Chapter 2

VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION AT SCHOOL IN ADOLESCENCE

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is focused on school violence in adolescence. In the last decades there has been a steady increase in research analyzing problems of violent behaviour among children and adolescents at school, reflecting the growing seriousness of these problems in some European countries and in the United States. In this chapter we first analyze different definitions of the concepts of "violence" and "school violence" in an attempt better understanding the topic we are going to talk about. Secondly, we introduce the most important theories developed to explain violent behaviour, and analyze each of them in relation to school violence in the adolescent period. These theories are split into two groups, innate drive theories and environmental theories. Innate drive theories include the genetic theory, the ethological theory, the psychoanalytic theory, the personality theory and the frustration theory. Environmental theories include the social learning theory, the social interaction theory, the sociological theory, and the ecological systems theory.

Thirdly, the following aspects regarding problems of violence and victimization at school are analyzed: incidence of school violence and bullying in the educational centers; where these acts occur more frequently; psychosocial characteristics of aggressors, pure victims, and aggressive victims; and psychosocial consequences derived from the involvement in violent acts and victimization situations at school. Results obtained regarding some psychological factors such as self-esteem and depressive symtomatology are analyzed in depth. Prior research has shown how victimized adolescents exhibit serious psychosomatic symptoms and poor psychological adjustment using measures of self-esteem, depression, perceived stress, feeling of loneliness and satisfaction with life, however, for the case of aggressors results are controversial and need more investigation. Some studies report, for instance, that violent adolescents exhibit low levels of self-

esteem, while others point out that aggressors usually obtain high scores in measures of this construct. This incoherence has also been found when examining other psychological aspects in aggressors such as symptoms of depression.

Fourthly, causes of school violence are examined, taking into account four types of factors: individual, family, school, and social factors. This part of the chapter is based on research results from previous studies. Some individual factors repeatedly linked to school violence have been, for example, level of empathy, poor satisfaction with life, nonconformist social reputation, and attitude to social norms and institutional authority. Family variables analyzed include quality of family environment, parent-adolescent communication, family conflicts, parental support and family cohesion. School factors refer to quality of classroom environment, friendships with classmates, teacher-student relationship, and social acceptance or rejection by peers. Within the social factors there is an increasing concern about the effect of mass media, the Internet and video games on children and adolescent behaviour. Findings regarding all these factors are presented and examined. Finally, some practices for intervention in school violence are presented, classified in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.

VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION AT SCHOOL IN ADOLESCENCE

For the past decades the interest on *school violence* has increased substantially in many countries. The increasing concern of the scientific, educational, administrative and political groups is based in the need to analyze and understand the precedents and consequences of violent behaviour during school ages. These concerns are based on the seriousness and frequency of certain behaviours that tarnish the student's integrity. Recent studies carried out in Europe and EEUU confirm that this problem tends to translate into more serious behavioural patterns related to the physical and verbal violence towards teachers and peers and, therefore, is an important threat to the teaching-learning process in the classroom, social relations and the social integration problems of some students. The destructive and antisocial behaviours in the school demotivate students from their learning process and teachers from their functions of educator and transmitters of knowledge and values. The school must increase, as well, the resources to pay attention to the appropriate intervention measures with the implicated students. But let's take one step at a time and let's start defining the object of our study. What does one understand by violent behaviour? What does one mean by school violence?

1. DEFINING VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Coming up with one sole definition of *violence* is very complex since this aspect of human behaviour has been studied from many different approaches, and each of them focuses on a specific part. Therefore one would find many definitions of violent behaviour that reflect the heterogeneity of the theories underneath. It is necessary to add that the term violence is used on many occasions as a synonym for aggression even in prestigious publications. Even though aggression and violence might seem equivalent there is a general agreement in the difference of their nature or origin. The difference between aggression and violence could be found in the fact that aggression is a behaviour guided by the instincts and therefore

characteristic of other animal species. Violence, on the other hand, is rather the product of the interaction between biology and culture, and it entitles a conscious intentionality (Sanmartin, 2004).

Many authors such as Berkowitz (1996) or more recently Anderson and Bushman (2002), show the differences between two main dimensions in violent behaviour: a behavioural dimension that implies the use of hostile conduct with the sole purpose of causing damage, and an intentional dimension where violence is used as a mean to achieve someone's own interests. These two dimensions are known as *hostile violence* which makes reference to an unplanned, rage based, impulsive behaviour usually after being provoked and with the main objective of causing damage. And *instrumental violence:* a violent planned behaviour with the sole purpose of achieving specific objectives by the aggressor and not as a reaction to a previous provocation.

Other more recent and complex classifications of violent behaviour, such as the one proposed by Little and colleagues (2003) make a double distinction and make a distinction between several *forms* of violence (for example, direct, physical, or manifest *versus* indirect or relational), and between different *functions* of violence (reactive or defensive *versus* offensive, proactive or instrumental) (Little, Brauner, Jones, Nock, and Hawley, 2003; Little, Henrich, Jones, and Hawley, 2003). The characteristics of these forms of violence are:

- *Direct or manifest violence* makes reference to behaviours that imply a direct confrontation towards others with the intention of causing damage (pushing, beating up, threatening, insulting...).
- *Indirect or relational violence* does not imply a direct confrontation between the aggressor and the victim and it is defined as the act directed to provoke damage in his/her social group or in his/her perception of belonging to that group (social exclusion, social rejection, spreading rumors...).

On the functions of violence:

- *Reactive violence* refers to behaviours that entitle a defensive answer towards a provocation. This violence tends to be related to impulsivity and self-control problems; as well as problems dealing with social relations, based in the tendency of carrying out hostile attributions towards other people's behaviour.
- *Proactive violence* makes reference to behaviours that entitle an anticipation of the benefits. It is deliberate and controlled by external reinforcements. This kind of violence has been related to subsequent antisocial and criminal problems as well as with high levels of social competence and leadership skills.

School violence is a kind of behaviour that includes the general characteristics of violent behaviour, with the difference that the actors are kids and adolescents and that it takes place in primary and secondary schools: in places where they are together for several hours a day all year. Having said this, a violent student at school is the one who fails to comply with the school's regulations that monitor the interactions in the classroom and the school setting throughout punitive behaviours towards the others that imply manifest, relational, reactive or

proactive aggressions, which according to Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) are due to different reasons:

1. Achieve or maintain a high social status. Some group leaders are the teenagers that stand out for their violent behaviour.
2. Have power and control other students.
3. Being "avenging" imposing their own law and social norms since they consider the existing ones unacceptable or unfair.
4. Challenge the authority and oppose to the established social controls that they feel oppressive.
5. Experiment new risky behaviours; therefore they choose environments where they can practice violent and antisocial behaviours.

Nevertheless, before analyzing in depth the particularities of the violent behaviour in the school context and the different factors that might affect their development, it would be interesting to briefly review the main explanatory theories of the violent and aggressive behaviour in general, since they will help us to grasp a better understanding of the topic.

2. EXPLANATORY THEORIES OF THE VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

A fundamental step in order to try to understand the mechanisms implied in school violence entitles a review of the general theories that explain the origin of the violent and aggressive behaviour in the human being. It is not necessary to make an extensive revision but it is essential to review the main theoretical frameworks on the origin of the aggressive and violent behaviour, which can be divided into two broad theoretical groups: active or innate drive theories and reactive or environmental theories. On the one hand, *active or innate drive theories* see aggressiveness as an innate human component where aggressive acts respond to impulses or internal motivations of the person, which are necessary for their adaptation process. Therefore it is considered that aggression has a positive function and that one of the fundamental socialization tasks is to channel their expression towards acceptable social behaviours. This perspective includes studies that cover from ethological studies up to psychoanalysis. On the other hand, *reactive or environmental theories* stress the influence that the environment or social context exert on violent behaviour and consider that the person carries out an active role through out the learning processes. The environment is therefore regarded as the main responsible for the origin of violence, in the sense that the person's behaviour is a reaction learnt through specific environmental events. This perspective includes studies that cover matters such as social learning or the ecological systems theory. Hereinafter, a review of the most relevant aspects of each theory will be outlined.

