community of Belgium is striking. The «education indicators» published by the Education Department do not contain any figures for absenteeism or for dropping out, and even fewer on facts that can be qualified as violence or delinquency. Some data on the reasons for permanent student exclusion only exist on the official network of the French-speaking Community. Thus, in 2007, of 1,200 exclusion files forwarded to the administration, approximately one third concerned serious disciplinary issues (serious disruption in class, ineffectual sanctions etc.) and violence (carrying a knife, physical aggression etc.). We have been unable to obtain more details. We also know that the department providing psychological assistance to teachers who are victims of violence receives about 20 requests per year as a result of violence perpetrated by students against these teachers.

The main reference presenting sound methodological guarantees is provided by the "surveys on victimization in secondary education" commissioned by the French-speaking Community in 2000 and 2003, and implemented by an inter-university team. The aim consisted in producing, from a representative questionnaire survey targeting teachers and students, an extensive database on "violent » behaviour whose actors claim to have been victims. This is "self-reported" data that is assumed to be more reliable than the data collected by the judicial institutions or by the police. The objectives consisted in quantifying victimization types in (and outside) the school environment, in quantifying and comparing "objective" facts of violence with the "sense of insecurity", of quantifying their changes and impact in terms of "psychosocial well-being," of comparing the point of view of the education team with that of pupils and, finally, identifying explanatory factors with a view to suggesting lines of action and prevention.

A list of 11 acts of victimization has been produced and grouped into four categories: rumours, racist insults, mockery, verbal intimidation, grouped

5 Les statistiques de l’enseignement en CFB restent extrêmement difficiles à consulter, en raison de la prégnance de règlements sur la protection de la vie privée. En tant que chercheurs, nous sommes régulièrement confrontés à un manque criant de données officielles accessibles, ce qui rend extrêmement difficile la poursuite d’études dans ce champ.
7 En interrogeant les acteurs eux-mêmes sur les violences à l’école auxquelles ils ont été confrontés, les concepteurs de ces grandes enquêtes espèrent en effet résoudre le problème du « chiffre noir » de la délinquance souligné par nombre de criminologues (Carra, Faggianelli, 2003).
under the category of "verbal harassment"; theft, deliberate damage to equipment, grouped under the "damage to property" category; racketeering, threats delivered with objects or weapons, blows, unsolicited touching or sexual acts, grouped together under the "physical harassment" category; peddling drugs, considered as a specific category. These studies have produced a few important results. Thus, concerning the frequency of victimization types, the respondent was asked if he/she had been a victim at least once in school of one of abovementioned categories over the previous 5 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since the Christmas holidays,</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Members of teaching staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you been the victim of racist insults?</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have rumours already been spread about you?</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do people make fun of you?</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you already been the victim of verbal harassment or threats?</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you already been victim of racketeering?</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you already been the victim of a theft?</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have any of your belongings been deliberately damaged (jacket, car etc.)?</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you already been threatened with normal objects (knife, cutter, scissors etc.) or with a weapon (knuckledusters, firearms etc.)?</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been hit (slapped, punched, kicked, kneed etc.)?</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has anybody offered you any drugs?</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you suffered unsolicited touching or sexual acts?</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Frequency of types of victimisation acts. Source: LECOCQ C., HERMESSE C., GALAND B., LEMBO B., PHILIPPOT P., & BORN M., (2003), p. 121

Some findings emerge from these data. First of all, pupils are the first victims of school violence and in all categories of actions. They are also the main body reported as being responsible for victimization in schools, even if adults are also responsible for victimization in numbers that cannot be ignored. Then, the most frequent forms of victimization are verbal attacks followed by attacks on property and physical injury. The most serious deeds from a criminal point of view are rather rare. Thirdly, victimization is more common outside than inside school with regard to drug peddling and to threats with weapons and violence. Racketeering occurs more frequently outside school and on the way to school. Verbal and property attacks against students take place more frequently in school.

Concerning the perception of violence and the feeling of insecurity, investigations reveal that these are not particularly significant in schools. However, pupils generally state more frequently than members of teaching staff that they feel insecure and depressed, and they have a relatively low level of trust in adults. In other words, the problems reported by the students have
more to do with the feeling of well-being and integration into the school than with «real» violence.

In terms of the variables that determine victimization, the survey highlights the following significant reports: attacks on property, verbal and physical attacks within the school decrease with age (whereas victimization remains stable outside school). Only the younger students face greater victimization in school compared to outside. The situation where they are offered drugs increases with age. Boys are slightly more exposed to physical attacks and to drug peddling than girls.

If this scant information enables us to glimpse the magnitude of the phenomenon and of the principal factors involved, it remains limited and leaves the question of interpretations applied in order to understand trends unresolved. In the next point, we broaden the outlook in order to review the research developed in all disciplines and the differentiated object construction modes that emerge.

DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES, FIELDS OF REGISTRATION AND OBJECT CONSTRUCTION MODES

Three main disciplines prevail in the field of research violence and deviance in the school environment: psychology, sociology and criminology. These fundamental disciplines are associated with particular object construction modes and with the various methodological approaches.

INPUT FROM SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEVIANCE

A significant part of the work recorded has been carried out by researchers into social psychology, into the psychology of social development, or, more specifically, by researchers specializing in the psychology of deviance and of «social maladjustment». This disciplinary anchor goes hand in hand with an object construction in terms of psycho-social development of «asocial» or «deviant» behaviours. The aim consists in identifying the weight of different factors involved in the emergence of such activities. When they are carried out by researchers in education sciences, these studies will include an analysis of the specific role played by the educational context (establishment organization or teaching factors).

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8 On peut classer ici les travaux de C. Gavray, M. Born, G. Shaber, C. Hermesse, B. Lembo (service de Psychologie de la délinquance et du développement psychosocial de l’ULg; ou, à l’UCL, de chercheurs en Psychologie sociale (B. Galand, C. Lecocq, P. Philippot)
The researchers involved in this discipline have significantly contributed to the analysis of data derived from «surveys into victimization in secondary education» mentioned above, whether in terms of a general analysis (Galand, Philippot, Buidin, Lecocq, 2004), or through a number of targeted studies, focusing on the analysis of the impact made by such or such a context level. At this point, we can quote articles exploring the relations between the feeling of insecurity and the professional (dis)engagement of teachers (Galand, Philippot, Lecocq, 2007), those analysing the role played by of the establishment in the phenomena of victimization, or those reporting on the links between teaching practices and phenomena of violence (Galand, 2004a). Other authors explore classic sociological issues such as the effect of socio-cultural diversity on the perception of violence-related actions (Small, Born, Manço, 2002).

In addition to the articles applying victimization survey data directly, there are more targeted surveys conducted by the same teams of researchers. A study conducted with approximately 616 young inhabitants of Liege links the frequency of different forms of violence (within and outside of school) to the level of satisfaction reported by the school actors (Born, Gavray, Lembo, Galand, 2005). Another ad hoc study (Galand, Dupont, 2002) examines the adoption of beliefs that encourage the use of violence, in association with a number of sociological (socio-economic or ethnic in origin) and psycho-social (perceived individual and group discrimination, school integration) variables. These works partially support earlier conclusions submitted by other psycho-sociologists (Egido, Born, 1995) for whom maladjustment in school is correlated to attitudes conducive to violence. These authors identify the relational context as the cause of inappropriate or violent behaviour.

Other studies focus on specific phenomena such as the consumption of drugs or school dropout. In a case study, Galand, Macquet and Philipot (2000) show that the variables correlated to dropping out and to absenteeism relate to social and school integration (identifying with the school, relations with peers and teachers). Another work (Born, Lafontaine, 2006) connects dropping out to individual psycho-social (self-esteem, well-being, social skills), family (style of education) and teaching variables.

Finally some research work undertaken by psychologists in the field of public health, and based on epidemiological type data - such as some studies on the use of illicit drugs in schools (Jünger-Tas, 1972; Born, Shaber, 1987).

Beyond the differences between these disciplinary frame-lines, the purpose of the work carried out in social psychology shares a common point: understanding school violence from the viewpoint of individual asocial or deviant behaviour. These approaches establish a kind of continuum ranging...
from mundane discourtesy through school deviances such as absenteeism or dropping out to extreme violence on the criminal level. The explanatory factors mobilized are linked to the social psychology legacy: most of the authors refer to social and school integration, the development of social skills, the feeling of exclusion, the establishment (organizational factors) or even academic progression (Born, 2005; Galand, 2004b). "Deviant behaviour’ is viewed in the relational, educational, teaching, organizational or even institutional context. Recent developments in research seem to attribute increasing importance to these contextual factors, including those relating to school context.

SOCILOGY

Sociology constitutes the second major discipline in the field of research into violence and deviance in schools. This work, often carried out as part of requests for assistance in the establishment, is based on quite different epistemological premises. The issue consists not so much in identifying «factors» that could explain the phenomena of deviance but rather in understanding the experience of the students in a non-egalitarian educational institution. In relation to the approach of psychologists, more firmly entrenched in the positivist paradigm, double displacement occurs. On the one hand, the «school violence» object is deconstructed and forms part of a more comprehensive approach to the educational system. On the other hand, if attention is paid to deviant behaviour, it is from the viewpoint of their social and cultural significance for students or even from that of resistance to «institutional violence» . This view which is both understanding and critical goes hand in hand with the use of qualitative and ethnographic methodologies.

One of the pioneering works of this approach is that of Nizet and Hiernaux (1984), derived from a survey involving interviews with several tens of male students and teachers in a secondary establishment offering diploma routes. Questioned by the educational team about violent disobedience phenomena but also about student boredom, researchers offered an analysis of the socio-cultural divergence between the presuppositions of teaching practices and working class youth culture. With a similar outlook, the work by Quivy, Ruquoy and Van Campenhoudt (1989) presents an organizational analysis conducted at the request of a secondary school on the issues of «lack of discipline».

However, it is especially toward the end of the 1990s that there was a significant revival of research into «violence in schools», with the development of ethnographic approaches. In this respect, the work carried out by Vienna (2003, 2005 and 2008) is emblematic. Based on a long-term
ethnographic survey conducted in two Brussels institutions where positive discrimination prevailed, the author develops a detailed analysis of school interactions - and in particular behaviour qualified as deviant by the educational institution-, based on concepts inherited from symbolic interactionism. This ethnographic viewpoint that pays careful attention to day-to-day social meanings is closely linked to a «critical» approach: school violence occurs alongside the institutional and cultural processes which create symbolic violence.

Some ethnographic type research has also been conducted recently on sociology and education and on sociolinguistics (Lannion, Hambye, 2008), focusing on the response to linguistic standards of young people who possess a «street culture» in school. Some works on school dropouts (Delcourt, 1990; Van Haecht, Baugard, 1989) also feature an analysis of individual «school careers» and how the structural and symbolic phenomena surrounding their deployment are taken into account.

**Criminology**

The third discipline present (more discretely) in this field is criminology. This research deals with school violence, its indicators and its causes, or even the risk /protection factors involved in «juvenile delinquency», in or outside school. The works of Ganty (1993, 1995) fall within this perspective. The author seeks to define school violence (fairly broadly, including institutional violence) and, to this end, is based on the works of other authors or on data, frequently quantitative, from major surveys available in the CFB. Work by other criminologists (Gavray, Born, 2006; Gavray, Vettenburg, 2007) also attempt to define violent behaviour indicators as well as to identify «risk» and «protection» factors associated with juvenile delinquency. In particular, criminologists use the international survey carried out by the International Study on self-Related Delinquency network with the participation of Wallonia and Flanders, or even surveys on victimization.

**Four intelligibility models used to consider violence and deviance in schools**

Beyond the survey mechanisms and the differentiated object construction modes, works identified refer the reader to contrasting types of
interpretation. We intend grouping these analysis models into four major ideal-typical9 «families ».

THE DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AS A RESULT OF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

A first model (which underlies most of the work carried out in social psychology but also in criminology) regards deviance in terms of *socially inappropriate behaviour* or of deviant behaviour and attempts to identify «trigger» or «protective» factors. More than individual characteristics (social, cultural etc. origin), the adoption of deviant behaviour is linked to certain contextual factors (educational relationship, composition or establishment effects, the impact of school relegation etc.). Some researchers (Junger-Tas, 1972; Born, Schaber, 1987) have thus demonstrated that the «individual inclinations to deviance » only emerge in connection with certain context characteristics (peer influence, level of information available in school etc.). Other works (Galand, Smith, 2002; small, Born, Manço, 2002) stress the role played by the establishment (in particular via the composition effect) in adopting beliefs favourable to violence. Social integration related variables (quality of teacher-pupil relations, a sense of belonging to the school etc.) or even the establishment’s organizational functioning are also significant in relation to the school dropping out and absenteeism (Galand, 2004b).

In short, the different types of victimization, the school violence or dropout related beliefs are considered within the relational and organizational contexts that generate these beliefs. More fundamentally, this model «explains» violence and deviance as the product of failing «social integration» dynamics (Dubet, 1997): the adoption by the young of deviant behaviour is linked to family integration or school problem processes.

THE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS: PERSISTENCE OF THE SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE MODEL

A second interpretation model refers back to the institutional violence thesis. Violence in schools is not considered initially from the individual behaviour viewpoint but rather as the result of symbolic and structural violence mechanisms inherent in the educational system. There, violence there is less associated with the inadequacies of social integration than with the effects of domination and social inequalities (Dubet, 1997). Many versions of this model can be found in sociological literature. Already present in the 1960s, it specifically stresses the school’s inability to cope with the

9 Nous avons élaboré ces modèles d’intelligibilité en nous inspirant, tout en les complétant, des propositions développées par F. Dubet (1997)
social and cultural diversity of its public or the gap between school culture and the (sub-)culture of students from working class backgrounds (Nizet, Hiernaux, 1984). The behaviour labelled as “deviant » is analysed as forms of responding and resisting to the violence inherent to the meeting of two symbolic universes - that of school and that of the street-, or even the institutional violence linked to the school relegation (Vienna, 2003, 2005, 2008).

### Societal Violence and Exclusion

A third intelligibility model put forward is based on the assumption of the school as an institution affected by societal violence. The tensions or violence observable on the school scene are approached from charts dealing with the new social question and new forms of poverty, on the forms of destabilization and deregulation within working class families, or even on the hard social relationships that typify juvenile sociability in urban working class environments. This model, fairly scantily represented in literature, is however detectable in certain studies carried out by socio-anthropologists who address the phenomena of juvenile sociability in urban multicultural working class environments, and social tensions (violence, wandering etc.) which permeate youth groups and which are apparent, among other areas, on the school scene (Jamoulle, 2002, 2005).

In this model, the school, in some way, suffers the ensuing societal violence and social exclusion and is obliged to protect itself.

