

The Right to be Young in the Argentinian Press

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ABSTRACT – The Right to be Young in the Argentinian Press. This paper analyzes the main characteristics of the discursive practices of the media coverage with respect to the phenomenon of violence in schools and its relation to the representation of the young. This work attempts to clarify the challenges that the visibilization of the young as subjects of rights presents. The sample is made up of three thousand five hundred and eighty-one articles of newspapers from La Plata city between 1993 and 2011. It is a qualitative analysis from the socio-educational discourse analysis perspective. The objective of this work is to consider and discuss how the press –through its implicit meanings – shows certain subjects as threatening.

Keywords: Young. School. Mass Media. Rights. Violence.

RESUMEN – El Derecho a ser Joven desde la Prensa Argentina. El artículo analiza las principales características de las prácticas discursivas de la mediatización del fenómeno de las violencias en las escuelas y su relación con la representación de las juventudes. Se busca clarificar los desafíos de la visibilización de los jóvenes como sujetos de derecho. Se basa en el análisis cualitativo de una muestra de tres mil quinientas ochenta y una notas de los diarios de la ciudad de La Plata, en el período 1993-2011. El método utilizado fue el análisis socioeducativo del discurso. Esta investigación amplía la base empírica con la que pensar y discutir cómo a través de los sentidos implícitos en las notas periodísticas se construyen ciertos sujetos como amenazantes.

Palabras-clave: Jóvenes. Escuela. Medios de Comunicación. Derechos. Violencia.

Typifications of Violence

The media coverage concerning young people is a relevant object of research in contemporary social sciences. At the same time that mass media reproduce the predominant institutional relationships, they create and reinforce a *moral panic* in society against those individuals who are seen as a threat to the hegemonic values and lifestyles (Hall; Critcher; Jefferson; Clarke; Roberts, 1979). Moral panic constitutes an ideological strategy related to the larger process of hegemony production that operates in everyday discourse as an advanced system of warnings.

For Birmingham School, the generalized alarm of the English society was linked mainly to the practices and patterns of consumption of the youth-subcultures that gathered marginalized sectors. These groups challenged the institutions and denounced the mass media because of their defense of the dominant culture values and their public calls for a repressive eradication of the social *threats*. The public appeared to be sensitive to these media interpretations riddled with sensationalism, legitimizing, thus, the criminalizing discourse.

From this perspective, the official discourse about the *juvenile delinquency* was two-fold, mutually reinforcing each other. One aspect showed popular images of dissatisfied young people as a sign of an equal breaking point of social homogeneity for workers, punk rockers or gangs. The other aspect constructed specific hegemonic discourses in which young people were defined beforehand as a problem. These two reasons acted as the justification for the demand of more social control and the implementation of distributive policies based on discretionary criteria of cultural and social singularization and differentiation grounded on the market logic. The main argument stated that only a coercive control policy could effectively manage the noticeable social and moral breakdown (Hall; Critcher; Jefferson; Clarke; Roberts, 1979).

In the Latin American context, some researchers (Dastres, 2002; Dastres; Muzzopappa, 2003, Dastres; Muzzopappa; Sáez; Spencer, 2005) argue that mass media play a certain role concerning citizen security. According to the contents they include, the processing of information they do, and how and with what frequency they present the news, they induce a perception of risk that may be exaggerated.

When mass media show a scenario of violence, they fall into the stigmatization of young people, considering them as troublemakers (Rey, 2005; Cerbino, 2012). Moreover, mass media contribute to the construction of meanings about the criminalization of this age group (Núñez, 2007; Saintout, 2009). In this regard, the studies carried out by the Observatorio de Jóvenes, Comunicación y Medios (Observatory of Young people, Communication and Mass Media) from National University of La Plata in 2012 verified the existence of a series of cases that determined the emergence of the young in the media. As victims or offenders, the adolescents are presented in the press associated to cases of violence. This relation between youth and violence spotlights the need

to conduct research projects about the discourse processing of meanings associated to young people in order to generate reflexive processes and intervention practices that confront the penalizing hegemonic sense.

Therefore, this article analyzes the mass media discourses on violences at schools and their relation with the implicit representations of youth. This work characterizes, from a socio-educational perspective, the discursive practices of the written press in La Plata city (Argentina), with regard to the phenomenon of violence at school in the period 1993-2011. The methodological approach was qualitative with a purposive sampling: the criterion of selection used was to choose those discursive practices that provided relevant information in relation to the objectives of the study. The data analysis was carried out according to the socio-educational discourse analysis (Martín Criado, 2014). To that end, in the first place, a quantification of the gathered journalistic articles was made. This was a necessary step in order to characterize and analyze which situations at school were typified as violent, their continuities and ruptures. The information was organized into four periods based on the occurrence of relevant events in the educational and communicational field at national and provincial (Buenos Aires) level: the first interval extended from 1993 to 1997, the second one was 1998-2003, the third period covered 2004-2007 and, finally, the fourth one, from 2008 to 2011.