2.1. Active or Innate Drive Theories

The main active or innate drive theories include the genetic theory, the ethological theory, the psychoanalytic theory, the personality theory and the frustration theory. As it has

already being outlined, these theories see the origin of violence in the individual's internal characteristics. The *Genetic Theory* maintains that aggressive individuals have specific organic pathological syndromes such as DNA anomalies or alterations in hormonal and biochemical processes (for example high levels of testosterone and noradrenalin). The genetic predisposition and inherited traits are, therefore, pointed out in the development of aggressive behaviour.

The *Ethological Theory* explains the reasons of the animal aggressive behaviour in the human being. Aggression is meant to be an innate reaction based in biologically adapted unconscious impulses that have been developed together with the species evolution. The purpose of the aggression is the individual's survival and it is related with matters such as territory, hierarchy and selection. The ethologists consider that the human being, in the evolutionary scale, has exceeded his own genetic scale and does not almost respond to these aggressive stimuli. As it happens with animals, this theory justifies the male's tendency to higher levels of aggressiveness.

The *Psychoanalytic Theory* maintains that aggressiveness is a basic instinctive component that arises as a reaction to the libido repression or the impediment of fulfilling the acts that provoke pleasure (Eros and Thanatos' theories). If the person is able to liberate the accumulated interior tension due to the repression of the libido, he/she will enter a relaxation stage (*catharsis hypothesis or safety valve*), but if the person is not able to liberate it, the aggression will take place. From this perspective, the aggression is the result of internal negative feelings that the person is not able to exteriorize through accepted social channels.

According to the *Personality Theory*, the violent behaviour is based in personality constitutional traits, such as the absence of self-control and impulsivity, or the existence of cognitive deficits such as the difficulty of putting themselves in the place of the victim. From this perspective, it is considered that the personality factors determine or may sometimes increase the probability of the person to be involved in aggressive behaviours. Some examples of approaches that could be included here are Eysenck's theory that explains violent behaviour by the high levels of psychotic and neurotic characteristics, or Kretchmer's theory that biotypologically classifies the deviated behaviour of individuals. Closely related are also many studies on the psychopathic personality.

Aggression Innate Drive Theories

THEORY	FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTION
Genetic	The origin of the aggression is found in particular organic pathologies.
Ethological	The aggression is an adaptability reaction to guarantee survival.
Psychoanalytic	The aggression is the result of a cluster of negative tensions provoked by the repression of the libido.
Personality	The aggression is based in personality traits that determine the individual's behaviour.

Frustration	The impossibility of reaching a prefixed aim provokes frustration (which provokes in turn anger) and this leads to the aggressive behaviour.

The *Frustration Aggression Theory,* proposed by Dollar and colleagues at the end of the thirties, is based in the psychoanalytic association between aggression and frustration of instincts. From this perspective it is considered that there is a direct causal relation between the frustration provoked by blocking an aim and the aggression. Some years later Berkowitz (1962, 1989, 1996) published a revision of this theory by including some modifications. In particular, Berkowitz considered that the frustration arises when the person forecasts that he/she is going to lose his/her object of desire. Therefore the frustration does not arise due to the privation of something per se, but due to the need of possessing the object of desire. This author includes as well an intermediate variable between frustration and aggression, what he calls anger. The frustration provokes an anger state that activates the organism and makes it ready for the aggression. Finally the aggression will take place depending on the individual's emotional activation level and whether the individual is in a surrounded by stimuli with an aggressive component.

2.2. Reactive or Environmental Theories

The main reactive or environmental theories include the social learning theory, the social interaction theory, the sociological theory, and the ecological systems theory. All these theories believe that the environment influences the future violent behaviour. In the *Social Learning Theory,* Bandura (1976) considers that the violent behaviour is learnt through the observation and imitation of behaviours that occur in the immediate contexts to the individual. The imitation of the violent behaviour will depend on whether the model observed gets positive rewards for his/her actions or not: if the person had a benefit through the violent behaviour, the observer will probably imitate such behaviour, but if the model is punished for his/her violent behaviour, the probability of imitation will decrease. Bandura outlines as well that in many cases the violence is not only a mere imitative behaviour, but that new forms of violence arise, generalizing the model effect. To summarize, being exposed to violent models no only proportionate the information on how to act but also what the consequences of those actions are. From this perspective, the behavioural models which play an important role as socialization agents such as parents, teachers, friends and media, are crucial from this theory. This would be, for example, the case of the positive reinforcement produced by praising and been applauded by the peers when an adolescent carries out a violent behaviour at school or when parents tolerate violent behaviours at home.

The *Social Interaction Theory* underlines the interactive character of the human behaviour, and the fact that the violent behaviour is the result of the interaction between the individual's characteristics and the circumstances of the surrounding social context. From all the theoretical frameworks analyzed up to this stage, this is the one that gives more relevance to the environment and social contexts which are closer to the individual and, moreover, points out the bidirectional character of the interaction: the environment influences the individual and the individual influences the environment. In the explanation of the

behavioural problems in adolescence both the family and school contexts are seen as fundamental. Some important points in this sense are: deficiencies in the family socialization and in the relationship between parents and children, as well as problems of social rejection and victimization in the school. These and other contextual factors are extremely relevant and will increase the probability of the adolescent acquiring this type of behaviour.

The *Sociological Theory* interprets the violence as the product of the cultural, political and economical characteristics of society. Factors such as poverty, marginalization, the difficulty of intellectual development, social exploitation or highly competitive systems, are in many cases the origin of violent behaviours in some citizens and, therefore, may be the first cause of behavioural problems in individuals. This theory also conceals a great importance to the predominant desired and praised values in a specific culture, such as rivalry, competition or individualism. Along this line, in some cultures, violence has a positive value: it is considered a 'normal' behaviour in order to solve conflicts and problems, and it is not only allowed, but also praised. This tolerance is favored on many occasions by a key element which influences society and citizens: mass media, which act as a screen of those values.

Finally, the *Ecological Systems Theory* proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), contemplates the individual involved in a network of interconnected relationships and organized in four main levels. These levels reflect four contexts of behavioural influence: (1) *Microsystem*, composed by the immediate context of the individual, such as family and school. It includes all those activities, roles and interpersonal relations that the person experiments in his/her immediate environment; (2) *Mesosystem*, makes reference to the interactions existing between the microsystem contexts, such as the communication between the family and the school; (3) *Exosystem*, that clusters the social environments in which the individual does not participate actively, but in which there are facts that might be affecting the nearer contexts, such as his/her parents' or siblings' groups of friends or the mass media; and (4) *Macrosystem*, that makes reference to the culture and the socio-historical moment in which the individual lives, and includes the ideology and values of that culture.

The ecological approach, therefore, highlights the fact that in order to understand the violent behaviour of an individual it is necessary to consider both the *micro-violences* present in his/her immediate contexts (family, school or working place) as well as cultural and structural *macro-violence* in the society. In that sense, Vinyamata (2001) outlines some indisputable important social factors in the development of violence, such as: misery and social marginalization conditions, family destabilization, promotion of violent behaviours through the mass media, as well as aggressive values that imply an immediate benefit, or the justification of lies and hiding information as acceptable measures in the political settings.

Aggression Environmental Theories

Theory	Fundamental Assumption
Social learning	The aggression is learnt though the observation of praises after violent behaviours carried out by significant models.
Social interaction	The aggression is the product of the interaction between the person and the influence of his/her immediate social environment.
Sociological	Cultural, political and economical characteristics as well as the society's predominant values system are the base of aggressive

behaviour.	
Ecological	The aggressive behaviour is a product of the interconnection between the person and four influence levels: Microsystem, Mesosystema, Exosystem and Macrosystem.

This perspective mainly underlines that behavioural problems can not be attributed only to the person; they must be considered as the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment (in the case of the adolescent, the family, school and social context). That translates in the need of examining the problematic conduct in the context where it arises (in this case, the classroom or school) and, therefore, it would be more useful to promote effective changes in that context in order to intervene or prevent the problem, instead of exclusively paying attention to the individual involved.