### Social and School Construction of Deviant Paths

A fourth model, taking its inspiration from interactionism, defines school violence as the result of a social construction and labelling process. Here, the focus is less on the nature of the behaviour or to their «deep» sociological roots, but rather on the process through which individuals are designated by the institutions as «problematic» or «violent» and gradually revert to a «deviant way of life» (Becker, 1985). This model crosses horizontally through several disciplines since it is found in some criminologists, in some social psychology studies and ethnographic works. What is highlighted is the «relational» and institutionally rooted character of the process which led to deviance (Traube, 1996; Gavray, Vettenburg, 2007). The tendency to increasingly serious deviances is analysed as a process causing weakened individuals to react to various forms of labelling applied by control institutions (schools, social services, legal institution etc.) (Born, Gavray, 1993; Egido, Born, 1995).
THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ACTION IN EDUCATION

Do research endeavours that have been described above have a significant effect in the field of political action? Can we find any sign of this research in the decrees and measures adopted in CFB? If yes, which of the analysis models are adopted by the decision-makers? We can only touch on these issues here.

LEGISLATIVE TEXTS ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST AND PREVENTION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

If, within legislative texts, no direct reference is made to the conclusions reached by research conducted in the French community, it can be argued that these measures relate implicitly to different concepts of violence in the school environment.

Among the general legislation texts first and foremost, the reference to the institutional violence and societal model is relatively explicit. Accordingly, the most significant decree – The « Missions » decree - *Decree defining the priority missions in the field of secondary education and organising the structures designed to perform these* (24.07.97) - insists on equal opportunities, teaching students to respect individuals and their beliefs. It states that establishments must outlaw both moral and physical violence and replace this violence with democratic responsible citizenship practices (art. 8, 9). The «Positive Discrimination » decree - *Decree designed to ensure that all students are given equal social emancipation opportunities, notably through the implementation of positive discrimination* (30.06.98) provides for granting additional resources to the most disadvantaged institutions. It also aims to prevent dropping out and absenteeism via school mediation and teacher training measures.

As these are better focused legal provisions, aimed directly at fighting against forms of violence fund in schools, different reference models are used. The *Decree on various measures for combating school dropout rates, exclusion and violence* (15.12.06, amendment of the decree of the 12.05.04) put in place six measures: school mediation services, mobile teams, the coordination of actions preventing academic dropout and violence, in-service training, school attendance services. The school mediation services, the mobile teams and the «school attendance services» concern the prevention of violence and school dropout by restoring climate of trust and communication in the relations between the pupils, parents and the educational team. Here, the measures (social and educational assistance for minors and their families) are first and foremost educational and socially oriented. In this case, we have an action that aims to strengthen communication with and social and academic
integration of young people at a level that is more «micro». Finally, some legislation texts refer to a «safer» view of prevention, emphasising the collaborations between school communities and the police concerning school absenteeism and offenses (drugs, crime, theft, the carrying of weapons) (circular of the 07.07.06). In these texts, violence is considered as resulting from a «failure of the Law» or Government which is obliged to reaffirm its presence and restrictive framework. In other words, the specific measures and mechanisms refer to a two views of violence and deviance in schools: am interpretation reading in terms of «failed socialization and integration» (social integration model) and another in terms of «a failure of law» and of «order», almost absent from the scope of scientific research.

**Research-action and experiences in the field: a proliferation of reference systems**

In parallel with the analysis of the legislative texts, we have analyzed the outlook developed through pilot experiments or research-action developed by associations in the field (prevention in schools, support to dropout students etc.). A review of models of understanding detectable from these experiences echoes some of the models highlighted. Some pilot experiences mention «institutional» violence of which young «dropouts» are victims (Velz, 1998 1999). Other blame the «symbolic violence» which results when a «single culture» school has to face up to a diverse public, and provides support to teachers when these have to consider their cultural codes (Crutzen, 1998; Crutzen et alii, 2001). Many local initiatives focus their work on communication, on the «rehabilitation» and active integration of rules, or even the recognition of young people «as actors» in their integration. Behind these mechanisms and intervention tools, we perceive an interpretation in terms of desocialisation and a lack of integration. The achievements of social psychology research (especially the highlighting of a link between school integration, active participation and encouraging school attendance) are quite often capitalized, sometimes quite explicitly, in particular through actions designed to support the development of «social skills» in young people in the school context (Blomart, 2001; Blomart, Timmermans, Caffieaux, Petiau, 2001).

Finally, on the cusp between the worlds of research and of politics, the Mouvèt, Munten, Jardon (2000) report submits a critical reference system of existing measures for preventing and fighting violence in schools. The work, which discusses 33 measures (listed or not by the law) and compares the research with the views of European experts, stresses a threefold message: (1) the actors in the world of education have a real power with regard to the prevention of violence; (2) «multilevel» action is recommended; (3) there is a
need to strengthen the substantive measures designed to promote equal opportunities and to build projects for establishments, involving all actors.

**CONCLUSION**

With this contribution, we have endeavoured to analyse the way in which research is structured in the CFB in the field of violence and deviance in schools. Our attention is immediately drawn to several findings: on the one hand, the number of scientific work carried out on these issues is surprisingly low. Then, we are obliged to note the scarcity and dispersal of quantitative data available in the CFB. The fact that the present Minister for Education (C. Dupont) has just lodged a bill in Parliament on the «Observatory of school violence» responsible for documenting phenomena confirms the urgency with which focused observation tools need to be produced. On the university research side, the «victimisation surveys» constitute the most reliable database in the CFB. These investigations have led the researchers to put the extent of the violence and delinquency problems in schools in perspective: less present than elsewhere, the most serious incidents finally affect schools less than other social areas.

From a survey of main research works conducted in three major disciplines, we have built four intelligibility models applicable to these phenomena: the *shortcomings of social integration, institutional violence, societal and exclusion violence, labelling and the deviant pathway*. As for political action, we are obliged to report that it is only partially linked to research achievements. The models on which legislative texts are implicitly based seem to refer more widely to integration models and its «safer» version the «failings of the Law», than on systemic issues, probably more difficult to render operational. By contrast, the field of social action is proving to be dynamic and alternates with diversified analysis models, intent on respecting the complex nature of the issues.

In terms of future lines of research, several approaches would deserve to be developed. (i) the detailed analysis of the different effects of context (particularly in mobilizing of multi-level technique analysis) must be continued; (ii) it would be worthwhile developing qualitative works linking the analysis of youth sociability in and outside the school, which would allow us to address the realities of urban neighbourhoods typified by social relegation; (iii) Finally, the critical analysis of links between research and public action in this field remains open: how do the typologies put forward by researchers and questions put on political agendas affect each other? Beyond the «facts» or the indicators that claim to be objective, we must not forget that the analyses submitted by researchers correspond to interpretations of
the social universe and motors driving the action, and simultaneously convey representations of relevant and legitimate levels of action.
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ABSTRACT

Based on national reviews and current systematic research the present paper analyses the frequency and evolution of deviant—especially violent—behaviour in Luxembourg schools. Findings are presented in terms of how the students and teachers perceive the respective situation themselves. The empirical results for Luxembourg give an account of the incidence rates of different forms of deviant behaviour and violence in comparison with other (European) countries. In addition, specific methods of prevention and reduction of deviant and violent behaviour that have recently been used and evaluated in Luxembourg will be presented. The report closes with a preview of future developments and recommendations.

KEYWORDS:

Deviant behaviour, violence, school, Luxembourg.
INTRODUCTION

The following report describes the current situation in Luxembourg concerning the frequency of deviant behaviour in Luxembourg schools with a special emphasis on violent behaviour.

The report does not provide a description of the society, the school system in Luxembourg and the historical developments of the phenomena. This information are presented elsewhere (see Steffgen & Russon, 2003; Michaelis & Fischer, 2008). To date, though, no comprehensive research reviews and studies have been conducted on deviant behaviour in Luxembourg. But in the last decade the topic "violence in schools" has gained public as well as scientific interest. Hence, some reviews have been published on the situation in Luxembourg (Otten & Wirtgen, 2001; Steffgen, 2006). Steffgen and Russon (2003), as part of the European Connect-project 'Tackling violence in school', as well as Steffgen and Ewen (2004), documented the current research—partly in comparison with the findings in other member countries of the European Union. Following an order of the 'Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche' the 'Cellule de Recherche sur la Résolution de Conflits' (2003) has also presented an experts report on violence in Luxembourg schools. Extensive measures for the prevention and reduction of violence in schools have been suggested on the basis of both a qualitative-quantitative study and an analysis by experts. These methods were recommended for implementation by the schools themselves.

Based on these reviews and current systematic research the present paper analyses the frequency and evolution of deviant—especially violent—behaviour in Luxembourg. Findings are presented of how the students and teachers perceive the respective situation themselves. The empirical results for Luxembourg give an account of the incidence rates of different forms of deviant behaviour and violence in comparison with other (European) countries. In addition, specific methods of prevention and reduction of deviant and violent behaviour that have recently been used and evaluated in Luxembourg will be presented. The report closes with a preview of future developments of the subject.
HOW TO DEFINE DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AND VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL? DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

What is deviant behaviour? Clinard and Meier (2007) provide different definitions, which are based on statistical, absolutist, reactivist, or normative accounts. A statistical definition identifies deviance as any behaviour that is statistically infrequent. In the perspective of absolutist definitions, deviant behaviour constitutes a violation of principles and values that are assumed to be universal. A reactivist definition regards a deviant act as the transgression of a specific prohibition, be that formal or informal. Finally, a normative definition tautologically describes deviance as a violation of a norm, namely of a standard conduct to which most people feel they have to conform. Therefore, a lot of different deviances among school children can be detected.

In this report, however, the focus will be on behaviours related to criminality such as risk behaviour and violence. Risk behaviour can be defined as behavioral patterns (i.e., alcohol consumption like the amount in drinks per week; binge drinking) that are correlated with adverse social, psychological and physical consequences. In particular, alcohol is one of the major risk factors for social and physical harm. Alcohol consumption has strong associations with destructive behaviour and getting into trouble with the police (Perkins, 2002). Also cannabis consumption during adolescence is of concern for legal consequences for users and increased risk of psychosocial difficulties. Population studies among cannabis consumers have identified increased rates of juvenile offending and conduct problems.

Violence (in schools) as a specific form of risk behaviour is defined as a purposeful damage in form of a physiological or psychological action that is directed against the self, other persons (student against student; student against teacher; teacher against teacher or teacher against student), or against objects (vandalism). In contrast, bullying is a specific form of violence marked as the systematic and repeated harassment of weaker persons. Mostly it emerges as a group phenomenon (see Olweus, 1993; Smith et al., 1999; for a more detailed definition of the term school violence, see Steffgen, 2004a). The wilful and repeated harm inflicted through electronic media (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006) is than defined as cyber bullying.

RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE PREVALENCE OF RISK BEHAVIOUR AND VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL

What do we know about current risk behaviour and violence of adolescents in Luxembourg? Recently, systematic research by self-report measure has
been done in Luxembourg, especially on the topic of violence in schools, whereas fewer studies have addressed other risk behaviour (Steffgen, 2006; Michaelis & Fischer, 2008).

**National police crime statistics**

First and foremost, the annual police crime statistics report the frequency of juvenile delinquency in Luxembourg (see Police Grand-Ducale, 2008). Data about the frequency of burglary, theft, vandalism, forgery, violence against person, immorality, drug delict, violation of entry law and traffic offence are listed here.

Between 2001 and 2006, the juvenile delinquency of adolescents (< 18 years) was stable (between 10.8 and 12.5 %) in Luxembourg. In 2007, however, the rate was 13.3 % of all crime and, thus, higher than the previous years. Unfortunately, international statistics are missing, so comparing Luxembourg with other countries is not possible (Steffgen, 2008).

All in all, official crime statistics fail to reflect the true level of crime and are difficult to interpret. The existence of a hidden (or dark) figure of crime is obvious and caused by several factors (e.g., some victims of crime might fear a reprisal if they go to the police).

**National empirical findings about risk behaviour and school violence**

Empirical studies have been conducted with school children and teachers of primary and secondary schools as well as adolescents in Luxembourg (Steffgen, 2006). The key findings will be presented next.

**Findings on school children**

Up to now, research on risk behaviour in Luxembourg is sparse. Fischer (2000a, 2000b) reports that alcohol consumption and cannabis use is a problem in Luxembourg. In a local survey 15.9 % of adolescents (between 17 and 25 year old) report that they have been drunk at least five times in their life. 7.2 % of 12 to 16 year old, and 16.5 % of 17 to 25 year old students have consumed cannabis (lifetime prevalence, in 6 district councils). 3.2 % of 12 to 16 year old students and 5.8 % of 17 to 25 year old students consume cannabis on a regular basis. Dickes et al. (1996) found a lifetime prevalence of 4.5 % and a current use prevalence of 2.9 % of cannabis of 13 to 16 year old students (see also Origer, 2007).

In 1999/2000, a representative national survey based on the questionnaire of the study on "Health behaviour among school-aged children" was conducted in Luxembourg schools. Among other topics, primary and
secondary students were asked about risk behaviour, violence, and bullying in school (Wagener & Petry, 2002; Henschen & Wagener, 2005; Wagener, Henschen & Petry, 2005; Petry & Henschen, 2004). 7,397 students from the secondary school level (26.5 % of the student population), and 963 students from the primary school level (10.4 % of the student population), were included in the survey.

55.9 % of students from primary schools (5th and 6th class) and 85.5 % of students from secondary schools report having had a drink in their life. 1.9 % of the primary school children have been drunk at least twice, whereas this is true for 29.8 % of the secondary school students.

11.4 % of the boys and 4.2 % of the girls from primary schools report having consumed drugs. Until the age of 19 drug consumption is reported by more than 50 % of the boys and 40 % of the girls.

19.5 % of the students from primary schools and 14.4 % of the secondary schools indicate that they have being bullied by other students at least ‘sometimes, but not every week’. On the other hand, 18.5 % of the students from primary schools and 20 % of the students from secondary schools admitted having bullied other students at least ‘sometimes, but not every week’.

All in all, only 9.5 % of secondary school students but 36.7 % of primary school children indicate that they have been hit at least once by other students. In addition, 35.1 % of primary school children and 15.6 % of secondary school students report that they have hit other students at least once.

The gender difference is significant in these statistics. Boys were more likely than girls to become victims or perpetrators. Also, boys consistently bully other children more often than girls. With respect to becoming victims of bullying, however, there is little difference between boys and girls. The results of another representative survey on school violence of primary school children were published by Martin (2004). Violent acts were investigated from different perspectives, including observer, perpetrator, and victim. Data largely support research findings of the level of violent behaviour of Petry and Henschen (2004).