The starting point was 1993 with the enactment of the Federal Law of Education 24.195 (Argentina, 1993). By 1997, this law began to be implemented in Buenos Aires Province with the addition of eighth grade to the primary cycle.

The Massacre of Carmen de Patagones – as it was called by the mass media – on 28th September 2004, occurred in the Educational Institute 202 “Islas Malvinas” of Carmen de Patagones town, located in the southwest of Buenos Aires Province (Argentina). Rafael Solich, a student of that school, shot his classmates causing three fatalities and five casualties. This event became a milestone and it was, for La Plata press, the main reference point when mentioning violence at schools. Within the sample, it was the only case in which the mass media made a media coverage during three consecutive years, i.e., 2004, 2005 and 2006.

In 2008, during the first office of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2011), an intensification of an alternative communication policy, initiated by Néstor Kirchner office (2003-2007), took place. The legal framework of this policy was primarily the Executive Decree 527/05 of May 2005, and the Law of Audiovisual Communication (Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual) in 2009 (Argentina, 2009). This latter law – enacted on 10th October 2009 by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner – replaced the former Broadcasting Law 22.285 (Ley de Radiodifusión) (Argentina, 1980), enacted in 1980 by the military dictatorship – the so-called National Reorganizing Process – being in force since then. Moreover, it is worth noting that on 3rd March 2008, a new newspaper in La Plata city, under the name of *Diagonales*, was published, having

an editorial line different from those associated to the graphic media in La Plata.

The Youth in the Discursive Practices about Violences at Schools

This study examines actions of designation and classification in order to identify certain ways of youth visibilization at school. The press articles, conceived as spaces of representation, lead to a certain way of considering the young. The place given to them in the discourses of the press under analysis is far from highlighting their creative aspects or pointing out the contributions of youth to the social dynamics. The meanings that emerge build up stereotyped youth profiles which hinder the construction of recognition.

During the four periods studied with respect to the press coverage about violences at school in La Plata newspapers, youth is assumed as a group at risk instead of conceiving it as a subject of rights. That approach considers young people as a problem to be solved and not as a potentiality to be developed. The following examples illustrate this perspective:

I see young people alone, like helpless people [...] (La Violencia..., 1993b).

[...] young people at risk [...] the current culture, riddled with consumerism, competitiveness, and extreme individualism, stimulates behaviors that, when socially extended, become worrisome and harmful. It is paradoxical. There is a discredit of education and work as means of social mobility among middle class young people while now adolescents become a sort of avengers. There is a cultural crisis and the greater fault is the lack of care for the youth (Violencia..., 1993).

How will we react? The data we have been showing in this series of articles are alarming: violence, addictions and offenses have increased as well as the involvement of young people in them at earlier ages. These are signs of chaos (La Violencia..., 1993a).

Young people are unprotected [...] (La Difícil..., 1996).

Minor children from La Plata at high risk [...] (Investigan..., 2003).

In recent times, episodes of violence at schools have been registered. The methodology applied should be consistent with the age stage the adolescents are passing through because they lack a lot of resources to be able to reflect upon their self-knowledge and self-care (Capacitan..., 2003).

The Justice investigates the linkage between drug trafficking and minor children at risk [...] (La Droga..., 2004).

Some of the expressions used for denoting young people as a group at risk are the following: *precocious, helpless, fragile, unprotected, at risk, a sort of avengers, the face of chaos*.

It is worth mentioning the counterpoint between two different approaches in the media coverage in terms of their grounds and implications, namely: i) the one that considers the young as a risk, and ii) the

other that considers the young as subjects of rights. The *risk approach* examines as precarious the structural situation in which new generations grow up and, therefore, shows the presence of large sectors of out-cast youth. Nevertheless, this approach does not mention that young people are citizens having inalienable rights. This perspective led to many discursive practices to be tangled in the development of initiatives pursuing the improvement of the access to education; initiatives based, generally, on patronizing criteria (Rodríguez, 2011).

Assuming the limitations of the risk approach and based on – to a large extent – the strategies implemented for children and adolescents since the approval of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, a new approach started to be developed vigorously which considered young people as subjects of rights. From this perspective, and without disregarding the severe and noticeable situations of risk faced by young people, it is assumed that the young are citizens and have, in consequence, rights that the society and the State should endorse, ensuring their extended and effective enforcement at all levels. In other words, the access to education should not be understood as a gift or a favor of the State towards young people but as a right to be assured. This change of paradigm is highly relevant since now; the juvenile modes may be put into debate.