All these theories have been criticized and applauded, and probably none of them (at least by itself) could proportionate a global explanatory base to understand the frequency and importance of some violent behaviour displayed by adolescents in numerous modern societies. Nevertheless, we consider that amongst all the theories exposed in this section, the perspective presented as most adequate in order to understand the complexity of the violent behaviour during the adolescence period is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological approach. If one analyzes the school violence problem from this perspective, one should consider that the causes are multiple and complex and that they must be examined in terms of interaction between individuals and contexts/environments. Following this line, in the next section we outline the main characteristics of the context where school violence arises, as well as the profile of the individuals involved, before explaining later the risk and protective factors that, according to the Ecological Systems Theory, have been associated in scientific literature with problems of violence in the school.

3. Characteristics of School Violence and Bullying

Many different violent behaviours take place in the school context, including those directly directed towards objects or school material and those directly directed towards individuals such as teachers and peers. The first ones would refer to vandalic actions such as breaking desks or doors, painting names, messages and grafitties on the school walls. And the second type would include verbal and physical aggressions towards the teachers or peers, and serious problems of discipline in the class such as disobeying the school internal regulations. Out of all these behaviours, fights between peers are the most frequent ones, whether it is one to one or between groups. But beyond of a shadow of a doubt, the violent behaviour in which both the educative and the scientific communities are becoming more interested in, is bullying, and this interest is due to the increase of this form of violence as well as to the significant consequences that it causes to the victims.

Bullying has been studied from the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties in countries such as Norway, Sweden and Finland. In fact, it is in Norway where we find one of the principal pioneers in this study, Dan Olweus, with the publication of the book *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys* in 1978. In this book, Olweus points out that "a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and

over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (1978, p. 469), and considers as a negative action a type of violence in which someone intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort to another. From Olweus' point of view, bullying has three main characteristics: (1) it is a violent behaviour, (2) which occurs over time, and (3) involves a power imbalance.

Types of Bullying

Physical: pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, and punching.

Verbal: calling names, teasing, threatening, insulting, humiliating.

Relational: gossiping or spreading rumors about someone, telling others to stop liking someone, ignoring or stopping talking to someone.

Bullying implies behaviours that could be classified both in the manifest and relational violence, but it usually occurs without any provocation, rather as a reaction towards another person's actions. As Elinoff, Chafouleas, and Sassu (2004) have remarked that "bullying is a form of aggression that is hostile and proactive, and involves both direct and indirect behaviours that are repeatedly targeted at an individual or group perceived as weaker". This form of aggression, therefore, may be physical, verbal and relational (Craig, Henderson, and Murphy, 2000; Ladd and Ladd, 2001; Newman, Murray, and Lussier, 2001). The following table shows examples of theses three types of bullying taken from Dahlberg, Toal and Behrens (1998) and Mynard and Joseph (2000).

Some bullies will opt for the physical violence and others will not act as openly and will rather insult, persuade, manipulate and socially exclude their peers. The following section will outline information referring to the incidence that these behaviours have in the educational centers.

3.1. Incidence of Bullying

Apparently bullying can be found, up to different extents, in all schools, and it is spread throughout different cultures. Research carried out in Europe and EEUU reveals that the number of victims is usually higher than the number of aggressors. For example, one of the most recent studies by Olweus (2001a) carried out in Norway, showed that 7.4% of teenagers attending school consider themselves as bullies and that 8% have been victims of bullying. In other countries such as Austria, Belgium or Spain, figures reveal that the number of adolescents who have been victims of bullying seem to be higher. Studies conducted by Klicpera and Gasteiger-Klicpera (1996), Stevens and Van Oost (1995) and Serrano and Iborra (2005) in these countries, show that the number of victims is about 14-15% and the number of aggressors about 6-7%. The percentage of the incidence found in other European countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland are lower: Smith and Shu (2000) found that 12.2% are victims and 3% are bullies in the United Kingdom, and Byrne (1994) documented that in Ireland both victims and bullies are about 5%. Recent data from the United States collected by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) show similar figures to the European ones, although with a slightly higher percentage in the group of aggressors: around 13% of students say to have been bullied and 10.6% refer to themselves as bullies.

Differences in gender are a constant in the studies focused on this problem. The general tendency observed in research carried out in different countries show that boys are generally more likely to be involved in bullying as both bullies and targets, and furthermore, they are far more likely to both engage in and be the victims of physical violence (Nansel et al., 2001, Olweus, 1993). Tattum and Lane (1989), for instance, showed in their study that boys were involved in violent behaviours three times more than girls. Nevertheless, it is possible that the masculine predominance of bullying found in most studies responds to bias in the measures used in the studies. This fact could explain the reason why in those studies in which bullying is measured considering only direct and physical aggressive behaviours, boys present a much higher frequency of involvement than girls; but in those in which both direct and indirect violence is taken into consideration, differences by gender tend to disappear (Andreou, 2000; Craig, 1998; Hoover and Juul, 1993).

In this sense, it is possible that boys and girls preferably use different types of violence although at similar levels, thereby being differences between them more qualitative than quantitative (Kochenderfer and Wardrop, 2001). In fact, it seems that girls typically engage in what has been described as indirect and relational aggression: rumor spreading, intentional exclusion and social isolation and friendship manipulation (Olweus, 1997). These findings display the need to approach the study of bullying from a broader perspective and not only considering the physical side of the violent acts. In fact, it has been observed that the implications of relational violence are of great importance, since this type of violence seems to exert an important influence in the interpersonal relationships that the adolescents involved will develop in their future as adults (Crick and Nelson, 2002).

With regard to the range of age in which these behaviours among peers take place, it seems that physical violence is more common in early ages and tends to disappear at the age of 13-14. This finding matches the idea that younger students are usually physically weaker and more vulnerable than older and probable stronger peers. This tendency in the fall of physical violence coincides with an increase or high presence of verbal and relational violence during the middle adolescence (Avilés and Monjas, 2005; Boulton and Underwood, 1992).

Finally, in order to close the chapter on the incidence of bullying, it is important to outline the places inside the school where this type of behaviour seems be more frequent. It seems logical to think that bullying can take place anywhere in the school, although the different types of violence and the location will depend on the degree of adult supervision. For example, in the case of physical violence, the aggressor will try to look for those places where there are hardly any teachers, such as the corridors, playground or the entrance/exit of the school (Macneil, 2002). Verbal aggressions and social exclusion, on the other hand, seem to be more frequent in the classroom and in the playground (Rodríguez, 2004).

3.2. Characteristics of Aggressors

Bullies are often characterized by showing high levels of impulsivity, a strong need to dominate others, positive beliefs about the use of violence and low empathy with victims (Dykeman, Daehlin, Doyle, and Flamer, 1996; Evans, Heriot, and Friedman, 2002; Olweus, 1991, 2005). Moreover, as it has been remarked earlier, they tend to be physically stronger than their victims and have more difficulties in order to accept and follow the established

social rules. Other studies have shown a close link between a negative attitude towards formal authority (teachers, school, and police) and violent behaviour in adolescence (Emler and Reicher, 1995; Hoge, Andrews, and Lescheid, 1996; Loeber, 1996). It is also important to underline that bullies seem to present four basic social needs (Rodríguez, 2004):

- The need to stand out: the aggressor wants to stand up over the others and feel accepted and praised for his/her behaviour.
- The need for power: the aggressor wants to feel more powerful than his/her peers and he/she needs to dominate.
- The need to feel different: the aggressor needs to create a particular identity and a special reputation in the peer group.
- The need to fill an emotional void: the aggressor is not able to react with affect to the social stimuli and is constantly seeking new sensations and experiences.

Nevertheless, nowadays there is a scientific debate on emotional problems linked to aggressiveness during adolescence. In that line, for example, studies about self-esteem show contradictory results: some authors suggest that bullies show lower levels of self-esteem in comparison with those not involved in such behavioural problems (Mynard and Joseph, 1997; O'Moore, 1997), while others report that violent adolescents often obtain high scores on measures of this construct (Olweus, 1998; Rigby and Slee, 1992). This apparent contradiction seems to be linked to the type of instruments used to obtain self-esteem measurements, and particularly to the use of one-dimensional *versus* multidimensional scales.