Besides this, a research team around Steffgen (Boever, Letsch, Mathay, Nilles, Schumacher, Speller & Steffgen, 2001; Guillaume, Majerus, Nickels & Steffgen, 2002; Huberty & Steffgen, 2008; Steffgen, 2003, 2004b, 2004c) implemented numerous school specific studies to investigate the extent of school violence and the level of school climate in the respective schools. They found that the violence rates were slightly different between schools, which
indicates that also school characteristics can influence violence rates (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005)

Currently, they are working on the topic of cyber bullying (Steffgen, 2009). In a sample of 2,070 students (45.5 % boys; 54.5 % girls from Luxembourg schools), 4.3 % of the students reported having experienced cyber bullying often (almost daily, several times a week, about once a week, about once in a month), 9.8 % only 1-3 times a year, and 85.8 % never. The prevalence rates for cyber bullying other students were 5.0 % often, 5.6 % only 1-3 times a year, and 89.4 % never.

In addition, Willems and his colleagues (Boultgen, Heinen & Willems, 2007; Heinen, Boultgen & Willems, 2006; Willems & Meyers, 2008) have shown that drug abuse and violent behaviour rates are also varying between cities and regions in Luxembourg.

**Findings on school teachers**

Remarkable differences were found between students and adults in the perception of violence in school (CRRC, 2003). Teacher reported about more violence in school than students. In a sample survey with 90 primary school teachers, Steffgen (2000a) examined teachers’ awareness of the extent of physical violence and bullying among students. The majority of teachers believed that the incidence of violent behaviour (59 %) and bullying (66.3 %) remained stable over the previous five years. In another study with primary school teachers (n = 158), Steffgen (2001) found evidence that an authoritarian educational method in combination with an outwardly directed anger expression encourages aggressive behaviour of students.

In a representative study with 399 secondary school teachers, Steffgen and Ewen (2007) investigated incidences of violent acts of students directed against teachers. Data from the nationwide survey show that in Luxembourg 23.9% of the teachers are victims of strong verbal attacks by students at least several times a year. Also 9.3% of Luxembourg teachers became victims of object theft, 4.5% of object damage, and 5.8% of telephone terror, respectively. The data suggest that in Luxembourg, 7% of teachers were victims of sexual harassment, whereas only 2% of the respondents admitted similar experiences in the German study by Greszik et al. (1995). The national survey also showed that 4% of teachers were victims of physical assault, which is in agreement with the findings from German studies (Varbelow, 2003; Greszik et al., 1995).

To date, no research on the perception of deviant or risk behaviour by teachers in Luxembourg is available.
INTERNATIONAL EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON RISK BEHAVIOUR FOR LUXEMBOURG

Scherer (1996) was the first to present an international study on school violence in Luxembourg. In an attempt to analyze the cross-border situation in the greater Saar-Lor-Lux region, 323 students from Luxembourg, 346 from Saarbrücken (Germany), and 315 from Metz (France), derived from 18 different schools, participated in this study. Taking into account a variety of different aspects concerning school violence, school ecological and family related factors, this study demonstrates differences in the extent of school violence between the three cities of the same greater region. In this study, the Luxembourg students showed less physical violence and vandalism than their German and French colleagues.

Henschen and Wagener (2005) separately compared the findings of the national survey of 1999/2000 with findings of the fifth survey of the international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study. 13 % of the 15 year-old students report never having had a drink. This is one of the highest percentages of the 29 countries participating in this comparison. Furthermore, the Luxembourg school children are less often drunk than students from other countries (sixth last in the ranking of 29 countries of the 11 year old and third last in the ranking of the 13 and 15 year old students; see also section 3.4 below).

In 2006, Luxembourg participated for the first time as official partner in the collaborative cross-national HBSC study. In addition to findings of social context, health outcomes, and health behaviours the international report contains key findings of risk behaviour among young people in 41 countries and regions across Europe and North America (Currie et al., 2008). The international study focuses on children aged 11 (primary school), 13, and 15 years (secondary school). A total of 4,300 Luxembourg adolescents participated in the study.

Currie et al. (2008) show that there are large cross-border differences in the prevalence of alcohol and cannabis consumption, physical fighting, and bullying reports.

Adolescents (girls and boys) from Luxembourg report less alcohol drinking but more cannabis consumption than the average of the other 40 HBSC-countries (see table 1).

They are also less often involved in physical fights. With respect to bullying especially girls report been bullied more often than the HSBC average. 11-year old boys indicate less and 15-year old boys report more bullying compared to the average in other countries (see table 1).
IS RISK BEHAVIOUR AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON THE INCREASE?

As yet, empirical studies are missing that serve as a scientific estimation about whether the level of risk behaviour and violence of Luxembourg students has increased or decreased in the past years (Steffgen, 2000b, 2006). Longitudinal studies are required, in which the development of risk behaviour and violence in schools is observed and investigated (Steffgen & Ewen, 2004).

However, alcohol consumption may be compared between findings of the 1999/2000 survey (Henschen, Wagener & Petry, 2005) and the official 2005/2006 HBSC survey (Currie et al., 2008). Findings show that in 2006 a greater number of 15-year old girls (20 %) report to having been drunk at least twice in their life than did 15-year old girls in 1999/2000 (10 %, see table 2). Origer (2007) also concluded that cannabis consumption increased between 1992 to 2000. Comparable data show increasing lifetime prevalence in young people (16-20 years) for all common illicit substances.
SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Studies presented in the previous section substantiate that significant research concerning the prevalence of risk and violent behaviour at Luxembourg schools does exist. Based on these findings a concluding analysis about the extent of different forms of risk behaviour in Luxembourg is possible. The results from the different surveys show that:

- concerning alcohol consumption adolescents from Luxembourg show more or less similar levels of consumption as the adolescents in other countries (in comparison to the average). They report being drunk less often, but with an increase of alcohol consumption of 15-year old girls,

- concerning cannabis use the 15-years old report to consume cannabis more often than the average of adolescents in other countries,

- concerning physical violence slightly lower levels of violent acts have been observed in primary and especially secondary schools in Luxembourg in comparison to other countries,

- concerning bullying the situation is different. Luxembourg studies line out that verbal attacks are part of the daily experiences for most students (Steffgen, 2006). Compared to the HBSC average acts of bullying other students are slightly more likely in Luxembourg.

NATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE RISK AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

National prevention activities on risk behaviour that are integral part of national school programmes have mainly resulted from corporate actions of different governmental and non-governmental organizations (Origer, 2007; Steffgen 2006). In Luxembourg, especially the 'National Prevention Centre on Drug Addiction' (CePT), as a coordination centre of the ministry of health, is concerned with drug addiction prevention of adolescents (Michaelis & Fischer, 2008). The missions of the centre are elucidation, sensitization, education, and professional training in schools and communities. The CePT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have been drunk at least</th>
<th>11 year old</th>
<th>13 year old</th>
<th>15 year old</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>girls</td>
<td>boys</td>
<td>girls</td>
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<td>twice</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
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<td>1999/00</td>
<td>1.5 %</td>
<td>2.6 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
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Table 2: Comparison in alcohol consumption between 1999/2000 and 2006
also participated in the European Healthy Schools and Drugs research project funded by the EU (Fischer & Jung, 2006). The main objective of the project was to improve and develop innovative concepts for school based drug prevention. It was aimed at preventing non-users, experimental users, and recreational users from consuming substances in a harmful way. Altogether, the CePT has developed a national strategy and approach for drug addiction prevention, but drug prevention is not mandatory in schools. As yet, however, no clear national guidelines exist, nor has any official anti-violence initiative of the kind conducted in other countries (e.g. Canada and Australia) been implemented in Luxembourg. The educational Ministry especially supports peer-mediation projects in schools to tackle violence (Nilles, 2007), but all in all Luxembourg schools are largely left to their own approaches to handle the problem.

To get an overview of the initiatives and approaches aimed at the prevention or reduction of violence in Luxembourg secondary schools an exploratory study was conducted (Steffgen, Russon, Kieffer & Worré, 2001; for primary school see also Ministère de l’Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle, 2007). More precisely, an interview with the headmaster/-mistress of every Luxembourg secondary school was carried out. 33 schools were contacted, of which 28 were involved in this study. The questionnaire provided information on all attempts that had been made so far to prevent or reduce the phenomenon of violence in schools directly (i.e., in direct relation to violence), or indirectly. The findings of this study substantiated that a remarkable number of different interventions have been undertaken in Luxembourg schools to prevent violence without scientifically evaluating the effects and benefits of such actions (Steffgen & Russon, 2003). Currently, numerous scientific evaluations of projects and intervention programs to prevent risk behaviour are under way or have already been carried out:

- **Evaluation of pilot project "Community Based Prevention of Drug Dependency."** Prevention groups consist of voluntary citizens of seven Luxembourg communities to carry out drug addiction prevention activities in their communities. 644 persons were either assigned to a waiting group or a treatment group. They were surveyed twice by means of a questionnaire. The results show that substances and drug behaviours differed in terms of risk perception. Opinions regarding the function of alcohol, nicotine, and illegal drugs were comparatively less positive in the treatment group (Fischer, 2001).

- **Evaluation of project Prima!r.** Project Prima!r is a program for the prevention of aggressive behaviour and the promotion of prosocial behaviour among pre- and primary school children. Class teachers
received a vocational training course first and then held courses in schools, accompanied by further trainings and supervisions for parents, teachers, and extracurricular educators. The goal of this scientific study was to examine the effects of the child courses. Scientific results show a short to medium term effectiveness of child courses in preschool and grade one (Petermann, Natzke, von Marées & Koglin, 2007)

- **Evaluation of a training program of civil courage in school.** Class teachers of 9 different primary (5th and 6th grade) and secondary (7th grade) schools received a vocational training course for 16 hours which included (a) information about aggression, helping behaviour and different forms to intervene, (b) interchange about educational strategies, and (c) experiences with carrying out examples of students training. The evaluation is currently in progress. Training (33 classes) and control (26 classes) group (students and teacher) are assessed at three time points (pre, post, two month follow; N ~ 1000). Preliminary results of the training evaluation are promising (Pfetsch, Steffgen & Gollwitzer, 2008).

- **Evaluation of Faustlos curriculum.** Faustlos is an adaptation of the American Second Step program for the prevention of aggressive behaviours of elementary school children (Schick & Cierpka, 2005). In Luxembourg, 34 communities of the northern part of the country are participating in this project. The scientific evaluation is currently in progress (Steffgen, in press).

In addition to the direct activities in schools the police force are also providing adolescents in Luxembourg schools with information and awareness raising courses to prevent violence and drug consumption. Likewise, youth centres are developing and managing different projects to prevent and reduce risk and violent behaviour of adolescents (Nilles, Ecker & Dabrowski, 2007).

**FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

To summarise, the issues of cannabis consumption and psychological violence (bullying) emerges as significant in Luxembourg schools. It seems that more preventive interventions are needed (see report of the CRRC, 2003; Fischer & Jung, 2006; Steffgen, 2006).
What are the specific requirements for the future? Based on the list of recommendations from Debarbieux (2008) the following activities are to be considered for Luxembourg schools:

- The reports show that it is advisable to support further systematic research—especially longitudinal studies—in which the various forms and degrees of risk and violent behaviour should be differentiated and measured thoroughly (Debarbieux, 2006). Future studies and analyses have to address also new forms of risk behaviour (e.g. cyber bullying).

- It is necessary to develop and establish a national strategy to tackle bullying in schools. The report of the CRRC (2003) presents options for school procedures. With regard to this, an adequate school development (‘projet d’établissement’) as well as intensified training of teachers have been emphasized (see Ewen, 2004; Ewen & Steffgen, 2004).

- More independent (third parties) evaluations of actions are needed to prevent and reduce risk behaviour as well as school violence. Because the success (or failure) of certain approaches is sometimes subject to political interests, it is important to control and avoid the temptations to incorrectly evaluate the effects of certain interventions.
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SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SPAIN
NOTES ON ITS EMERGENCE AS PROBLEM AND ON RESEARCH APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Research into violence in schools in Spain developed from the second half of the 90’s as part of a wider concern with juvenile violence. Studies on the subject progressed tentatively. Initially, the objects of the research focused on considering pupils as a threat to teachers and to their peers whereas, nowadays, the approach includes the impact made by the school and social context. Some studies focus on a reduction of violent events in school over recent years. However, there are still research subjects to explore from the criminological point of view.

KEYWORDS

School violence, Spain.
INTRODUCTION

We have undertaken this work as part of a coordinated European action called Crimprev (Assessing Deviance, Crime and Prevention in Europe) aimed, among other aspects, at identifying factors (social, political, economic, legal, cultural) that influence the perceptions of crime and deviant behaviour and at examining crime prevention policies.

More specifically, we have been entrusted with the preparation of a report on the research situation involving school violence in Spain. This work is thus divided into three main sections.

- The placing of school violence in context as part of the new safety leitmotifs in Spain that we will address in section 2 of this work.
- The analysis of the main lines of research on the subject (headings 3 and 4). This approach does not claim to be exhaustive. We have prioritized monographs and published reports and nationally published magazines.
- The exploration of possible connections between the educational system and other systems (heading 5), considering both the possible shift of conflicts arising within the school toward action other than the intervention of external agents at the educational centre in response to these conflicts.

THE EMERGENCE OF VIOLENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AS A SECURITY LEITMOTIF

Recasens (2002) analyses the change in security related leitmotif in Spain during the 1980’s and 1990’s. He specifically quoted four major concerns: terrorism, immigration, drugs and juvenile delinquency.

As regards this last category, between the end of the 1970’s and the start of the 1980’s, the image of juvenile insecurity concerns groups of young people living in the suburbs, affected by unemployment and the increase in the sale and consumption of heroin taking place on this time. The security problems attributed to these young people at the time are mainly connected to property crimes (vehicle thefts, muggings, etc.).

In the early 1990’s, the problem of heroin-related crime decreased for a number of reasons: AIDS, the number of deaths by overdose, damage limitation and substitution (methadone) programs, juvenile court measures
and social and professional integration, etc. Furthermore, the entry onto the labour market of young people from working class neighbourhoods increased at the cost, it is true, of a high level of temporary and precarious employment contracts. This economic situation has significantly reduced the presence of young offender drug addicts in the streets and in communication media.

During the 1990’s, youth related security problems are based on two fundamental points. In the first place, the risks associated with the lifestyles of young people, and more particularly those related to leisure pursuits: extension of drug consumption, of reckless driving, of at risk sexual behaviour, etc\(^1\).

The second fundamental point is the **new category of juvenile violence**. Its use in our context begins with the visibility of **urban tribes** of juveniles and the violent acts carried out by groups of young people featuring aesthetic **skinheads**. The social image of **skinheads** was growing in turn by reason of their link to football club hooligan fans (Barruti, 1993). Young people have been the involved in other conflicts (the **kaleborroka** or urban violence in the Basque country, violence in schools, protests by groups of the extreme left, etc.). Widely disseminated in the media, they build a heightened and alarmist picture of juvenile violence, presenting young people as irresponsible and as a threat to the community\(^2\). Thus, some research has shown the important elements of social construction involved in the definition of juvenile violence phenomena of juvenile\(^3\).