It seems that one-dimensional or global self-esteem measures, as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1986), do not reflect any relation between violent behaviour and self-esteem (Dorothy and Jerry, 2003; Rigby and Slee, 1992); but when multidimensional measures are analyzed, aggressors usually present a lower or higher self-esteem depending on the dimensions (Andreou, 2000; O'Moore and Hillery, 1991). For example, recent studies have proven that bullies tend to get low scores in school self-esteem but high scores in social self-esteem (Andreou, 2000; O'Moore and Kirkman, 2001). In other research carried out by some of the authors of this chapter, it was found that these adolescents had an even higher emotional and social self-esteem than adolescents not involved in bullying or victimization problems; however, their family and school self-esteem were significantly lower (Estévez, Martínez, and Musitu, 2006).

Similarly to self-esteem, for the moment being, the results on the link between violence and depression in the adolescent period are very controversial. Some studies suggest that both bullies and victims show more psychological disorders than the rest of adolescents (Carlson and Corcoran, 2001; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Rantanen, and Rimpelä, 2000; Seals and Young, 2003), while other researches have not found a direct relationship between school violence and the presence of depressive symptoms (Estévez, Herrero, and Musitu, 2005), or have only recorded a very low co-occurrence between violence and depression -around a 5-8%- (Garnefski and Diekstra, 1997; Ge, Best, Coner, and Simona, 1996). These findings suggest that violent behaviour has not to be necessarily the consequence nor the direct origin of depression (Herrero, Estévez, and Musitu, 2005), since, as already said, most bullies present an adequate emotional adjustment (Brendgen, Vitaro, Turgeon, Poulin, and Wanner, 2004). A possible explanation of these findings is, as Hawley and Vaughn (2003) report, that violent students are often important figures in their peer group and therefore tend to enjoy

some benefits of social inclusion, which could be translated into positive self-perceptions and emotional adjustment. Violent adolescents are more likely to develop friendships with others that are similar to them in terms of values, attitudes and behaviours, usually by having a set of friends that admire and support them, all of them important factors that do not go hand in hand with depression or low self-esteem (Little, Heinrich et al., 2003).

3.3. Characteristics of the Victims

Scientific literature makes the difference between two types of victims that, in turn, reflect two different ways of reacting towards an act of violence: on one hand, the victim might interpret the victimization as a very traumatic critical experience that, together with a tendency to isolation, mines the concept of his/herself and turns into depressive symptoms and loneliness feelings; on the other hand, it is possible that the victim develops negative attitudes towards their peers that, together with an impulsive tendency, triggers into an aggressive reaction towards their aggressors. Olweus (1978) and subsequently other authors such as Boulton and Smith (1994) and Schwartz, Proctor and Chien (2001) have named this subgroups as pure or *passive victims* and aggressive or *provocative victims*. Passive victims are generally characterized as being submissive, anxious, insecure and unassertive, and they are described as lonely children, physically weaker than their peers and often without friends. Provocative victims, on the other hand, are impulsive and prone to hostile and aggressive behaviour. Studies point out that most victims belong to the first group, and that the provocative victims only represent the 10-20% of the total according to Olweus (1978) and the 4-8% according to Schwartz and colleagues (2001).

Generally speaking, there is more data in the scientific literature on passive that on provocative victims, since the latter have not been included in most research on bullying carried out up to the present. Nevertheless, even though provocative victims represent a smaller group, they are increasingly capturing researchers' attention due to their special characteristics and the lack of studies focused on analyzing the processes involved in their social condition in the classroom. It is known that provocative victims share characteristics with pure victims and bullies, but they seem to be a theoretical distinct group. Thus, for example, they tend to show high levels of anxiety as the passive victims, and high levels of impulsivity as bullies, but as a whole they seem to have a poorer psychosocial adjustment than the other two groups.

Some recent studies point out hat provocative victims, in comparison to bullies, are more likely to physically bully other students and less likely to verbally bully them (Unnerver, 2005). This author stresses as well that this subgroup of victims is more reactively aggressive than pure bullies, which indicates that these adolescents may inaccurately perceive that other peers intend to harm them and inappropriately respond with physical violence. In that sense, Olweus (2001b) even suggests that it is possible that aggressive victims provoke peer victimization, which entitles a clear difference with regard to passive victims. In relation to social interactions, Eslea at al. (2003) found out that the group of proactive victims reported having fewer friends and feeling more isolated in the school context than pure victims.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the type of bullying involved or the type of victim, it is well established that bullying has many undesirable consequences for individuals. Victimization in the school implies a high threat to the psychological wellbeing of children and adolescents

since it is an extremely stressful interpersonal experience (Alsaker and Olweus, 1992; Kupersmidt, Coie, and Dodge, 1990; Smith, Bowers, Binney, and Cowie, 1993) and in fact, many investigations have repeatedly shown how victimized students exhibit serious psychosomatic symptoms and poor psychological adjustment (Alsaker and Olweus, 1992; Kumpulainen, Räsänen, and Puura, 2001; Kupersmidt, et al., 1990). Moreover, these problems seem to persist over time and many of these students need to ask, ultimately, for help and support of mental health professionals (Guterman, Hahm, and Cameron, 2002). In this sense, for example, Guterman and colleagues observed that the victims of bullying presented depressive symptoms, anxiety and stress problems even a year after the last violent encounter. The following table summarizes the main consequences of bullying for the victims.

Main Consequences of Bullying for Victims

Low Self-Esteem
Depressive Symptomatology
Stress And Anxiety
Feeling Of Loneliness
Suicide Ideation
Health Problems

As seen on the previous table, it has been proved that victims of bullying at school tend to have poorer self-esteem (Austin and Joseph, 1996; Boulton and Smith, 1994; Karatzias, Power, and Swanson, 2002; O'Moore and Kirkham, 2001; Rigby, 1999), tend to show more psychological distress (Estévez et al., 2005; Rigby, 2001; Seals and Young, 2003; Sweeting, Young, West, and Der, 2006), and tend to score higher on the feeling of loneliness (Kochenderfer and Ladd, 1996; Storch and Masia-Warner, 2004), and suicide ideation (O'Sullivan and Fitzgerald, 1998; Rigby and Slee, 1999). The effects of bullying seem to affect as well the victim's physical health: victims present more psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, stomach ache, backache or sleeping difficulties (Due et al., 2005; Natvig, Albreksten, and Qvarnstrom, 2001; Rigby, 1998).

4. RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

This section will enclose data on the main risk and protective factors associated with school violence and victimization problems. These factors have been classified in four groups: individuals, family, school and social. The authors believe that school violence problems can only be understood from the combination and interaction of different elements that involve both the individual and his/her socialization contexts and, therefore, the ecological systems perspective as understood by Bronfenbrenner will be used to analyze causes of these behaviours during the adolescent period.

Individual factors related to behavioural problems in adolescence, include biological characteristics such as the genetic influence, and psychological characteristics such as irritability, lack of empathy, the need to dominate others and to achieve a respectable social reputation in the peer group, the attitude towards the established social rules and formal

institutions, as well as the general satisfaction with life. Amongst the main family factors, one could highlight the negative family environment, problems of communication between parents and children, the lack of affective cohesion and emotional support, the high presence of family conflicts, and a family history of behavioural problems. The most reviewed school factors in the scientific literature have been the school organization and ideology, the classroom environment, the quality of the teacher-student relationship, the social acceptance or rejection by peers, and the affiliation with deviated peers at school. Finally, amongst the social factors studied in relation to antisocial behaviour in childhood and adolescence, the influence of mass media and particularly the impact of television seem to be of great importance. Also, researchers are increasingly interested in other factors such as the Internet and videogames.

4.1. Individual Factors

The main individual factors associated with violent behaviour during adolescence include all biological, genetic and psychological elements. On one hand, when talking about genetic and biological factors, we refer to the influence that the genetic information transmitted by the parents has in the development of some characteristics or peculiarities of the children. Some biological theories claim, for example, that aggression may be the manifestation of a genetic or chemical influence and, in that line, organic pathological syndromes such as the chromosomal abnormality XYY or certain biochemical and hormonal processes relating to the testosterone and noradrenalin levels in the organism, have been studied. This association between genes and aggressive behaviour is still a key issue in the scientific debate; nevertheless, nowadays there is a broad consensus among researchers on the inexistence of an impermeable genetic determinism to the environment in relation to the psychological and behavioural characteristics of the person. A more interactive perspective between the genetic and the contextual characteristics is defended, as it was pointed out in the previous section.