We do not claim to defend the existence of a simple construction of these phenomena and to deny the existence of youth-related conflicts. However, it is necessary to place the emergence of these concerns against the background of the social changes which took place in recent decades (inclusion of women in the labour market, the crisis affecting the family unit, changes to the job market structure, etc.) and which have created, particularly in the middle classes, an ontological sense of insecurity, greater tension regarding the different forms of deviance and a greater sensitivity toward the victims.

As regards violence in schools, the enactment of the educational reform (from 1996 in a generalized form) provoked an increase in the tension that

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1 Some works specifically addressed the connection between victimisation (consequence of delinquency inherited from parents or of personal assault), behaviour at risk and lifestyles (Elzo, 1996, 1999; Martín et al., 1997; Megías, 2001; Comas, 2003;).

2 For example, between the mid 1990s and the start of the millennium, juvenile violence was quoted in victimisation investigations in Barcelona as the situation the population found the most worrying in terms of security (Sabaté et al., 2000).

3 With regard to urban tribes and Latin clans, please see respectively, Feixa (1998, 2006).
already existed in the school environment⁴. As we will have the opportunity to explain below, the social communication processes associated with this reform have amplified the image of conflicts in school.

From this point in time, literature on violence in schools, whether or not having an empirical basis, has increased enormously in Spain. It is possible to identify other events that will also set the pace and the direction followed by this output:

- In 1998, a woman died, killed by her husband. This tragic death became the starting point for media coverage of cases of domestic violence. From this point in time, prevention plans followed each other both nationally and locally. The first programs already included lessons on non-sexist values as a fundamental element in the fight against the phenomenon. Thus, the 2004 Law on Integral Protection Measures against Domestic Violence provides for the inclusion on all school boards of a new member responsible for developing educational measures targeting equality and combating violence against women.

- Educational establishments have been confronted by the challenge posed by the integration of the large contingents of immigrants who have arrived in recent years⁵.

- In September 2004, Jokin, a teenager from Hondarribia (Basque country) committed suicide after having been ill-treated for an entire year by a group of students from his school. This event attracted deep media interest. The minor’s parents sued the young people involved as well as the school. The responsibilities of the educational system were undermined in the face of the emotional impact created by the facts and of the punitive reactions. This event led to an increase in scientific output and in the literature on this topic and to a proliferation of associated forums and conferences. The criminal system also reacted (Circular 10/2005 from the Public Prosecutor’s Office; reform of the Law on the Criminal Responsibility of Minors) although we question the symbolic or real significance of these measures.

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⁴ Following on from this reform, the two compulsory education cycles in Spain are primary (6-12 years) and secondary (12-16 years) schooling

⁵ According to information from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the number of foreign pupils taken into primary and secondary education establishments rose from 72,335 in 1997 to 676,793 within a decade.
THE APPROACHES ON RESEARCH INTO VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS: THE STUDENT AS A THREAT TO THE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The institutional context of education in Spain determines the absence of a national policy for the prevention of violence in schools. Thus, the State has general competences for the development of the educational system but it is the autonomous communities which are responsible for controlling and managing their own educational systems. Similarly, research projects and intervention are mainly carried out at the autonomous community or municipality level and do not develop at the same rate in the various territories.

The studies into violence in schools were mainly conducted in the psycho-educational environment and have focused above all on the interpersonal conflicts between pupils although research objects have become diversified in recent years.

VIOLENCE TOWARDS TEACHERS

Among the first studies on conflicts and violence in educational establishments, some refer to the problems experienced by the teachers (Melero, 1993; CIDE, 1995; Buj et al., 1998). The most frequently reported conflicts involve a lack of discipline (72% of teachers quote these in the case of ICEL; 80% in the Buj study). On the other hand, aggression is not so prevalent.

Despite significant efforts by the scientific community to differentiate between concepts of lack of discipline and of violence, social communication processes have submitted ambiguous data and events and have contributed to the creation of a heightened image of violence in educational establishments. In practice, in a tense situation created by the deployment of the educational reform, means of communication have reinforced the image of school-related conflict and provided important coverage for the most serious cases of violence in schools abroad. The way this information has been processed has added to the institutional actions and statements which make secondary school pupils where education was extended for two years (16 years instead of 14 years) responsible for these incidents. This diagnosis of the situation failed to take into account other structural factors of the conflict (Rodríguez,

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6 According to the Buj study, 20% of the establishments approached stated that they had experienced such incidents during the previous three academic years and only 7% of establishments had been faced with more than ten attacks over the same period.
Accordingly, the first studies on violence in schools tended to present pupils as a threat - to teachers or to their own classmates – rather than analyzing the impact of the school organization or the social context on their behaviour.

**INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN PUPILS**

The first study on interpersonal violence between pupils dates of the end of the 1980s (Vieira et al., 1989 - quoted in Ortega and del Rey, 2004-. From that time, research dealing with this subject, mainly from the educational psychology point of view, has proliferated.

The methodological diversity of these (mainly quantitative) studies complicates comparisons of the characteristics of violence. On the other hand, these studies are frequently carried out on small samples of institutions and do not allow results to be extrapolated to reference populations. That is why we shall wait for the next paragraph, devoted to epidemiological studies before addressing the methodological description of operations and the analysis of the impact made by the phenomenon. At this point, we shall attempt to highlight the main theoretical approaches and psycho-educational research methodologies.

Most of the studies on interpersonal violence among pupils have focused on the analysis of the bullying phenomenon. The different works completed agree on the description of harassment dynamics: it is a situation involving domination or the abuse of power arising in association with various behaviour patterns (social exclusion, verbal or physical aggression, etc.) leaving the victim defenceless and in a marginalized situation. This situation is favoured by a kind of law of silence: witnesses and victims hide these facts from teachers and also, to a large extent, from parents. Almost all studies base their approach to the phenomenon on the study of aggressiveness or of antisocial conduct. Accordingly, questionnaires usually offer a list of behaviours and the category of moral harassment and the different roles involved are derived from the frequency of aggressive behaviour or exclusion. Initial studies on this subject distinguished between three types of actors:

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7 With extended compulsory education imposed by the educational reform deployed by the LOGSE (General education system enactment order), some 14 to 16 year old pupils who would have left school became obliged to continue their education. These are generally termed, within the school group, as *education objectors* (Buj et al., 1998) around whom complaints on the supposed increase in conflicts in the school are centred. However, the reform also allows for the transfer of pupils from the new secondary school system (from the age of 12 years) to the erstwhile lycées and technical lycées. Teachers working in these training establishments usually have no specific teacher training qualifications and insufficient resources for dealing with this new pupil profile.

8 We use the term *epidemiological* in the widest sense in order to refer to works that are representative of the quantification of the prevalence and incidence of the phenomenon.
aggressors, victims and witnesses. Subsequent studies reported the existence of a fourth protagonist: the aggressive victim who suffers the most aggression and who, in turn, attacks more.

Research has integrated different theoretical approaches to explain the causes and the impact of harassment: the effect of student group bonding on violence (Cerezo, 2001, 2006a, 2006b); the relationship between social contexts to explain and avoid violence (Díaz-Aguado et al., 2004); the link between moral reasoning or socio-personal values and antisocial behaviour (Díaz-Aguado et al., 2004; Ortega and del Rey, 2003, 2004; de la Fuente et al., 2006). Within the context of the analysis of psycho-social risks, works that have measured the impact of social rejection on the physical and mental health of students should also be noted (Aymerich et al. 2005; Nebot, 2006).

Research has already started into the characteristics and the extent of cyber bullying (Ortega et al., 2008a). Epidemiological studies (Defensor del Pueblo, 2006; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006) explained in the following paragraph have also included this form of harassment as one of the categories of bullying.

The main objective of most of the research into violence between pupils quoted above consisted in offering harassment detection tools to teachers and educational establishments. They have also been used to establish tools for educational action.

STUDIES INTO SEXIST VIOLENCE

In Grañeras et al. (2007), it is possible to find a record of studies which, especially from the year 2000, analyze the social constructions and processes of socialization linked to gender based violence. Some research confirms that when the school does not encourage the formation of connections between students and social inclusion, violence, aggressiveness or the lack of discipline is involved, especially in the case of boys, in the development of a positive

9 Within this context, we need to point out the work carried out in Seville by Ortega; this work was begun during the 902 and produced the Seville Anti-violence in schools (SAVE) programme during the academic years from 1996 to 1999. Between 1997-98 and 2001-02, the government of Andalucia deployed this programme to the entire autonomous region under the title Programme éducatif de prévention du harcèlement entre jeunes scolarisés [Education programme designed to prevent harassment between young school children] (ANDAVE).

Additionally, in the Madrid Community, Díaz-Aguado also began a research-action project during the 90s, based on knowledge about exclusion, intolerance and violence in schools. This resulted in the Education programmes designed to promote tolerance and to prevent education related violence.

In Ortega et del Rey (2004), we find a list of institutional programmes that encourage coexistence not only with the explicit aim of preventing violence but also of raising social skills and fighting racism etc. These programmes usually focus on the general prevention of violence. Very few of these programmes have included scientific appraisals.
identity between classmates. In the case of girls, the mechanisms of the development of a social identity focus on physical considerations (Ponferrada, and Carrasco, 2008).

For their part, Díaz-Aguado and Martínez (2001) have analyzed the impact of sexist values on attitudes and violent behaviour.

More recently, Ortega et al. (2008b) released the results of a survey on sexual harassment between young people.

**INTEGRATING THE ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS INTO THE SCHOOL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT**

Psycho-educational studies undertaken on violence in schools have frequently been criticized for being too heavily based on the relationship between pupils and for ignoring the analysis of the social context of the establishments or the impact of the school organization on conflicts. However, some research has analyzed the relationship between discipline management and pupil involvement in conflicts (Del Rey and Ortega, 2005) or the climate prevailing in the establishments (Zabalza, 1999, 2002; Blaya, et al., 2006).

Specifically, Del Rey and Ortega (2005) have studied the possible student perception-student opinion link with the management of discipline, its experience and its involvement in the phenomena of interpersonal violence from a survey of students in secondary education\(^{10}\).

Results show that all groups of pupils involved in violence experience more disciplinary measures (63.9% of the victims, 88.4% of aggressors and 85.4% of the aggressor/victims compared with 40.5% for those who are not involved). Thus, when reacting to those involved in the interpersonal violence, it would seem that aggressors and victims are placed at the same level. The teacher has problems in distinguishing between different roles present in the interpersonal conflict.

The first study on the school climate, commissioned by the government of the Autonomous Community of Cataluna dates back to 1998 (Bisquerra and

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\(^{10}\) In this study carried out on a sample of 764 pupils from nine schools in the Autonomous Region of Andalusia, aged 12 to 19 years old, from all year levels, the researchers assessed the passive or active behaviour of pupils, teachers and other adults.
Martínez (1998). However, attention paid to the violence was fairly circumstantial.

Zabalza (1999) carried out a survey in Galicia into the connections between the entities of the education community, regulations on coexistence, conflicts and their resolution in schools; this survey was undertaken using questionnaires distributed to a sample of 907 head teachers, 836 teachers, 4,801 pupils and 3,116 parents of pupils. Educational guidance advisers were also interviewed. The results of this study reveal an essentially positive school climate. Undoubtedly the most interesting result shows that, with the exception of guidance advisers who attribute problems to the coexistence of certain teaching staff work dynamics and to the educational organization, pupils are the only ones to suggest (paying lip service) that conflicts are due to the unfair way in which they are treated when they are at the bottom academic performance scale or when they lack motivation. That is to say that the collective entities involved do not blame the organization for the conflicts created.

As part of the European Observatory on violence, research was conducted in schools of the south of France and the south of Spain, applying the same methodology and the same tools to violence and to the school climate (Blaya et al., 2006). Although the samples in this study are not representative, we wish to emphasize them in view of the comparative approach of this study.

Additionally, some ethno-methodologies, although in the minority, have appeared as a very interesting tool for understanding the cultural context surrounding the creation of violence. We will be presenting some of these examples in the following paragraph.

STUDIES ON IMMIGRATION AND ON SCHOOLING

Since the 1990s, the integration of immigrants into schools has become the subject of routine studies. In García et al. (2008), we can find a critical

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11 The study was based on a questionnaire submitted to 1,815 members of the governing boards of 136 establishments in Catalonia and included questions on the appraisal of the general climate in class rooms.

12 Research was carried out involving nine secondary school establishments (12 to 16 year olds): four in Marseilles and five in Andalusia, in areas of low to medium-low socio-economic population categories. In Spain, the survey involved all the pupils (815); in France, the questionnaires were given out almost randomly to the sample (973). Teachers were not present while pupils completed their questionnaires. The questionnaire used was the International Survey of School Climate. Secondary School Students (Debarbieux, 1996).

The results indicated that Spanish pupils have a more positive opinion than French youth about the general climate. They see less violence in their establishments and, in general, regard themselves less frequently as victims and aggressors.
review of the research conducted on this subject from the year 2000. According to the authors, many of them make the mistake of applying a view limited to a group of immigrants and schools. Notwithstanding, they recommend adopting a holistic view that positions the school, among others, in a wider socio-cultural context and which includes all young schoolchildren in the sample population in order to confirm if, in fact, there are differences due to national origins, whether or not these differences are caused by socio-economic reasons or if these differences do not exist because the problems are generated by the general way in which the educational institution is run.

Studies on immigration and schooling have not focused mainly on the analysis of discrimination or violence; however, we believe that those which addressed these subjects seem remarkable because of the results produced and because they represent a good illustration of the implementation of qualitative methodologies13.

Serra (2002) undertook a positive investigation of the relationship between statements on the “otherness” of young people attending school and discrimination and violence. This is the secondary school ethnography of an average size city in Catalonia, having a medium-high economic level and with a significant presence of immigrants. Research shows that there are also many statements on “otherness” which is not rooted in nationalism and which define the interpersonal relations and serve to justify discriminatory and violent attitudes and behaviour. As far as the school is concerned, it develops initiatives designed to make the students think about cultural diversity but does not intervene directly in relations between students, does not work towards ending the isolation of students suffering from discrimination and towards building links between them and the rest of the pupils.

Palou (2006) analysed the integration of immigrants into the school environment as part of wider ethnographic research focusing on young Latin Americans in Barcelona. The results reveals teacher ignorance on schooling conditions in the countries of origin and the cultural differences of these young people hamper integration. It also detected a tendency of teachers to attribute problems of lack of motivation and school failure to the attitude of these students. This circumstance adds to the rejection of new arrivals by native students and their families. The lack of immigrant pupil integration explains their behavioural (lack of discipline, aggressiveness) or psychological (school phobia) problems. The author emphasises this aspect by stressing that

13 The main lines of research on this issue concerned the analysis of the social-demographic change affecting establishments and, above all, the concentration phenomenon; the appraisal of the induction methods applied to new pupils and their integration into the class room; the group’s failed education or the link between the school community and immigrant families.
the educational programs or mechanisms designed for the purpose of integration fail to transform the system or to improve, it seems, the social integration of immigrant pupils.