Moreover, if one considers the distinction made between aggression and violence, it could be argued that, even if ethologists show that aggressiveness is included in the genes of every single specie (including the human being), it is most probable that no one is born violent (Clemente, 1998). In this sense, we could consider that the step from aggression, as an adaptation mechanism, into violence, understood as an intentional human behaviour, is mediated by the socialization processes and, therefore, by the main socialization agents such as the family, the school and the mass media.

On the other hand, amongst the psychological factors related to behavioural problems during adolescence, one can find: irritability, that is to say, the tendency to react in an impulsive and abrupt way to small provocations, closely linked to a low tolerance for frustration (Baron and Byrne, 1998); the lack of empathy or the ability to put oneself on the other person's place and recognize and perceive the emotions from the other (Evans et al., 2002); the poor satisfaction with life in general (MacDonald, Piquero, Valois, and Zullig, 2005); the desire of dominating others and of showing power through an non conformist social reputation based on respect (Carroll, Hatti, Durkin, and Houghton, 1999); and a negative attitude towards the social rules and institutional authorities (Emler and Reicher, 1995). Some of these factors, even if they have been referred to as "individual", since they are beliefs, attitudes and ways of thinking, clearly include a social component, such as in the case

of empathy, social reputation and attitude towards institutional authority. In fact, those characteristics of the person are balanced by the adolescent's experience in his/her immediate social contexts. Let's analyze each of them more in depth.

Individual factors related to violence in adolescence

Irritability
Impulsivity
Low Frustratrion Tolerance
Low Empathy
Poor Satisfaction With Life
Desire Of Dominating Others
Non Conformist Social Reputation
Negative Attitude To Authority

First of all, it has been well established that aggressive adolescents are normally unable to anticipate the negative consequences that their behaviour are going to have for the victim, showing low levels of empathy (Dykeman, et al., 1996; Olweus, 2005). On the other side of the coin, is has been shown that development of empathy in the adolescence period seems to be a relevant protective factor for antisocial and violent behaviour (Evans et al., 2002; Hoffman, 2000). But how do adolescents develop this social skill? Prior studies have shown that a negative family environment has a substantial and negative effect on the development of particular social skills in children, such as the capacity to identify non-violent solutions to interpersonal problems (Demaray and Malecki, 2002; Lambert and Cashwell, 2003), or to put oneself in another's place (Eisenberg-Berg and Mussen, 1978; Henry, Sager, and Plunkett, 1996).

According to this line of thought, as Paley, Conger, and Harold (2000) remark, children establish their first social relations with their parental figures and the nature of those parent-child relationships and the context in which they are sustained, may determine the social skills and social relations the child will develop with others later in life. Consistent with this, Henry and colleagues (1996) found out that adolescents having parents who engage in positive reasoning in order to solve problems, and who described their families as very cohesive, are more likely to report higher levels of perspective taking when trying to understand another individual's feelings or emotional state. These authors conclude from their findings that the family fosters adolescent empathy development in multiple ways: it does not only provide the training ground for empathy skills, but also establishes a precedent for the use of an empathic response which the adolescent can then draw upon in the course of the interactions with peers.

Secondly, other recent studies conclude that aggressive adolescents at school show a very strong need for social recognition; they would like to be considered as powerful, socially accepted, different, and rebellious by their classmates (Rodríguez, 2004). In other words, some authors suggest that the desire for popularity, leadership and power leads to the involvement of many adolescents in disruptive behaviours, providing them with the opportunity to construct their desired social reputation (Carroll et al., 1999; Emler and Reicher, 2005; Kerpelman and Smith-Adcock, 2005). The wish of being recognized as a rebel implies, moreover, that these adolescents hold rather negative attitudes towards the authority.

In fact, it has been documented that aggressive adolescents normally show somewhat negative attitudes to institutional authorities such as the police, the law, and also school and teachers (Adair, Dixon, Moore, and Sutherland, 2000; Emler and Reicher, 1995; Estévez, Herrero, Martínez, and Musitu, 2006).

In order to grasp a better understanding of these associations, we should analyze again the most relevant socialization contexts during this age bracket: the family and the school. Recent studies point out that a positive climate at home might discourage adolescents from searching for social recognition in other contexts such as the school, whereas their perception of a deep lack of social capital in the family might be translated into a feeling of insecurity and emptiness that leads them to look for a reputation based on the respect and recognition from others, which in turn seems to be a key factor leading adolescents to take part in antisocial and violent acts, as Barry's research (2006) stresses. Regarding the school context, the quality of the classroom environment based on friendship among peers and positive interactions with teachers have all recently been singled out as important for the adolescent's psychosocial adjustment (Andreou, 2000; Blankemeyer, Flannery, and Vazsonyi, 2002; Reinke and Herman, 2002). Students sharing these characteristics are likely to perceive the school as a useful learning context the purpose of which is to help them construct a successful future as workers and citizens. Such students will not normally therefore exhibit behavioural problems and will express positive attitudes towards teachers and the school (Jack et al., 1996; Molpeceres, Lucas and Pons, 2000; Samdal, 1998).

4.2. Family Factors

As it has already been suggested, some characteristics of the family system seem to be associated in a great extent to the development of behavioural problems in children. The psychological explanations emphasize that the probability of the adolescent implicating him/herself in antisocial behaviours increases when the family socialization process is altered by factors such as an erratic discipline, frequent conflicts or the lack of parental support. In this sense it is well known that the quality of family relations is crucial to determine the level of competence and trust with which the adolescent faces the transition period from childhood to adulthood. The parent-adolescent relationships significantly influence children psychosocial adjustment, when it comes to negotiate the main adolescence tasks such as identity and autonomy acquisition, and can consolidate the necessary bases for the development of important cognitive and social abilities. Nevertheless, if the interaction between family members is not a quality one, it can constitute a risk factor of special relevance which may predispose the adolescent to learn violent and socially inappropriate responses.

More specifically, previous research has shown that a negative family environment characterized by poor or negative communication with parents (Lambert and Cashwell, 2003; Loeber et al., 2000; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, and Van Oost, 2002), and by lack of cohesion and parental support (Barrera and Li, 1996; Juang and Silbereisen, 1999), has a substantial and negative effect on the development of behavioural problems in the adolescent period (Demaray and Malecki, 2002; Dekovic, Wissink y Mejier, 2004; Gerard y Buehler, 1999). The presence of high levels of family conflict (Crawford-Brown, 1999; Cummings, Goeke-Morey, and Papp, 2003) and the strategies used by parents to resolve these conflicts,

play as well a very important role in this sense: strategies such as threats and insults, the lack of collaboration between family members and not regulating the negative affects, have been related with the presence of behavioural problems in children (Cummings, et al., 2003; Webster-Stratton and Hammond, 1999).

Family factors related to violence in adolescence

Problems Of Communication Within The Family
Lack Of Affective Cohesion
Poor Parental Support
Presence Of Regular Conflicts
Disfunctional Strategies On Conflict Resolution
Uninvolved Or Authoritarian Parental Style
Family History Of Problem Behaviour

Another factor that has proven to have a close relation with children's and adolescent's behavioural problems is the *parental stile,* which can be defined as a constellation of attitudes towards the child that, jointly considered, create an emotional environment where parental behaviours are expressed (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). One of the classical studies in this field is the one by Diana Baumrind (1978), who makes the difference between three types of parental styles: (a) the authoritarian style, when parents value obedience and restrict the child's autonomy; (b) the indulgent style, when parents practically do not exert any type of control over the child and let them be autonomous, as long as the child is not in physical danger; and (c) the authoritative style or a middle point: parents try to control child's behaviour through reasoning over imposition.

It is also important to highlight the work of Maccoby and Martin (1983) during the 80's, who presented a categorization of parental styles in function of the responsiveness and demandingness dimensions. Parental responsiveness refers to warmth, supportiveness and the extent to which parents are acquiescent to children's special needs and demands, and parental demandingness refers to behavioural control, supervision, and disciplinary efforts to confront the child who disobeys. The combination of these two dimensions translate into four parental styles, and each of them reflects a distinct balance of responsiveness and demandingness: (1) Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and directive, but not responsive, (2) Authoritative parents are both demanding and responsive, (3) Indulgent parents are more responsive than they are demanding, and (4) Uninvolved parents are low in both responsiveness and demandingness.