**Epidemiological Studies on Bullying and Harassment between Peers**

Since the year 2000, many epidemiological studies designed to assess the impact of the phenomenon of harassment among peers have been carried out in Spain, both at national level in autonomous communities and in the provinces.

The majority of studies analyzed aim to assess the impact of the bullying phenomenon and its different variants and modalities from the point of view of those involved (victims, aggressors and witnesses). This research reveals significant differences in the results concerning this impact because of the different methodologies used (information retrieval tools, sample characteristics, etc.)\(^\text{14}\). However, some conclusions are common to all studies carried out.

**The Methodological Differences**

The majority of epidemiological studies analyzed have used quantitative techniques for collecting data, especially questionnaires for group management and for work undertaken with populations and large scale samples.

The questionnaires are primarily aimed at pupils, questioned about their participation in various types of physical or psychological aggression as victim, aggressor or witness. Some studies include questionnaires aimed at teachers, seeking to obtain information on their perception of the problem of harassment between peers in their educational institution.

**Design and Sample Size**

As we discussed above, in most of the research work observed, the population object of study consisted of students enrolled in educational institutions. However, the curricula and the courses followed by the students can vary from one study to the other. Many studies concentrate on compulsory secondary education as in the case of the Ombudsman’s report (Defensor del Pueblo, 2000, 2006) or the study carried out in the Reina Sofía

\(^{14}\) An exhaustive analysis of the differences between study methodologies and comparison difficulties in Defensor del Pueblo (2006).
Centre (Serrano and De, 2005). Other work focuses on the sample population of pupils attending primary or secondary education courses. That is the case of the studies undertaken by the Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006, the Government of Aragon (Gómez-Bahillo, 2006), the La Rioja (Sáenz, 2005) or the inspectorate of the Basque Government (Oñederra, 2005a, 2005b).

The size of the sample varies considerably from one study to the next. The studies with the largest samples are those of the Generalitat of Catalonia (10,414 students distributed according to their level of study: 4,951 students primary and 5,463 secondary school pupils) or that of the Government of Aragon (8,984 pupils in their final two years of primary school, secondary education, vocational education and teaching providing access to the university). The Ombudsman’s report has a sample of 3,000 pupils and the Reina Sofia Centre’s study includes 800; in both cases these were secondary education pupils. The Community of Madrid Minor Ombudsman’s study also uses a large sample of 4,460 students.

The sample selection is normally divided into strata that are proportional either according to gender and age variables (Reina Sofia Centre) or to areas, cycles or property in the centre (Generalitat of Catalonia, Community of Madrid Minor Ombudsman, the Community of Valencia Ombudsman) or by centres and school year (Pareja, 2002).

**Use made of the questionnaires**

The majority of surveys were performed with the use of anonymous, self-managed questionnaires targeting entire groups in the classroom, usually without the presence of a teacher. There were a few exceptions such as the computer assisted study (CATI) of the Reina Sofia Centre where the interview was carried out over the telephone. Other studies required the questionnaires to be returned by postal mail as in the case of the Government of Aragon study. Finally, we must mention the research undertaken by the Basque Government using a self-administered questionnaire completed on-line using classroom computers.

**INCIDENCE**

**Bullying and harassment typology**

Even when studies are not directly comparable, we will give below their most important results.

In almost all the studies undertaken, verbal aggression is the behaviour usually found among pupils. This is the case of the study published by the Generalitat of Catalonia (2006) which demonstrates that the incidence rate is
School violence in Spain

inversely proportional to the severity of the incident. Some of the results of the study commissioned by the Community of Madrid Minor Ombudsman (Marchesi et al., 2006) confirm that verbal aggression is behaviour most frequently suffered by those who are often or always harassed (13%) followed by the physical aggression (7.7%) and social exclusion (6.6%). In the study commissioned by the Basque Government (Oñederra, 2005a, 2005b), the authors reached the conclusion that the most frequent harassment is verbal harassment and, more generally, harassment of a psychological rather than physical nature.

Some studies asserted that the frequency with which a respondent states that he/she has physically attacked a fellow student exceeds the frequency of reports by victims, which could indicate that aggression is carried out in groups. This is the case of the Ombudsman’s report (2006) and of the study commissioned by the Síndic de Greuges, the Community of Valencia’s Ombudsman (Martín et al., 2006). Similarly, these studies conclude, based on pupil statements, that there are more aggressors than victims in both secondary and primary schools. Pareja (2002) stresses that the number of aggressors is higher than that of the victims even if 30.2% of the students consider that their aggression is sporadic and haphazard.

All studies agree from the logical viewpoint and indicate the existence of a greater number of young schoolchildren witnesses than victims or aggressors. But here again, the most frequently occurring harassment is verbal.

Some research works define an aggressor-victim category. This is the case of the Ramírez study (2006) which identifies 1% of the pupils as committing and being victims of aggression almost every day.

Victim and aggressor characteristics

If we allow for the gender variable of the young people involved, almost all studies confirm that more boys than girls take part in harassment (as perpetrators and as victims) with the exception of the psychological or verbal harassment categories, where girls feature more extensively (Serrano and Iborra, 2005; Defensor del Pueblo, 2006; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). Pareja (2002), however, does qualify this, pointing out that the boys and girls feel ill-treated when we speak of theft or sexual harassment.

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15 As previously discussed, psycho-educational research quoted in the preceding paragraph also uses this category (Ortega and Mora-Merchán, 2000; Díaz-Aguado et al. 2004; Cerezo, 2006a, 2006b).

16 However, the Marchesi et al. (2006) study covering the Madrid Community contains higher percentages of male pupils as aggressors in all types of harassment incidents including verbal harassment.
Almost all of the studies report that the highest frequency of harassment occurs during the first years of study and gradually decreases over the following years. Thus, according to research carried out by Gómez-Bahillo (2006), there is more violence in the primary schools surveyed (the last two) than in secondary schools, especially concerning physical bullying and social exclusion. Similarly, Sáenz (2005) points out that harassment in schools is more frequent in primary schools and especially among children aged 8 to 11 years (5.9%). Specifically, it is the younger children (7 and 8 year olds) who are most affected by harassment in terms of both frequency and intensity. In secondary schools, this figure drops to 2.5%. The Marchesi et al. (2006) study confirms these findings.

The majority of studies analyzed offer no clear and common conclusions with regard to the ownership of institutions (public, private and under joint contract with the government).17

In most of the work consulted, much of the harassment took place in the playground and in the classroom, although the different types of aggression seem to be related to a specific part of the educational establishment. Nevertheless, some studies do not concur with this assertion. The work of Martín et al. (2006) states that systematic bullying takes place in areas of the establishment where classes are not held and which are not monitored: toilets, corridors, canteen, and classrooms when the teacher is not there and at the school gates. According to the study of Oñederra (2005a, 2005b), whereas in secondary schools, the classroom is the place where attacks most usually occur according the victims (36%), the playground is where the attacks are more frequently repeated (60%) in primary schools.

Another fundamental aspect considered by many research works on harassment in schools addresses cases of bullying reported by the victims. One of the conclusions reached by most of the studies analyzed is that victims tell their friends first about the abuse they suffer and then their parents but very rarely their teachers. Thus, according to Diaz-Aguado et al. (2004) from the testimonies of pupils themselves, it is not the teachers’ lack of willingness to assist the victim but rather a “he doesn’t realize” or “he can’t do anything about it” attitude. In the case of primary education, the reporting sequence is reversed: usually, the pupils tell their families, then their friends and finally the teachers. There is always a percentage of the victims, both in primary and in secondary schools, who tell nobody of their experiences. This percentage, which is important because of possible negative consequences for the victim, differs from one study to the next.

17 In Spain, 33% of primary and secondary education pupils during the 2007-08 academic year had been enrolled in private establishments or those that were covered by a joint venture with the State (Source: Ministry for Education and Culture).
THE CHANGING FACE OF HARASSMENT IN SCHOOLS

There are no longitudinal studies that allow us to produce a comprehensive analysis of developments in bullying and harassment among peers. Nevertheless, we have the data from two studies, that of the Ombudsman (Defensor del Pueblo, 2000) and that of the Generalitat of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2001) to which a response was made in 2006.

The results of the research promoted by the Ombudsman in collaboration with Unicef, reported a decrease in the incidence of different types of harassment involving the abuse of power (insults, offensive nicknames, ignoring a classmate, hiding another’s property and threats designed to frighten). Other types of harassment remain stable (indirect verbal aggression, social exclusion, the various forms of physical aggression and the most serious forms of threats).

From the point of view of the attackers, the percentages of those who accept that they are the perpetrators social exclusion, insults, offensive nicknames and of those who beat and threaten others in order to scare them, have decreased. The only category which seems to have slightly increased is the one relating to thefts of property belonging to classmates.

Finally, witnesses to verbal aggression are also in decline, perhaps because new forms of harassment are emerging in school (cyber bullying) which we will now discuss below. In both studies, the percentage of pupils who state that they have witnessed harassment is higher than that of victims and perpetrators.

The following table details actual results by type of harassment as seen by victims, perpetrators and witnesses.
The Ombudsman’s 2006 study introduced issues relating to harassment that may have been perpetrated via new technologies (cell phones and the Internet). More specifically, 5.5% of the victims identify new technologies as a tool used to perpetrate the abuse they suffer (including 0.4% on a frequent basis). As regards the aggressors, 4.8% stated that they resort to this "sometimes" and 0.6% "very often". 22% of witnesses have observed incidents occasionally and 3% frequently. According to the authors of the report, the use of new technologies should not be considered as a new type of harassment but as a way of rendering abuse more offensive.

As regards the reporting of harassment by the victims, there are large differences between the studies carried out in 2000 and those carried out 2006. In the latter study, the victims tend less to tell their friends of their experience although this remains the majority option in both studies (67.1% and 60.4% respectively). Nevertheless, the percentage of victims who report facts to teachers has increased considerably (from 8.9% to 14.2%). Another positive aspect reveals that the victims who tell nobody are on the decrease, from 16.6% to 11.2%.

Finally, because of the significant increase in students of foreign origins entering the Spanish education system in recent years, it is important that we emphasize the introduction of the "national origin" variable. The Ombudsman’s report concluded that there are no significant differences in the incidence of harassment from the aggressors’ viewpoint. However, differences exist from the victims’ point of view. More specifically, the level of students who claim to be ignored is double for those of foreign extraction (20%). As regards the type of harassment where the victim is threatened with a weapon, the percentage of immigrant pupils is significantly higher than that

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignoring a classmate</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowing him to participate</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of offensive nicknames</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking ill of somebody</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding property</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaging property</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing property</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats designed to frighten</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsion by means of threats</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening with a weapon</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Type of harassment according to those involved. 1999-2006

Source: Defensor de Pueblo (2006)
of other students (0.4% and 1.9% respectively). It is important to emphasize that foreign students account for 7% of the total sample.

The Generalitat of Catalonia in 2006 study allows us to compare the data obtained in research carried out on the 2000-2001 academic year. The comparison shows a significant increase in the perception of bullying in schools. However, cases of victims of frequent aggressive actions are declining considerably (from 13.2 to 7.8%). We may add that the number of pupils who acknowledge themselves as perpetrators of negative actions toward their classmates is also falling significantly (from 12.8% to 7.8% in the most frequent cases).

This study also analyzes the influence of the "national origin" variable between the different actors involved in harassment between peers. Its conclusion is that if we consider the aggregate figures, 18.8% of young people born in Catalonia are the target of aggressive actions at least once a week whereas the percentage for young people born elsewhere rises to 23.4% (+4.6).

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

THE SHIFT IN CONFLICTS OCCURRING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The study of the Generalitat of Catalonia (2001, 2006) study also includes, among others, issues of aggressive or violent relations in all social contexts involving young people.

It is important to bear in mind that the typology of victimization is changing, particularly for students of secondary school and as and when they grow older; actions become less frequent but officially more serious (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006). Furthermore, life styles are changing and the freedom of movement of young people and the places that they go to are becoming more diverse. However, according to the same study and taking the example of physical attacks suffered by students, 40% of these acts are perpetrated by persons associated with the establishment, irrespective of the place where the aggression occurs. In the table below, we can see that assaults that took place in school decrease (by 25 points) as pupils reach the age of 16

18 We have to take into consideration the fact that this comparison has to be limited to secondary education because it exclusively targeted this section during the 2000-2001 academic year (aged between approximately 12 and 18 years) whereas the latest version of the study addressed issues of coexistence from the middle of primary education to the end of secondary education (approximately 8 to 18 year olds).
years (usual age at which secondary schooling ends). In contrast, a strong school link persists between victims and aggressors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School establishment</th>
<th>12 years or less</th>
<th>13 years</th>
<th>14 years</th>
<th>15 years</th>
<th>16 years</th>
<th>17 years</th>
<th>18 years and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aggressor(s)</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults taking place in the establishment</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Percentage of physical assaults where the aggressor belongs to educational centre and percentage of physical assaults which took place in the establishment, by age

Source: personal based on the Generalitat de Catalunya (2006)

We believe the studies on violence in schools should deepen the analysis of changes in forms of victimization suffered by the oldest students as well as that of its shift towards contexts other than those of the school. Until now, criminology has not investigated such issues in depth either. Thus, for example, the matter of the location of the incidents or the identity of the victims in the International Self-Report Delinquency, applied in Spain in its two editions by the Rechea team (1995, 2008) has not been analyzed.

The Criminal System and Violence in Schools

After the Jokin case, some of the most important institutional reactions were the publication of Circular 10/2005 by the Prosecutors’ Office and the reform of the Law 5/2000 regulating the criminal liability of the Minor (LRPM).

Circular 10/2005, although it recalls the subsidiary and reactive role that juvenile justice must perform, it instructs prosecutors to not to tolerate any humiliating school harassment act and to provide a response based on the law applicable to minors. It asks, for example, that action be taken in the case of behaviour that appears to be insignificant as the result of an assessment of such behaviour or that the victim is questioned whenever a complaint is made. The document also establishes the obligation of informing the educational establishment of all complaints on the subject.

The LRPM reform, for its part, confirms an earlier trend where the victim was given greater importance during juvenile court cases and new

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19 In the first version of the law, the emphasis was on aiming the process at re-educating minors. Even compensation to the victim was treated as an educational measure when
preventive measures have been put in place to protect the victim. The most important, in our view, is the establishment of an injunction that can be imposed on the minor having been reported, banning him from approaching the victim or his family.

Therefore, at least from a symbolic viewpoint, we see conflicts in school being externalized and moving toward the court system. Certain legal works have been published to address this judicial solution of conflicts (Rodríguez, 2006; Rodríguez, 2007; Rubio, 2007). However, there are no empirical studies analysing the extent to which the legal system in general, and the criminal justice system in particular, act as "closure clause" for the educational system.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The social and institutional concern about violence in schools arose in Spain during the second half of the 1990s within a context of the increasingly greater perception of young people as a problem and of growing tension in the education sector because of the deployment of the educational reform.