Generally speaking, the research carried out on the different consequences associated to the effect that parental styles have on children, has shown that the authoritative style is more directly related to children's psychosocial and behavioural adjustment than the rest of the parental styles (Beyers and Goossens, 1999; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, and Dornbusch, 1991). Adolescents coming from authoritarian homes do not usually present behavioural problems (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss and Schwarz, 1996; Miller, Cowan, Cowan, and Hetherington, 1993), although, when discipline and punishment are too rigid, the probability of the adolescent engaging in antisocial behaviours becomes higher (Gerard and Buehler, 1999; Loeber, et al., 2000). According to Baumrind (1991), adolescents with uninvolved parents are generally the less socially competent and present adjustment problems in all

domains. Finally, the results on the effect of the indulgent parental style over children are the most controversial. Some researchers point out that adolescents coming from indulgent homes do not interiorize norms and social rules adequately and therefore are more likely to be involved in behavioural problems (Weiss and Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993). Others, however, remark that these adolescents show a social and behavioural adjustment as good as those that come from authoritative homes (Musitu y García, 2004; Wolfradt, Hempel, and Miles, 2003). Therefore it is possible that these results are modulated somehow by the specific culture where researches are conducted.

Finally, variables such as the family history on behavioural problems have been also studied in relation to antisocial and violent behaviour in adolescence. It has been observed that, as a matter of fact, there is an association through the modeling effect: the parents pass on their behaviour to the children (McCord, 1999) and even the older siblings onto the younger ones. The fact that an older sibling shows behavioural adjustment problems is considered a risk factor for the future misbehaviour implication of the youngest (Slomkowski, Rende, Conger, Simona, and Conger, 2001).

4.3. School Factors

The school is another fundamental socialization context for the individual together with the family, and it is considered as an institution intended to prepare individuals for life and adulthood. According to this, Feagans and Bartsch, (1993) maintain that schooling should guide the student in order to: (a) become an intellectually reflexive individual, (b) be ready to compromise in the working world, (c) fulfill his/her duties as a citizen, (d) form his/herself as a compromised ethical individual, and (e) become or carry on being a physically and psychologically healthy individual. The relevance of this context can be found in two principal aspects: on one hand, as it has already being mentioned, its important role in the socialization process and, on the other, the fact that adolescents are integrated in the school in new social groups and experiment relationships with other adults, such as the teachers. Some authors such as Thornberry (1996) have pointed out that the link the adolescent holds with the family and the school contexts is one of the most relevant predictors in the implication in antisocial behaviours, since parents and teachers can exert a big influence in the orientation towards the social norms.

It has been observed that some intrinsic characteristics of the educational centers can favor the development of violent behaviours in the schools, such as, for example, the overcrowding of students in the classroom, the lack of clear behavioural regulations for the students and the authoritarian teacher orientation *versus* the democratic one (Henry, et al., 2000). But as well as this general factors of the education settings, there are other more specific facts in the classroom management related to the student's behavioural problems. Cava and Musitu (2002) point out the following:

- Carrying out highly competitive activities amongst students.
- The isolation and social rejection suffered by some students.
- The tolerance and the natural way in which violence and mistreatment situations are perceived by and amongst peers.

- The little importance given to learning interpersonal skills.
- The ignorance on how to solve conflicts in pacific ways.

In contrast, two important measures that should be applied to every day's life in the classroom in order to prevent behavioural problems are: the transmission of attitudes and values about democracy and citizenship by the teachers, and the creation of reflection moments with the students on the behavioural problems in the school. Another efficient way to favor coexistence is through activities named *cooperative learning*. The classroom dynamic is many times based on carrying out competitive activities and the emphasis fundamentally relies in the success of exams, in detriment of group activities or prizing of individual reflection. As outlined by Johnson and Johnson (1999), in the situations of cooperative learning, since the students interact directly with their peers, the understanding between them increases, as well as their effort to take the other person's place. This will lead the adolescent to develop his/her capacity to perceive and understand other people's feelings, allowing a change in the perception of the peers, which is the first step in order to achieve the social integration of many students that suffer victimization problems (Slavin, 1986; Zahn, Kagan, and Widaman, 1986). In the activities of cooperative learning there is as well a positive interdependency amongst all students, since the success of the exercise depends on the joint participation and collaboration when carrying out the task.

These cooperative learning activities improve, moreover, the classroom environment and have clear positive repercussions in the adolescent's school adjustment. The term *classroom environment* refers to the subjective perceptions and meaning system shared in respect to a specific situation, which, in the case of the school, can be translated as the shared perceptions between teachers and students on the characteristics of the school and the class context (Trickett, Leone, Fink, and Braaten, 1993). Therefore, the classroom environment is a reflection of the positive or negative feelings regarding the social climate where they all interact (Peterson and Skiba, 2000). A positive classroom environment exists when students feel comfortable, valued and accepted in a climate based on support, mutual respect and trust (Moos, 1974). According to Yoneyama and Rigby (2006) the two principal elements that constitute this positive environment are: (1) the support and respect from teachers, and (2) enjoyment of relationships with peers in the class.

Indeed, prior research has shown that perceiving peers in the classroom as friends or colleagues and having positive and supportive interactions with teachers are both relevant protective factors in the development of misbehaviours and have been linked to adolescent psychosocial and behavioural adjustment at school (Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, Hogdson, and Rebus, 2005; Estévez, Herrero, et al., 2006). Quality friendships in the classroom may provide beneficial opportunities to learn values and attitudes, or in the acquisition of interpersonal skills such as conflict handle (Hartup, 1996; Laursen, 1995); however, by contrast, peers may also constitute a crucial influence in the development of behavioural problems (Dishion, Patterson, and Griesler, 1994; Vitaro, Brendgen, and Tremblay, 2000). Aggressive behaviour of some adolescents in the school is due to the fact that they have socialized with friends that engage as well in those behaviours (Barnow, Lucht, and Freyberger, 2005). They create and define their own codes and norms and reinforce by approving their own behaviour (Hymel, Wagner, and Butler, 1990). Moreover, when adolescents belong to one of these groups, they keep less positive interactions with other peers and thus reduce the possibilities of learning appropriate social abilities. This limited

opportunity makes that students with behavioural problems might risk carrying out using these strategies (Parker and Asher, 1987), since their peer group offers them the training base to express disruptive behaviours (Patterson, Reid, and Dishion, 1992).

School factors related to violence in adolescence

Poor Organization Of The Center
Lack Of Motivation From Teachers
Violence Tolerance
Negative Environment In The Classroom
Friends With Problem Behaviour
Negative Teacher-Student Relationship
Social Rejection By Peers

In relation to the role carried out by teachers, recent studies have indicated that when teachers establish positive contacts with students, offering them individual attention, treating them with respect and giving support, aggressive behaviour in the classroom decreases. On the contrary, when teachers neglect students and treat them disrespectfully, they are promoting aggressiveness in the class (Meehan, Hughes, and Cavell, 2003; Reddy, Rhodes, and Mulhall, 2003). Therefore, teachers contribute in a very special way to both perception of social climate in the classroom by students and students' behaviour, since negative teacher-student interactions adversely affect students' well-being and contribute to the escalating of violence in schools (Blankemeyer et al., 2002; Estévez, Murgui, Musitu, and Moreno, in press; Murray and Murray, 2004).

Finally, another school factor that has been associated with the implication in behavioural problems in adolescence is social acceptance by peers. Research on peer rejection has traditionally focused precisely on the high rates of violence that rejected students show (Bierman, Smoot, and Aumiller, 1993). However, other studies suggest that not all rejected students are violent and that not all violent students are rejected by their peers (French, 1988; Graham and Juvonen, 2002). Rejected students seem to be, therefore, a heterogeneous group in which at least two subgroups have been identified: *aggressive* rejected and *non-aggressive* rejected (Harrist, Zaia, Bates, Dodge, and Pettit, 1997). Approximately 40 to 50% of rejected students show a violent behaviour profile (Astor, Pitner, Benbenishty, and Meyer, 2002; Parkhurst and Asher, 1992) while the other half are passive and shy and do not exhibit aggressiveness at school (Cillesen, van Ijzendoom, van Lieshout, and Hartup, 1992; Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker, 1998; Verschueren and Marcoen, 2002). Does violent behaviour leads them to isolation and social rejection or does their rejected status predispose them to use violence against others? In any case it is a matter of related factors.

4.4. Social Factors

In the adolescent period, it is not only fundamental to take into account the socialization elements in the family and the school, but it is essential as well to consider the influence of cultural and social communication instruments in the socialization process. Both the most

traditional communication channels such as the press, the cinema and the television, and the new ones such as the Internet or videogames, reflect somehow cultural models and values of society. Therefore, in this information society, mass media exert a crucial socialization function and fulfill a very important role in the transmission of social contents (values, believes and attitudes), particularly during childhood and adolescence. The present world, for our adolescents, is, in this sense, very complex and dizzy: they have been born and they socialize in a society immersed in images and screens. According to Grisolía (1998), the bombing of images can eventually cause anxiety and a state of shock that together with the increasing intensity of some scenes, may lead to fascination for what has been watched, as it could happen with violence scenes.

Television has been one of the researchers' main focuses of interest when trying to understand violent behaviour of children and adolescents. In this field there is a general consensus that points out how violence on television programs can cause harmful effects in any type of audience, especially when they are children and adolescents. The Social Learning Theory by Bandura provides with an explanation for this fact when underlining that an important part of the learning process is not only carried out through the observation of real life models but also through *images* and *words* (Bandura, 1976). In relation to violence, it is obvious that television and cinema are full of violent images and vocabulary, which are used by fiction characters as a regular way to achieve their aims. For example, according to a classic study in this domain, carried out in EEUU, the *National Television Violence Study* (Federman, 1997), it was estimated that over 50% (between 58 and 61%) of TV programs contained violent scenes. Only 4% of these violent programs raised a topic against violence. These figures repeat themselves in the studies of other countries such as Spain (Bercedo et al., 2005; Clemente, 1998) and in more recent researches in the United States (Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh, 2004; Rideout, Roberts, and Foehr, 2005).

The main debate on this topic has been around the direct link between TV violence and the real life one. On one hand, the general agreement is clear: some violent behaviours in real life (in most of which children and adolescents are involved) are inspired in films, TV series and cartoons. In this sense, Huessman (1998) concluded in his longitudinal study that there is a significant relationship between watching a lot of television during early ages (round 8 years) and the subsequent implication in violent behaviours during adolescence and adulthood. Nevertheless, on the other hand, no rigorous researcher would defend that the cause of violence in real life is violence shown on TV. Thus, nowadays is commonly accepted that this relation is not direct and that the exposure to violent scenes does not affect all the spectators in the same way. Neither all violent contents have the same influence potential. From the social learning theory perspective, certain characteristics of the violent scenes have been identified as variables that imply a higher risk of becoming imitation models for children and adolescents: the scenes are played by attractive characters with an apparent justification for their behaviours; the settings are realistic; the main character is rewarded for his/her violent acts; conventional weapons are used; the action performed by the character has no observable negative consequences (such as the harm inflicted to the victim); and many scenes are developed in a humorous environment (Donnerstein, 1998). We are talking, therefore, as this author remarks, about an "embellished and clean" violence.

On many occasions, the heroes tend to be just the most aggressive and insolent characters and the ones usually challenging the social established rules in order to defend themselves. This attitude transferred to the classroom is related to the rebelliousness of many students

towards the teacher and the school norms, with the purpose of achieving prestige and popularity amongst peers (Rodríguez, 2004). Other effects of the audiovisual exposition to violence, in addition to learning attitudes and behaviours, are the cognitive and emotional unawareness of the audience towards violence itself and suffering of victims, as well as the increasingly fearful perception of becoming the victim of a violent act (Donnerstein, 1998).

Risk factors related to the presence of violence in the cinema and TV

Attractive Characters
Justified Violence
Realistic Settings
Rewarded Violence
Use Of Conventional Weapons
Absence Of Negative Consequences
Humorous Context

This fear is observed in many students who do not give away the name of their bullies and avoid isolated places in the school, or who do not offer help to their victimized peers, just because they fear possible reprisals or becoming the target of harassment and violence.

Nowadays, in addition to the fundamental importance of television in adolescents' life, Internet already constitutes the basic social and interpersonal communication channel, and videogames the entertainment space. Regarding violent videogames (for example, *Mortal Kombat* o *Resident Evil*), it is important to ask oneself what happens with the «role-playing» of violence. The answer to this question would proportionate interesting information since, in contrast with the mere visualization of violence on TV, a further step is taken in videogames: the player assumes the role of virtual aggressor. In this sense, it is worth underlining the contribution of a recent study pointing out that it was much more likely for a child to report a preference for violent videogames than for violent television or violence on the Internet (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, and Baumgardner, 2004). It could be assumed, therefore, that violent videogames may be more harmful than violent television and movies because they are interactive, very engrossing and require the player to feel identified with the aggressor.

Nevertheless the impact of videogame violence is just beginning to be examined in depth. Some studies have focused on analyzing consuming habits related to these games. For example, a recent study carried out in EEUU with 1,254 participants revealed that only 80 reported playing no electronic games in the previous 6 months. Of 1,126 children who listed frequently played game titles, almost half (48.8%) played at least one violent (mature-rated) game regularly and 33% of boys and 10.7% of girls played games nearly every day (Olson et al., 2007). Likewise, different studies have proven that boys use game consoles more often, spending approximately an hour a day playing, and that the average age for starting playing is around 8.8 years old (Bercedo et al., 2005; Riedout et al., 2005). Youngest adolescents are those who play the most: 9 hours a week 14 year olds and 2 hours a week 18 years old (Anderson and Dill, 2000; Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh, 2004).

Regarding the possible consequences of the violence present at these videogames, different experimental studies with adolescents have documented that the use of these games can reduce prosocial motivations and promote exploitation of peers in future social interactions, due probably to the development of a hostile causal attribution bias (Kirsh, 1998;

Sheese and Graziano, 2005). It has been observed as well that playing these kind of videogames, is directly related to hostile and aggressive behaviour in laboratory (short term) and to delinquent and violent behaviour (long term) (Anderson and Dill, 2000; Ballard and Rose, 1995; Kuntsche, 2004; Olson et al., 2007; Wiegman y van Schie, 1998). Against the argument of defenders who claim that videogames can work as a catharsis or "safety valve" for certain aggressive impulses, these studies indicate that the virtual practice of violence is associated with a higher practice of real violence.

Finally, our understanding on the impact of exposure to violent content on the Internet is an uncharted territory (Montgomery, 2000; Tarpley, 2001), although is easy to understand that its impact may be very similar to that exerted by television on one hand, and videogames on the other. The reason being that in the Internet one can find many real violent scenes such as tortures, gender violence and violent sex (pedophilia, Sand M, etc.) and, at the same time, it is also a leisure and virtual game tool. On top of this, there are other risks associated with its special characteristics: easy access, anonymity guaranteed, and difficulty for parents to supervise Web pages logged in by children.

It is important to emphasize that conclusions from studies up to the present time provide with enough data to seriously consider the non beneficial influence of current mass media on children and adolescent adjustment. Therefore it is fundamental that all socialization agents are implied in the commitment of educating youngsters so they do not passively accept any audiovisual content. We should all assume our responsibility in this task: parents and the school from the educational prevention side, mainly related to the critical analysis of audiovisual contents, as well as the reasoned control of its use; politicians and the audiovisual industry, from the respect of pacific and cooperative values that are somehow against the interest of certain groups that foster and nourish the existence of violence in the mass media. It would be convenient to carry on with the idea that screens are not a loyal reflection or an opened window to reality, but a discourse on reality, a slanted way of reflecting it. This, together with the recreational characteristics that most of these activities imply -TV, Internet and videogames- have a remarkable and direct influence on violence in the schools. Many children and adolescents, because of mass media influence, perceive violence naturally, are 'immune' to other people's grief, and have problems related to the lack of empathy. This fact clearly blocks any type of measure carried out to prevent violence, not only in the school context, but also in any other scenes of social life in which children and adolescents take part.