There is no unanimous view on school violence within the scientific community even if research has usually adopted the issue of moral harassment (bullying) between school children as a subject for study. These works, primarily based on educational psychology, have clearly described victimization systems as well as the confusion about the roles played by victims and perpetrators. These are two issues that are frequently reported by criminology which does not, however, always analyze them empirically.

The social awareness and educational programs designed to improve life within schools probably explains the development of harassment indicators (bullying) and the increased reporting of incidents by pupils as highlighted by certain recent studies. However, the results produced by research works examined recommend paying particular attention to students of immigrant origins who suffer greater victimization than their comrades.

Additionally, research into this subject, like that carried out in other disciplines, such as criminology, has not yet investigated to any great depth any analysis of the changes in forms of student victimization as they grow older (the incidents decrease but tend to be more serious) or the shift of conflicts between students toward contexts other than the school environment.

reparation was required for damage caused or treated as a different aspect (third party liability). Consequently, the victim had no substantial presence in these cases.
Finally, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the relationship between school and other actors, especially as regards the trend towards legal settlement of conflicts or interaction with the officers of the criminal system. In practice, there are many examples of collaboration between such institutions, but we cannot say whether or not their roles have changed.
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ABSTRACT

This article has set itself the task of putting into perspective the European trends in research into violence in schools, the dominant definitions, the preferred methodologies, their underlying problems, and the type of data available. It questions the implications, simultaneously shedding light on grey areas. It is based particularly on national summaries from approximately ten European countries produced as part of the CRIMPREV action financed by the European Commission and coordinated by the European Group of Research into Normativeness (GERN = Groupe Européen de Recherches sur les Normativités) while also making use of international reports. This investigation is attempting to clear the way for future research work.

KEYWORDS

Violence in schools, deviances, standards, risks, anti-social behavior, socialization, the actor’s strategy.
INTRODUCTION

The 1990s witnessed, in the most European countries and rich countries outside the European Union, an explosion of violence in schools as a social problem which was accompanied by a host of solutions devised to deal with the situation. Researchers took over the topic with a view to attempting to assess its extent and nature in order to produce a profile. The explanatory objective would frequently only develop during a second phase. Can we assert today that research into violence in the school environment has acquired a certain maturity? How is it structured in Europe? What are its main results? What are its grey areas? Have researchers been able to highlight cases of social problems of violence in schools, cases which tend to impose their construction and interpretation charts? Is the "violence in schools" object still attempting to define itself? How is it put together today, in terms of definitions, concepts, methodologies? What are the preferred explanations? On what theories and disciplines are they based? Do public answers integrate information produced by scientists? These are the major issues that researchers from ten countries in Europe have been led to examine: Germany, England, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal and the Czech Republic. Be they European countries under the Treaty of Rome, or former Eastern Block countries that have recently joined the European Community, all these countries provide a range that can be used to gain an idea of European trends in research into violence in schools and its different degrees of development.

This text is not an overview of national summaries which are, nevertheless, at the heart of this special issue of the IJVS. It is definitely more than an attempt to put into perspective European trends in research, their underlying problems, the type of data available and to be gathered, but also issues and problems some of which have already been the subject of exchanges upheld during the conference which was held in Paris from the 8th to 10th January 2009, bringing together all rapporteurs from the countries mentioned earlier. Although it is also based on all of the national reports, this contribution nevertheless transcends them, drawing on other European

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1 Our thanks go to each of the participants for their involvement in this working approach, in the writing of national summaries, for their active and constructive participation at the conference up to the publication of this special issue which required the summaries to be reworked.

2 This workshop was coordinated by Cécile Carra and Maryse Esterle-Hedibel (CESDIP CNRS, IUFM University of Artois). It is part of the CRIMPREV (Assessing Deviance, Crime and Prevention in Europe) initiative financed by the European Commission under the 6th PCRD and coordinated by the European Group of Research into Normativeness (GERN). René Levy, director of GERN (CESDIP-CNRS) is responsible for its scientific content.
works. In order to give substance to this outlook, this approach follows in the footsteps of other international reports (in particular, Carra & Sicot 1996; Vettenburg, 2000; Up & Blaya, 2001; Carra & Faggianelli, 2003; Smith, 2003). Putting issues into perspective involves sacrificing details and nuances but allows us to identify the main thrusts and to examine their implications.

THE ONGOING NATURE OF THE INITIAL CONCERN: QUANTIFYING VIOLENCE

Faced with the continued media and political coverage of the topic, researchers will endeavour to assess the extent of the phenomenon. For this purpose, the first reaction consists in referring to institutional data, police and judicial data in most cases and, more rarely, because they are frequently non-existent, to school-related data. When they are available, institutional statistics are, however, inadequate or irrelevant for researchers who will then build their own indicators. The 1990s witnessed the production of statistics that were generally descriptive, tending to use categories created through public debate, policies, the school institution etc. thus bringing behaviour into the classification of violence, by virtue of systems constructed outside the scientific field. Moreover, any correlation is rarely disputed because it helps to establish a cause and effect interpretation. The following investigations will be more wary of these pitfalls, moving from the production of descriptive statistics to that of explanatory statistics, and attempting to objectify the phenomenon.

If statistics currently provide more data on violence, they do not, however, all address violence in schools. In some countries, researchers use statistics for understanding violence in young people, whether or not this violence takes place in school. This approach may reveal a lack of specific statistics; more often, it implicitly demonstrates the role generally attributed to contexts and, in particular, to schools. The underlying problems are then those of juvenile delinquency addressed by international surveys into self-reported delinquency (ISRD\(^4\) 1 and 2) or victimisation (ICVS\(^5\)) or those on health disseminated by epidemiological surveys and by international mechanisms

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\(^3\) In order not to overload the reader, few bibliographical references will be inserted into the body of text. In other words, the issue here does not consist in producing a list of authors that we can find to support a particular stance for each dimension addressed, or even for any particular country. The reader will discover these through the national summaries. Additional references are included in the bibliography.


Rarer are those who seek to objectify the phenomenon within the school. We must, however emphasize the importance of surveys on school bullying and the Olweus «bullying/victims» questionnaire (1993) and its variants. Rarer still are those which take into account not only the socio-school context but also its role in creating violence: we can, however, quote the Debarbieux victimisation and school climate questionnaire (1996) deployed in France but also in other European countries: Germany, Belgium, England, Spain and the Czech Republic. These investigations reveal a high dark number for juvenile deviance and high pupil victimisation.

The widely preferred quantitative surveys are, however, variously systematized depending on the country. But some have managed to build temporal series in order to provide an answer to the recurring question of the changing phenomenon of violence. Results converge, demonstrating that not only has there not been any explosion of violence but, what is more, violence very often remains at fairly stable levels. Although its frequency does not appear to have altered much, we still need to query this change from the viewpoint of another criterion: social inequality and the distribution of violent behaviour: this phenomenon is far more present in areas of social relegation and appears to be on the increase in some countries.

With the media coverage of school bullying and its new forms (especially cyber bullying), the quantification of violent deeds has again become a pressing issue in recent years and has given rise to the production of new statistics. The preoccupation concerning the measure accompanied by a request for an international comparison has caused the definition of the violence and the categories used in different countries to be questioned.

**MATTERS OF DEFINITION: TRANSGRESSING STANDARDS, ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS AND BEHAVIOURS AT RISK**

The strongest trend today consists in considering violence in the broad sense, that is to say, not reduced to physical violence, or limited to legal

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6 ESPAD: European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs
7 HSBC: Health Behaviour in School-aged children
8 A bearer of important political and scientific issues, the "dark figure" refers to the gap between facts of violence recorded by the various institutions and "actual" violence. However, we should emphasise that the surveys do not provide access to "true" violence, the latter being an unknown by definition. In contrast, they contribute to a better quantification of certain forms of violence, often less serious but more frequent, and a better inclusion of direct violence to a victim.
categories. However, the definitions used form part of different problems. Three of them currently appear to predominate:

- the Olweus definition (1993) is based on the «school bullying» concept; it broadly involves the idea of repeated bullying of students or harassment between peers. It implies the deliberate intention of the student or group of students to cause harm to one of their peers, an imbalance of forces and repetitive acts. Therefore, we need to pay attention to interpersonal violence between pupils and to focus on the assessment of the psychosocial risks to be prevented.

- the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005) definition with categories selected on the basis of the injury suffered or damage inflicted, where human, social and economic costs should be reduced: self harm (attempted suicide, legal or illegal drug taking etc.) or other (homicide, aggression etc.), damage to society (vandalism, discrimination etc.). The key concept then becomes the «risk behaviours » found particularly in the epidemiological surveys.

- A definition derived from that of delinquency and using legal categories while extending these to «anti-social behaviour» (physical violence or threats against persons, other forms of delinquent behaviour such as theft or drug taking, offenses associated with the status of minor such as frequenting cafés, violation of established rules and especially school rules). The author and his intentionality can be found at the centre of this approach.

All these definitions have the effect of viewing violence from the standpoint of the individual, in this case, the student or even young person, the adolescent and the minor all grouped together within the concepts applied: interpersonal violence, behaviour at risk and anti-social behaviour. Despite these points in common, reaching a common definition of violence appears extremely difficult: should one start from the perpetrator and his intention in order to define violence, or from the victim and the harm suffered? Two major criticisms emerged from the seminar: the perpetrator may not realize that his behaviour is violent while the victim may not know that he has been a victim. Regardless of the approach preferred, that of the perpetrator or that of the victim, the difficulties persist when establishing the categories selected, the recurrent issues being those of the serious nature of the act and of category objectivity. Are playground skirmishes sufficiently serious to be included in the violence classification? Is the ostracism category too subjective? Clearly, a choice will need to be made, a choice which will be based on reference to standards and the respective or presumed weight of each within the working groups resulting in the construction of data
collection tools. It is a choice which will also come from opportunities deemed to be put forward should such or such category be selected and more widely if such an approach is preferred (being selected for inclusion, for example, in a project that is funded or even being able to compare data). Occasionally, it will be a default choice when researchers are unable to identify a formulation capable of being understood by young students such as homophobic related violence.

Irrespective of the definition applied, the results converge to show that the very essence of violence in schools permeates daily life in the form of micro-violence, minor victimisation, rudeness, disrupting the school order and more broadly, the social order. Researchers talk of low intensity violence, below the criminal threshold, reiterating the rarity of serious events. The severity of an incident should not be sought in terms of the form taken by the violence but rather in terms of repeated victimisation. However, this finding does not produce feedback on social crystallization social regarding this type of behaviour, but to short and sharp assaults on views propagated by the media.

**DOMINANT EXPLANATIONS AND UNDERLYING PROBLEMS: BETWEEN A LACK OF SOCIALISATION, FAILED INTEGRATION AND THE ACTOR’S STRATEGY**

If the research into school violence has proliferated since the 1990s, not all, especially at the beginning of this period, incorporate a clarification perspective but accumulate data for the purpose of providing a description of the situation. Devoid of a theoretical framework, they are most often founded on an inventory of behaviour regarded as problematic. If this situation has changed significantly since then, research into violence in schools can still be based on the theoretical models that are little, if at all, explicit while several theoretical models can coexist in the same research work. These trends can be seen in major international surveys based on compromises. The works can also make do with empirically proven data in order to produce a data collection tool.

The variables used, in the same way as the forms of violence selected, reveal explanatory trends that are more or less detailed and more or less identifiable. Trends develop at a different rate depending on the country’s scientific tradition and on inputs from the various disciplines. Sociological research tends to investigate the contextual and social variables inherent in violence. Research into education will address the impact made by violence on the school climate and on learning, while considering prevention and
intervention strategies. Criminology tends to examine individual causes and effects on the Law etc.

For all that, we can mention two major problems. The first, the most classic, is the one that is founded on the paradigm of standards and deviances. This issue includes the breakdown of the social structure and social disorganization, a lack of socialization and lack of integration in order to explain a violation of standards. On the fringes, we also have cultural conflicts and stigmatization as part of the creation of deviance. The second problems, which tends to develop quite strongly, has risks and prejudices as its paradigm. The perpetrator develops strategies according to his interests but his strategies are based on taking inappropriate risks. This risk-taking is then construed as a pathology causing harm – from self-prejudice to the harm caused to the community - , individual pathology (inadequacy of the individual, interruptions to individual development) or social pathology (dysfunctional family environment, criminogenic environment). Concerning the first problem, the social order is taken as normed; violence is a violation of the social order through the breach of standards on which this social order is based. Concerning the second, the social order is built within interrelations and violence is a product that is detrimental to this order thus negotiated.

Transversally, positivism and aetiology typify the most strongly displayed trend. The aim consists in finding out what differentiates deviant individuals from others, deviance being considered by some approaches as a characteristic of the person. This trend coupled with practical prevention and security practices undoubtedly explains the success of the risk factor approach. The recognized legitimacy of the social order appears implicit.

A MARKED INTEREST IN THE STUDY OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY FACTORS BUT ONE THAT IS MUCH MORE MEASURED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCLUDING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS.

This explains the dominant trend observed in research into centration involving individual and family risk factors. Individual factors such as gender and age are two variables closely correlated to violent behaviour. If boys constitute by far the greatest number of perpetrators – especially when physical violence is involved –, they also represent a very large proportion of the victims. Violence in schools develops at about the age of 12 years with a peak at about 16 years after which the violence drops off to a low level. Only a small proportion of young people will continue to develop these behaviours. Deviance is then interpreted as the normal transition into adolescence. Other approaches, in
contrast, seek the causes of violations in the statistical association between poor intelligence, socio-cognitive shortcomings, hyperactivity, impulsiveness and violent behaviour. Failure at school and membership of an offender peer group also appear to be strongly related to the problematic behaviour of the individual. The study of family factors is particularly developed. The family factors such as parental criminality, intra-family conflict, parental violence, lack of control and random parenting (alternating rigid rules with indifference or permissiveness) or even poverty in the home appear to be significantly correlated to violent behaviour in children.

Rare in the 1990s, the introduction of contextual factors is today more frequent; however, the time taken to include the factors related to the school itself in its models may, however, be surprising. Moreover, there is no consensus on the role attributed to them. However, if one examines the factors applied, they tend less to typify the context but rather refer again to the individual. Accordingly, the factors used for schools are frequently limited to school failure, to weak attachment to the school, to absenteeism or to school dropout rates, to frequent changes of school, to disciplinary problems or even in low commitment to school activities. Therefore, scant attention is paid to the establishment, its team, its operation, its organization, its professional practices, its management of violence, the definition of violence, its climate which constitute as many aspects which nevertheless seem important if one refers to work on "the establishment effect." They show that in sociologically comparable environments, the establishment may make a difference in contributing to mitigate or exacerbate the phenomenon of violence. However, these works still seem to have little influence on the dominant research guidelines in terms of definition and explanation. In contrast, at the outset, the school is recognized as playing a prevention role if only through the socialisation process prevalent in this environment but also through the proliferation of programmes and actions which take place there in order to prevent, detect, monitor and treat behaviours at risk. The dominant representation which emerges by implication is one of a school which is affected by violence which is alien to it and which it must manage.