5. PRACTICES FOR INTERVENTION

The last section of this chapter will focus on the main school violence intervention strategies. Since these behavioural problems take place in a particular context, the school, it seems obvious that interventions need to focus not just only on individuals, but also on the system, as it will be discussed hereinafter. Practices for intervention can be generally divided in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies. In the *primary prevention* sphere, we find the strategies designed to prevent the problem from occurring before signs of the disorder appear (Meyers and Nastasi, 1999). This kind of intervention includes the participation of all the students, as well as of all the school staff and it seems to be the best choice in order to carry out a really successful prevention (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaundry, and Samples, 1998;

Grossman et al., 1997; Olweus, 1993). The main objective of these interventions is to modify the school environment by improving peer relations and promoting prosocial behaviours. Many of these programs include as well training for teachers and procedures to motivate parental involvement.

These interventions are based on the conception of *school* as a general coexistence system that is necessary to boost in order to facilitate positive relations and impede the negative ones, by involving all the members of the educational community in this process, and including the families. The existence of relational channels between parents and teachers are important in this sense, such as informal meetings and debate forums in the school that enable the discussion and the negotiation of a common educational criterion, where parents can participate actively, express their opinions and debate on behavioural and integration problems that might arise in the education centers. Moreover, all interventions aimed at preventing violent behaviours at school and at promoting coexistence and psychosocial wellbeing in students, should include, as key elements, the zero tolerance of bullying amongst peers and the need to socially integrate all students in the classroom. In this sense and in order to prevent and minimize violent behaviours in the schools, it would be necessary to: adopt a non-violent style to display emotions and disagreements and to solve school conflicts; develop a non-violence culture through the explicit rejection of any behaviour that provokes victimization; and break the "silent conspiracy" that is usually established around this problem. Other recommendations proposed by Olweus (1991), Rué (1997) and Boyle (2005) are summarized in the following table:

Recommended strategies to prevent school violence from the organizational context

-Favour the students' identification with the school and increase their participation when taking decisions in a democratic way
-Create a good environment in the school, a place where students feel accepted as individuals and have positive adult role models.
-Include the education on values and activities designed to develop social and personal abilities from a democratic and inclusive approach.
-Create and define a student code of conduct that makes sense for the students and that can be discussed with them.

Teachers' commitment is crucial to put these strategies into practice, as well as it is the role they play in preventing violence in the schools. Also, teachers' training, both through short courses and/or continuous education at school, is a key aspect to improve coexistence. This training should include an overview of the risk and protective factors related to violent behaviour in childhood and adolescence, as well as on how to handle and solve conflictive situations that might arise within the students. This kind of intervention is usually carried out in the educational centers, so all the teachers belonging to the same school can receive the same knowledge tools. The fact of receiving the same training and exchanging points of view during staff meetings favors consensus when decisions are taken, which will translate into a better school coexistence. Generally speaking, these trainings, in addition of supplying theoretical and practical information for teachers, can be used to request the development of a plan or program to deal with school violence, which will entitle an in-depth reflection on the

specific problems in the schools, as well as on how to carry out preventive and intervention tasks.

Together with the mentioned proposals, there are other concrete strategies that can be applied to the specific context of the classroom with the aim of preventing behavioural problems amongst students. An efficient way of favoring coexistence in the classroom, which is as well considered as an important didactic measure, is the cooperative learning that was already mentioned in the section on risk and protective school factors. The students need to learn to cooperate, since cooperation is a basic skill and a fundamental requirement to build a society without violence. In a cooperative situation people try to obtain results that are beneficial for themselves and for the rest of members of the group, which contrasts with competitive learning, in which each person works against the others to reach individualist objectives (Jonhson, Jonson, and Holubec, 1998). In addition to the cooperative learning technique, Casamayor (1999) proposes other basic principles for a pacific pedagogy in the classroom: talking the problems over, learning constructive strategies to solve conflicts, developing self-confidence and self-regulation, establishment of norms in a framework of participative democracy, promotion of empathy and of non-violent confrontation techniques, and comprehension of the violent behaviour. The following table gives a summary of other strategies recommended by these authors to put into practice in the classroom.

Recommended strategies to prevent school violence from the classroom context

-Give more responsibilities to the students, for example in the mediation between peers in order to solve conflicts.
-Involve students in cooperative and non-violent conflict resolution activities.
-Periodically introduce social reflection elements such as debates on conflicts and problems in the class, and openly discuss them with the group.

The setting off of all these efforts entails an important resources package for the adolescents, both personal and social, which is the best way of preventing social conflicts in the educational centers. Moreover, these resources have a clear and direct repercussion in coexistence and quality of education, as well as in the personal and professional satisfaction of teacher staff; and on the whole, they are very useful in the student's everyday life. The benefits of these activities reside in the fact that they promote relevant aspects such as the choice of alternative solutions rather than the use of violence, the evaluation of the consequences of violence for students, the joint taking of decisions amongst members of the classroom, and group thinking. These positive strategies favor the development of a healthy environment, whereas on the contrary, the adoption of strictly penalizing measures such as severe punishments and expelling from school, have proven to be very inadequate ways of facing violence in the schools. As Smith and colleagues (1999) have explained, the reason behind this is that these strategies do not solve the base problem nor prevent future conflicts.

Up to now, the main strategies proposed for a primary intervention of the violent and disruptive behaviours in the educational centers have been outlined, however, sometimes it seems relevant to adopt other strategies when traces of the problem are detected or when the problem has already been established. In this case we are referring to secondary and tertiary prevention, respectively. More specifically, *secondary prevention* implies strategies designed for individuals exhibiting initial signs of the disorder, in order to prevent the development of

more severe problems (Meyers and Nastasi, 1999). In the case of victims, as remarked by Boyle (2005), some of these things can be: damaged or missing belongings, unexplained cuts, bruises or other injuries, fearfulness of going to or avoidance of school, loss of interest in school work, decrease in academic performance, somatic complaints such as headaches and stomach aches, depressive symptoms, anxiety and passivity. In these cases, once the problem and the agents involved have been detected, it might be necessary to develop tertiary prevention strategies.

Tertiary prevention strategies are those focused on individuals with an established problem and are designed to remediate that problem, decrease the duration and minimize the negative effects (Meyers and Nastasi, 1999). These measures are therefore adopted with those students that have already been identified as victims or aggressors. On the one hand, with respect to victims, the first step of the intervention usually lies in ensuring their safety in the educational centre. In parallel to this punctual action, victims should get psychological support so they can express their emotions regarding the bullying situation and thus minimize the arousal of possible depressive and anxious symptoms (Boyle, 2005). Victims of school violence also need training in the following aspects: how to deal with new attacks from bullies, how to assertively answer to their peers, how to avoid dangerous situations and how to ask for help. Therefore, the training in social skills and assertiveness is a key element in this instance (Yung and Hammond, 1998).

On the other hand, interventions with violent students should cover two relevant areas: the supervision of the aggressive behaviour and the development of an appropriate social behaviour. In some occasions it will be necessary to carry out punctual punitive measures with aggressors, although any intervention aimed at solving long-term school violence must take re-education into consideration, and not only punishment. That is why it is fundamental that aggressors understand why their behaviour is unacceptable and be given the necessary tools to develop alternative behaviours. In order to achieve this, specific programs on problem-solving strategies, self-control techniques, as well as measures to develop empathic abilities, can be very useful (Boyle, 2005; Lochman, Dunn, and Klimes-Dougan, 1993).

Nevertheless, as it has already been pointed out, if interventions exclusively focus on 'problematic' students, we will be overlooking other relevant contextual factors for the explanation of behavioural problems. An effective intervention strategy should pay attention to those environments and change the nature of social relations established within. This perspective implies a more proactive and preventive approach to the problem of violence at school which is, at the same time, more coherent with both the theoretical and empirical knowledge of childr and adolescent behaviour, mentioned above. These findings emphasize that child behaviour is closely linked to particular characteristics of the immediate social environment and, especially, to family and school environments, so that both contexts should be equally involved in establishing alternatives and solutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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