The socio-political and economic context is also neglected in numerous research works and this non contextualisation constitutes an obstacle to the understanding of the emergence of the social problem of violence at school. Among the research works which address this issue, certain elements continue to recur: educational system reforms where violence can be interpreted as one of the effects of the massive expansion; waves of migration, violence appearing as the sign of a lack of integration, a lack of socialization and sometimes as a cultural characteristic; changes in the political system and the problem of adjusting values; globalisation of the economy and increasing social inequality. The links between, on the one
hand, the development of the violence phenomenon and the disparities between countries and, on the other hand, the changes to political and educational systems must be questioned and examined in depth.

**Solutions: From Social Prevention to Risk Management**

Solutions for responding to violence in schools have proliferated during these last two decades, from managing conflicts in the classroom to the deployment of national or federal programmes or even government plans, from establishment policy to the creation of experimental schools, from team work to school-police-justice partnerships, from citizenship to laws, not overlooking internal regulations etc.

Political, institutional and professional mobilization seems important even if it is differentiated and is occasionally reduced to announcements on action or vague local attempts.

Some of these responses are closely linked to research such as school bullying prevention programmes tailored to suit the needs of different national contexts. These prevention programmes have been extremely widely disseminated within the European countries, including in the former countries of the Eastern Block that have recently joined the European Union, and well beyond. Other responses entertain apparently weaker links to research in the same way as the security measures which have proliferated in a number of countries in Europe as evidenced by the legal output of recent years in the field of juvenile justice. They are part of a radicalization of professional practices, accompanied by an inflation of rules, a tightening of sanctions and an increasing number of cases referred to the courts. This last approach is an important aspect of the problem which has evolved in terms of risk management. The aim consists in deterring individuals from developing certain behaviours by levying heavier penalties. This punitive prevention approach tends to combine with an initiative seeking to prevent the occurrence of situations in an attempt to render risk situations rarer through the development of technological and human monitoring resources; at the same time, the aim consists in forestalling the danger of victimisation. The premise is that the individual at risk will rationally analyse the risk in terms of costs and benefits and that the threat of repression burdening the loss side, prevents him from progressing with the action.

This risk management problem has a third aspect, that of preventing treatment based on the identification of individuals at risk, individuals whose negative psychosocial development has to be corrected, acting on their direct
environment and their families in most cases. The premise involved here is that the causes of behaviour at risk have their origin in individual and family dysfunctions. It may be surprising to see, in this issue of risk management, the apparently contradiction between the co-existence of a concept of the individual at risk and a rational perpetrator in some cases, and the individual whose behaviour is determined by the individual or family deficiencies in other cases. Irrespective, in each of these cases, we have to manage risks from an essential defensive position.

In parallel, and tending to blend during the last decade with the - largely dominant - approach in terms of risk management, actions forming part of a social prevention logic have been deployed. In the latter case, developed in very different ways depending on the country, the aim consists in addressing the presumed causes of the problem by combating social and urban relegation or even failure at school and dropping out. The concept underlying this view maintains that problems involving violence originate in the living conditions of the individual. These answers are accompanied by actions that are supposed to contribute to the socialization not only of students but also of their parents. Developing social skills becomes a recurrent objective in a context where the problems of violence are interpreted as relational, communicational and especially behavioural problems.

Thus, there is a transition from social prevention to the general prevention – or primary prevention – of behaviours at risk.

**IN CONCLUSION: PROBLEMS AND LINES OF RESEARCH**

**EXTENDING THE RANGE OF POPULATIONS SURVEYED**

Focusing on the student, particularly the school pupil, and on the methodologies used, explains the availability of data concerning age, gender, school career, membership of an ethnic group etc. However, the latter poses a problem in some countries whereas, in others, it forms a central criterion. This variable, unlike others, continues to be hedged in by political disagreements which jeopardise its deployment. Where it is available, results tend to converge: pupils who belong to an ethnic minority group are significantly over-represented in victimisation, this not applying in the case of the perpetrators of violence.

These data extend to the pupil’s family circle. However, the number of parent-related data is astonishing as, unlike students, parents are rarely directly involved in the survey. It is true to say that access to families is not easy. Therefore, the role of the family and especially of the working class
family is strongly queried as part of the origins of violence unlike other major socialisation structures such as schools. This is clearly also what enables us to understand the little data available on teachers. To this has to be added the strong resistance opposed by the profession when questions focus on the teacher and his professional practices. Nevertheless, existing research work demonstrates the importance of the role played by socialisation, contributing to the construction or deconstruction process applicable to violence found in teacher-pupil interactions.

**Diversifying theoretical-methodological approaches and re-opening problems**

The quantitative approach dominates and statistics are numerous. For all that, longitudinal studies are rare. When they do not exclusively form part of a descriptive objective, they are of value because they objectivise the phenomenon and stabilise the definition of correlations. In the trend that currently prevails, these correlations are seen as just so many risk factors – or protection factors. However, this approach cannot be used to open the «black box», to question the processes implemented, to bring out into the open situations where behaviours will be regarded as violent, to report on interactions that will lead to violence. We need to rely on qualitative research work that is more capable of accounting for these analysis levels and which can enrich illustrative views.

The most interpretative currents and the most critical views are marginalised in the current scope of research into violence in schools. The social order, the inequalities it can produce, the social effects these can generate, are not sufficiently questioned for their part in creating violence. It is undoubtedly because of this that data appears to be placed into context in different ways. What role do macro-social variables play in the violence phenomenon? Here again, research is needed in order to reply to these questions, especially as a comparative approach to national contexts. Answering this questionnaire is not just part of the additional research that has to be undertaken, particularly as more than a few have already been carried out. It is also a theoretical comment. The lack of theory, which is very noticeable in some countries, renders the causal attributions that can be made on the basis of correlations that are recorded fragile without being able to remedy these using the sophistication provided by statistical calculations.

**Questioning violence categories in order to rethink definitions**

A salient concern emerged during the conference: producing a common definition and harmonizing violence categories in order to be able to
undertake comparative research. However common definitions are circulating, especially those put forward by supranational entities. They tend to home in on violence perpetrated by and between students. There is much less data on violence between students and the professionals working in educational establishments, especially when the student is the victim. If we believe the definition of violence to be – too – broad, it has, however, become somewhat depleted theoretically, marginalizing structural violence, symbolic violence and even institutional violence. Little deconstruction is applied to the categories selected and the implications are not questioned enough. What do they tell us about the way in which our societies work, about ideas on childhood, about relations with young people, about the role played by the school and our attitude to deviance? Behind the words, the categories, the interpretations, the replies, there are views of the world, standard and cultural systems that are insidiously imposed on researchers. However, the make-up of the social problem that is violence cannot be exclusively perceived as changes in student behaviour. It acquires meaning within the contexts; it is formed within social relations where it becomes a power issue, the power to define what is violence, the power to decide who is violent, the power to define the solutions to be devised. Nowadays, violence in schools which, we must not forget, is linked to normal academic and social disruption, is primarily interpreted as individual pathologies questioning what seemed to form an achievement of multi-discipline research: the normal nature of deviance during adolescence...
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STAKES OF VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION RESEARCHES IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of violence at the school in Africa is less and less eclipsed. More and more decision-makers are concerned about it. Non Governmental Organizations NGO) and researchers begin taking a particular interest on this question. Although embryonic, the production of data knows some advances. From existent researches, some forms of violence which seem to be particular to Africa need to be explored much more in depth. These forms of acts of violence lift the curtain on a certain number of concerns. Important stakes for education in Africa or even for social peace commands the draft of researchers around these problems.

KEY WORDS

Violence at the school, sexual violence, mystical violence, political violence, corruption, physical punishment, Africa.
**INTRODUCTION**

La violence à l’école est devenue à la fin du XXème siècle un problème mondial (Debarbieux, 2006), au sens où elle préoccupe de plus en plus les décideurs et les hommes politiques. Elle est un souci majeur de sécurité publique dans de nombreux pays du Nord. Des recherches de grande envergure se sont développées pour tenter de prendre mesure du phénomène et d’innombrables programmes sont créés pour tenter d’y faire face.


**QUELQUES PROBLEMES DE L’ETUDE DE LA VIOLENCE EN MILIEU SCOLAIRE EN AFRIQUE**

L’étude de la violence en milieu scolaire en Afrique peut être confrontée à un ensemble de problèmes bien connus du reste du monde mais également à d’autres, bien spécifiques à l’Afrique. S’agissant des problèmes communs, il convient de penser à l’aspect médiatique de ce phénomène dont la très grande tendance est de l’aborder de manière sensationnelle. Sans forcément procéder à une analyse conséquente, les médias très souvent se comportent comme des charognards devant un chien écrasé et abandonné dans la nature. La violence dans une école devient alors l’événement à la Une soit pour augmenter l’audimat soit pour élever la cagnotte des ventes.

Mais il n’y a pas que les médias qui ont la forte propension des profits. Il y a également la tentation pour des individus de bâtir fortune ou carrière sur ce phénomène. L’Ecole étant un appareil idéologique de l’État, toute action sur ce terrain peut courir le risque de pression et/ou de récupération politique.
S’il y a quelque chose de bien spécifique à l’Afrique c’est bien le problème de données statistiques qui permettraient d’avoir une idée de l’ampleur et de pouvoir établir un certain comparatisme par rapport à d’autres milieux.

**DE L’EXAGÉRATION**

L’une des raisons qui m’avaient poussé à entreprendre une étude de ce phénomène c’était les propos des enseignants au Burkina qui consistaient à faire croire que, pour enseigner bientôt dans ce pays, il faut avoir fait les arts martiaux (Lompo, 2005). A entendre certaines déclarations qui indexent les causes de la violence à l’école, on croirait que le bateau Éducation est sur le point de couler. Face à des cas de violence autour d’eux ou sur eux, les gens peuvent avoir un discours qui grossit le phénomène. N’est-ce pas là toute la question de l’absence de données ? Les propos de cet officiel guinéen repris par Debarbieux (2006) viennent corroborer ce que nous venons de dire : « Le fait très malheureusement de ne pas prendre le train au départ, nous empêche de connaître le nombre de gares qu’il a traversé sur son parcours. C’est signifier, que le manque d’archives bien tenues afférant à ces cas de violence dans nos écoles ne nous permet pas d’établir un tableau statistique exhaustif qui pourrait mieux nous édifier. Il faut cependant retenir, qu’il n’y pas d’année scolaire où des cas de dispute, de bagarre, de vol, de confiscation ou de détournement de bien d’autrui, des coups et blessures, des attaques à mains armées par des clans, des agressions ne sont enregistrés dans nos établissements scolaires ». Voilà qui témoigne aussi que le phénomène constitue une réalité indéniable mais mal cernée qui a pu prendre plus d’ampleur et qui court le risque d’en prendre davantage avec la menace d’une mauvaise perception des faits si des études sérieuses ne s’y attaquent pas.

La production des données fiables s’impose à l’Afrique : ces données donneront un tableau plus réel : après coup, l’enquête de victimisation que j’ai menée a montré que les propos des enseignants étaient quelque peu alarmistes. Interrogés sur le climat scolaire au Burkina les élèves étaient 41%, 42%, 15% à affirmer respectivement qu’il est « moyen », « bien » et « génial ».

**DE LA NÉGATION**

La négation de violence à l’école constitue à son tour un danger réel. En adoptant une telle posture, on se s’attarde plus sur ce phénomène. Il ne faut pas perdre de vue que la négation c’est le fait d’exclure et même de dire non, c’est-à-dire « c’est s’enfermer dans un refus absolu du monde, qui peut prendre la forme du mutisme » comme le dit David-Ménard (2001). Nier une chose ne l’empêche nullement d’exister et de connaître de la profusion. Cette négation peut avoir pour sources, la paranoia, la recherche d’une bonne image de soi, de l’établissement voire du système.
Etant eux-mêmes auteurs de violence, les enseignants peuvent adopter la négation pour ne pas être dévoilés. Un chef d’établissement en niant l’existence de la violence dans son établissement pense ainsi présenter celui-ci comme fréquentable. C’est dire que les préoccupations financières ne sont pas non plus étrangères à cette négation.

Avoir un système éducatif non atteint par la violence n’est-ce pas là une preuve de bonne gouvernance ? C’est du moins ce à quoi certains politiques pourraient amenés à penser.

Au niveau de l’administration et au niveau politique, pour éviter que les problèmes donnent une mauvaise image de l’établissement ou au système éducatif, la violence peut être niée. Comme le dit un proverbe gourmantché au Burkina Faso: « Dabuno ba kan yini ojuoli daagu », en d’autres termes, « aucun margouillat ne se permet de traiter sa queue de bois. »

La négation peut aussi provenir de la culture comme le dit Debarbieux (2009) : la violence semble alors quelque chose de normal. On la justifie en évoquant les pratiques ancestrales. Au Burkina Faso par exemple le châtiment corporel, jusqu’à nos jours, pour certains enseignants, reste quelque chose qui est indiqué pour redresser l’enfant comme nous le notions dans nos travaux de thèse (Lompo, 2005).

L’étude de la violence en milieu scolaire est comme prise en étau entre la dramatisation ou la démesure et la négation dans un univers culturel particulier. Seul le recours aux données peut ouvrir la voie à une perception plus réelle du phénomène.

**LA QUESTION DES DONNEES**

Il n’y a de solution de confondre les propos tendant à grossir un phénomène de société qu’en évoquant des données dignes de fiabilité scientifique. Si on peut avoir du regret de n’avoir pas pris le train de départ comme l’officiel guinéen cité par Debarbieux, on peut se réjouir néanmoins d’avoir pris le train pour la bonne destination. Sans doute que les relevés administratifs sont muets au sujet de la violence à l’école – les raisons peuvent être multiples- mais des enquêtes de victimisation ont été réalisées ou sont entrait de l’être dans les pays africains (Debarbieux, 2006 ; Lompo, 2005 ; Coulibaly, thèse en cours au Sénégal ; Diallo thèse en cours au Mali). Sans nul doute commence-t-on déjà à voir le décalage entre les propos de rue, les écrits journalistiques, les versions officielles de la violence scolaire et la réalité sur le terrain. Il n’y a pas de méthode irréprochable comme le déclare Devine (2001) mais le mérite de toutes ces enquêtes entreprises c’est de questionner le terrain, toutes les composantes de ce terrain et surtout donner la parole aux victimes à travers des échantillonnages représentatifs. Sur un
terrain comme celui de l’Afrique on ne peut se passer des informations données dans les médias mais on peut non plus se contenter de faire un recueil de faits divers.

Bien entendu au-delà des éléments statistiques les données ethnographiques peuvent renseigner comment certains peuples préviennent les violences scolaires ou tout simplement quels comportements adoptent-ils pour rendre bien perceptible la violence scolaire. Il a été montré que la pratique de l’alliance et la parenté à plaisanterie n’est pas sans effet sur le climat scolaire dans un milieu où 82,5% des élèves interrogés déclarent la vivre (LOMPO, 2005). Il s’agit donc de voir, sans applications mécaniques, quels sont les mécanismes mis en œuvre. Tout au moins reconnaît-on par ces faits relatés que la lutte contre la violence n’est pas une affaire de répression mais de prévention par le lien social établi entre les probables victimes et les potentiels agresseurs.

Au moment où paraît cet article, on peut noter un apport non négligeable à la connaissance du phénomène à travers cet ouvrage collectif de Azoh, Lanoue et Tchombé. Cet ouvrage évoque les dynamiques sociales et politiques, sans, avant, pendant et après les conflits. Ont été abordées les violences dans certains systèmes éducatifs.

Il est évident que la disponibilité des données occasionne le comparatisme international mais aussi donne au continent africain de se faire entendre, comme ce fut le cas lors de la 4e conférence mondiale sur la violence à l’école organisée par l’Observatoire internationale de la violence à l’école : présence de plusieurs délégations mais aussi participation à un symposium.

A partir de l’ensemble de ces recherches nous commençons à voir clair au niveau des violences qui marquent plus spécifiquement le continent africain.

**DES PARTICULARITES AFRICAINES**

Des différents types de violence dans les systèmes scolaires africains il y en a qui semblent spécifiques à ce milieu même si on peut les retrouver sur d’autres continents à des degrés divers. Ces particularités, nos propres travaux en thèse mais également des travaux d’autres chercheurs les révèlent. Parcourons les plus en vue comme le châtiment corporel omniprésent, la violence sexuelle exercée par certains enseignants, le sentiment de violence « mystique », la corruption, le lien violence scolaire et violence politique.

1 Sory CAMARA, déclare à ce propos qu’« il s’agit de désamorcer la guerre, de la jouer pour ne pas la faire. »
**LE SENTIMENT DE VIOLENCE MYSTIQUE**

Le recours au maraboutage et à la géomancie est une pratique quelque peu généralisée en Afrique. Cela peut être dans le but de faire aboutir un projet ou pour nuire à autrui. Les hommes politiques par exemple ont généralement chacun son marabout ou son charlatan. La croyance en l’action mystique est bien partagée. Pour preuve, des populations sont parfois en émoi quand on parle de disparition ou stérilisation mystique de sexe ou de la présence des « de tueurs de sexe » comme le relève René LUNEAU (2002, 24) ; on pense avoir le dessus sur l’adversaire en sport et notamment en football en faisant recours aux actions mystiques (Le pays n°1600 du 13 mars 1998). Nous définissons la violence mystique dans notre thèse comme un moyen par lequel, des individus pensent atteindre leurs adversaires ou des ennemis, sans laisser de traces ou de preuves valables en matière de justice. C’est un sentiment répandu dans les sociétés qui influencent considérablement les rapports sociaux.

L’école n’échappe pas à ce sentiment de violence mystique. Bien qu’il ne s’agisse pas d’une enquête de victimisation à proprement parlé, un élève de 14 ans énonce bien ce que beaucoup d’élèves peuvent avoir comme perception : un enseignant réputé méchant, suite à un châtiment corporel sanglant sur une fille, tomba gravement malade. Son état fut imputé par ce garçon à l’action des populations du village en vue de venger secrètement (Azoh et al, 2009).

La violence mystique mérite qu’on la sonde sérieusement pour savoir jusqu’à quel point elle peut agir sur le climat scolaire. Aujourd’hui des vocables comme « wak », « waker », « waké » pour désigner l’acte d’agir mystiquement sur quelqu’un ou d’être atteint par cet acte, ont cours chez les élèves..

**LA VIOLENCE SEXUELLE**

En Afrique de l’ouest une forme de violence pas ou peu explorée par les chercheurs occidentaux est de plus en plus préoccupante : c’est la violence sexuelle. Les gouvernants, les associations en ont pris la mesure et affinent des armes pour contenir le fléau. C’est par exemple le cas de RECIF ONG (Réseau de communication des femmes (Le Pays n° 1639 du 12 mai 1998, (p.1).

En 2005 le Ministère de l’Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale (MASSN) avec l’appui des partenaires techniques et financiers en particulier l’UNICEF sur recommandation du Secrétaire Général de l’ONU préoccupé par les violences faites aux enfants dans le monde, a réalisé une enquête au Burkina qui a affiché un tableau assez éloquent en matière de violence sexuelle :
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types de violences sexuelles</th>
<th>enfants n=780</th>
<th>adultes n=953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viol</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tentative de viol</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attouchements sexuels</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentat à la pudeur</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution des mineures</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation à des activités porno</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harcèlement sexuel</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation à caractère sexuel</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voyeurisme</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racolage</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tableau 1 : Perception des violences sexuelles par les enfants et les adultes : MASSN**

En milieu scolaire il s’agit d’une violence des adultes sur les élèves et en particulier sur les filles dans les établissements scolaires. Elle est plus connue sous le nom de MST, sigle en SVT (Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre) qui change de contenu et donne à voir Moyennes sexuellement transmissibles. Les élèves et les adultes dans les établissements scolaires reconnaissent que ce phénomène est une pratique courante au Burkina (Lombo, 2005). Il en va de même au Sénégal où tenir tête devant les avances d’un professeur peut conduire à une mauvaise note (http://www.eip.cifedhop.org/eip.afrique/senegal/violence.htm).


En Côte d’Ivoire il a été relevé par le ministère de l’éducation nationale que 37% des filles abandonnaient l’école suite à des grossesses non désirées et que dans la majeure partie des cas ce sont les enseignants qui en étaient les auteurs (http://www.eurofem.org/02.info/22contri/2.07.fr/4fr.viol/20fr_vio.htm).
Un tel phénomène a des conséquences énormes : abandon de l’école par les filles, infections sexuellement transmissibles et sida, grossesses non désirées, perturbations psychologiques.

LA CORRUPTION

Un des problèmes à ne pas sous-estimer dans le climat scolaire en Afrique c’est la corruption. C’est à la fois une violence des adultes des établissements scolaires sur les élèves celle des adultes sur d’autres adultes en l’occurrence les parents d’élèves.

Cette forme de violence est une forme de racket que mènent certains enseignants sur leurs élèves. On la rencontre par exemple au Mali où on parle de « notes et moyennes financièrement transmissibles » (Le Républicain du 12-17 décembre 2004).

Ce phénomène tant à se généraliser en Afrique. An Niger, par exemple, certains qui la pratiquent en sont arrivés à penser que c’est un fait normal pour réduire les inégalités sociales (Enquête ANLC/TI, 2004)

Comme le déclare le Bulletin des Organisations de la Société Civile Béninoise, après une enquête sur la corruption en milieu scolaire, « La corruption dans le monde de l’Education est un fléau colossal » (Education et Culture n° 9 en ligne).

Pour ce qui est des violences entre adultes elle est l’action des enseignants et surtout des chefs d’établissement et des surveillants sur les parents d’élèves en quête de place pour inscription. Cela a eu pour conséquence des effectifs pléthoriques (100 à 120 élèves par classe) malgré les instructions officielles qui les limitent entre 60 et 70 selon le cycle au Burkina.

Quelles peuvent être les conséquences sociales et surtout pédagogiques face à une telle pratique ?

LE MANQUE OU L’ABSENCE D’ÉCOUTE

Le châtiment corporel n’est certes pas une spécialité africaine ! Rappelons par exemple que vingt-trois États des États-Unis d’Amérique autorisent encore légalement cette forme de punition dans les écoles (le Canada l’a aboli en 2004 après un long débat). 26% des Américains croient que les enseignants des écoles primaires doivent frapper leurs élèves si nécessaire d’après un sondage ABC de décembre 2002.

Il n’empêche que le châtiment corporel reste une préoccupation dans les systèmes éducatifs en Afrique Subsaharienne. Au Burkina par exemple, un texte législatif a été pris pour contrer cette violence à l’égard des apprenants mais ce n’est pas pour autant que la pratique a cessé : des violences physiques (gifles en particulier) sont souvent infligées aux élèves par les enseignants et le personnel administratif des établissements secondaires (Lompo, 2005). Il en est de même à l’école primaire (GARBA, 2007). Il est sans doute temps de s’interroger sur les mobiles d’une telle conduite,

Pour donner une idée de l’importance de cette violence physique, les études de victimisation en cours incluent des questions sur les formes de punition pratiquées. Ainsi les résultats provisoires d’une enquête au Mali (Diallo, 2009) montrent à partir d’un échantillon de 782 élèves interrogés que 20% de ceux-ci disent avoir été frappé avec un instrument (règle, tuyau, chicotte...), 18% avoir été giflé, 21% avoir subi le pilori ou 34,5% avoir dû se tenir à genoux en classe ou dans la cour. Ces éléments statistiques se rapprochent des résultats d’une enquête menée à Djibouti par Debarbieux (2006) sur un échantillon nationalement représentatif de 1669 enfants d’école primaire (CM1 et CM2).
Debarbieux note cependant que les résultats sont une moyenne ; selon les écoles élémentaires il a relevé entre 5 et 80% d’élèves frappés.

**LA VIOLENCE SYSTEMIQUE**

Je la nomme ainsi au regard du fait que c’est une violence instituée et même promue par un système. Dans les écoles coraniques ou écoles franco-arabes une forme d’éducation qui aliène l’enfant par toutes sortes de souffrances : mauvaise hygiène, châtiment corporel, mendicité...Ce type de violence a une capacité de nuisance et de beaux jours devant lui. « « L’appareil idéologique et culturel rend cette violence encore plus pernicieuse parce qu’étant légitimée, inscrit dans les esprits et dans les corps, elle n’est pas reconnue et identifiée comme telle, ce qui limite les potentialités de sa remise en cause, et par voie de conséquence, de son éradication » nous déclare Moussa (in Azoh et al, 2009, 66).

**DES VIOLENCES POLITIQUES**

On ne soupçonne pas toujours ce qui peut être considéré comme une violence pour l’autre ou pour un groupe social donné. Des élèves au Burkina Faso ont considéré la grève comme une forme de violence à leur égard (Lombo, 2005).


On s’en doute, les conséquences sont douloureuses pour les élèves (retard social, démotivation et difficulté de renouer avec l’enseignement à la reprise, etc.). Il ne s’agit absolument pas ici de remettre en cause le droit de grève acquis après âpres luttes sociales mais chercher à explorer cette forme de victimation sur les élèves.

Dans l’ensemble on a affaire à une violence des adultes sur les plus jeunes plutôt qu’une violence entre pairs. Ne peut-on pas parler même d’une violence d’une génération sur une autre ?

Dans l’ensemble ces particularités témoignent de la prédominance des violences adultes sur les plus jeunes. Il ne s’agit pas de violences entre pairs. Celle-ci existe mais pas comme on pourrait la retrouver dans les pays du nord.
CONCLUSION

Les formes de violence ci-dessus énumérées requièrent de la communauté scientifique une sérieuse exploration tant leur généralisation et leur développement peuvent mettre en péril les systèmes éducatifs africains déjà fragiles. N’y a-t-il pas d’autres logiques face aux logiques que développent actuellement les « prédateurs » de ces systèmes ? Les enjeux sont de taille pour l’Afrique face à son développement mais aussi face à sa paix sociale.

En en ce qui concerne le châtiment corporel, il est indéniable que les moments et lieux initiatiques connaissent des violences physiques (Lompo, 1989) mais l’éducation et tout particulièrement la formation n’étaient basées sur le châtiment corporel. Du reste, cette violence initiatique apparaissait comme « une épreuve à surmonter, une démonstration de courage, de résistance » (Meyran, 2006, 21) à l’image du service militaire dans les sociétés modernes. Les enseignants et une partie de l’opinion africaine tendent de faire croire que sans châtiment, l’apprentissage semble voué à l’échec. C’est oublier que c’est l’école coloniale qui a vite donné, à son arrivée en Afrique, une tournure de contrainte, de punition voire de pénitence (Lompo, 2005). « Il faut l’envoyer à l’école ; là bas on le corrigera, on le redressera ! » Ce sont des propos souvent entendus face à un enfant « impossible ». L’image de l’école renvoie quelque peu à l’incarcération, à la flagellation. Combien d’enfants africains ont-ils fui l’école croyant fuir les coups ? L’Afrique ne peut-elle pas renoncer à cette forme d’école dont le souvenir reste douloureux ? Ne peut-elle pas renoncer au châtiment comme moyen par lequel l’apprentissage passerait obligatoirement ?

Ces violences semblent se développer alors que des mécanismes de régulation sont à portée de mains. On peut penser par exemple à l’alliance et parenté à plaisanterie utilisée pour renforcer la cohésion entre ethnies (Sissao, 2002). On peut également se référer aux énormes valeurs sociales, domaine dans lequel l’Afrique pourra d’ailleurs contribuer à la production des valeurs partagées et mettre un frein à l’érosion morale dont l’une des conséquences se trouve être la déstabilisation des élites africaines (Robert, 2004). Se pose par la même occasion le problème du « piège » dans lequel sont entrain de tomber les cadres africains, à savoir le fait de tourner le dos au stock de connaissances du continent car comme le disait Joseph Ki-Zerbo (2003), « ils ne connaissent pas un traitre mot des réalités et des choses qui les entourent ».

Il est également question de l’exigence démocratique face au phénomène de violence : une jeunesse exigeante ou en quête de bien être social face à des régimes politiques tenant à leur survie et à l’honneur. Comment concilier
liberté d’expression ou revendications sociales et gouvernance, sans que l’une ou l’autre partie soit versée dans la violence. Paix sociale et démocratie que rien oppose à priori dans les structures d’éducation comme les établissements secondaires et les universités, constitue aujourd’hui un axe de préoccupation majeur en Afrique. On y connaît très souvent le cycle privation d’un droit, réaction pour rétablir le droit, répression pour rétablir l’ordre. Les partenaires traditionnels de l’éducation s’interrogent face aux différents dérapages qui entraînent ça et là des années invalidées ou des années blanches. Quel regard le scientifique porte-t-il sur cette réalité?


A ce jour des formes de violences spécifiques à l’école africaine ont pu être repérées ; La tâche revient à la communauté scientifique de les questionner. À l’image de la renaissance de l’Afrique évoquée par SALL (voir Ba Konaré, A. (dir.) (2008) une mobilisation des chercheurs africains de concert avec les chercheurs d’autres horizons s’avère nécessaire voire indispensable. Peut-être, par la suite naîtront, selon la nécessité, des observatoires dont la vocation sera de donner l’occasion à l’Afrique, au travers de ses atouts culturels et de ses expériences, de contribuer à l’édification d’une école à climat apaisé à l’échelle de l’humanité.
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