In this respect, referring to the national press, the Observatory of Young People, Communication and Mass Media mentions some aspects associated to the visibilization of the young as a group of risk in the discursive practices:

[...] the media configurations of young people happen synchronously with other ones, produced by the criminal control agencies – Justice and security forces – that act violently on and against young people, replicating the paradigm of the Patronato (Child Welfare Agency) which was the legal and political framework of the State guardianship during most of the twentieth century. Although this paradigm has recently started to move towards the promotion of rights, it has not got a significant coverage in mass media (Observatorio de Jóvenes Comunicación y Medios, 2013, p. 12-13).

In this article, the youth is considered a historical condition socio-culturally constructed, and not a merely biological category. In the symbolic struggle for defining what the young are and the legitimate modes of being young, mass media hold a relevant position. A recent research work (Kaplan; Krotch; Orce, 2012) proved – with thorough arguments – that Western modern history has related social hazard to young people. This argument is consistent with the description made by Robert Muchembled (2010) in his book *Una historia de la violencia* (A history of violence) in which he analyzes the aggressive behavior in Western Europe from the thirteenth century up to the present day. Muchembled points out that the word *violence* appeared for the first time at the beginning of the thirteenth century, derived from Latin *vis* that means *force*,

vigor, and represents a human being with an irascible and brutal temperament. The term *violence* would have been coined to describe the most terrible expressions of the vigor associated to men. Many theories and studies have dealt with its characterization. The Western world invents the adolescence by means of a symbolic tutelage on an age group considered turbulent and insubordinate in the eyes of the ruling power. The concern about the incapacity to control young people's energies emerges as a background fear (Kaplan; Krotch; Orce, 2012).

In accordance with these perspectives, this article attempts to reflect – from a socio-historical and pedagogical approach – upon the dual social discourse referred to the young; a category that needs to be historicized.

The School Identity: the relation between young people and school

The young burst out in the contemporary Latin American public scene by the student movements at the end of the sixties. This social actor started to be visualized as a student who is associated to fear, it was conceived as a *rebel without a cause* because of his/her eagerness for participating as a political actor (Reguillo, 2000). This has a correlation with the mediatization of the student resistances observed in the corpus under study, in which young people are not considered as subjects of rights but according to the inconveniences that they generate:

Students from the Normal School 1 blocked roads... (Podrían..., 2011).

From the first period under analysis onwards, media coverage showed the relation between young people and school as deteriorated, as it can be seen in the following examples:

The current adolescents have the same difficulties as the former ones because of the basic characteristics of this age group. Nevertheless, not everything is the same. The questions that caused distress to the young in other times differ significantly from the current ones. Disregarding an analysis of the differential aspects between periods, we will focus on the questionings at school (¿Para Qué?..., 1994).

What it is learnt at school, it is not visualized as useful; the relations between the systematized knowledge and their circumstances are not seen. This point of view is somehow significant since everyone knows the imperious need of bringing together curricular contents and the student reality (¿Para Qué?..., 1994).

The school is shown as a place where useless contents are taught; this is starting to appear as the difficult reality of the secondary schools located in La Plata city (La Difícil..., 1996).

Lilians Gómez Pittaluga, who is the Principal of the Secondary School 14, and teaches in the Liceo Víctor Mercante (Lyceum Victor Mercante), referred to the insecurities that students face, contributing to their lack of interest for education. These insecurities cause the increase of their distrust and the belief that what they learn at school is not useful. But

they do not have certainties about these ideas. So, what can be expected beyond school? (La Difícil..., 1996).

Students are described as *skeptics* and *frustrated*, or that they *only attend school to comply with the school timetable*, or as they were called in a media coverage, they are “nomad students” (Sentada..., 1996) because they do not find their place in the school space.

Young people do not believe in speeches, they follow models. It is time to incorporate the affection, releasing students from the totalitarianism of the reason and the selfishness of intellect. They need, essentially, to believe and be convinced of the usefulness of what they are learning for their future life [...] The National Education Survey proved that we are witnessing a secondary school which is not capable of giving responses to our current national reality (Crisis..., 1994).

Students expect that the school time gives them the basic rules of a shared ethics. The teaching of respect for individuals and ideas can only be carried out through testimonials (Crisis..., 1994).

Nowadays, students face their future with a high dose of skepticism. The frustration of thousand of graduates, the plethora of professionals in the most popular professions, the lack of work opportunities in discipline areas recently created, the inadequacy of the highly qualified labor force requirements within the productive system, particularly industry and agriculture, they all are the breeding ground of a generalized perplexity concerning the future and their possibilities of professional and human fulfillment (Reflexiones..., 1994).

It is not surprising, therefore, that boys and girls do not have much to celebrate on the Student Day, except for the natural joy, typical of their age. The situation is worsened by social dualism, the reduction of work possibilities and the intensification of school insulation from the real world. Today students live the future as threatening rather than as an exciting adventure with respect to a future full of possibilities (Reflexiones..., 1994).

Apathy and lack of interest were present in many of the answers in which students assured that the only thing that mattered was to pass to the next grade; others, by contrast, showed a more positive position related to the possibility of developing a project and criticized those who came to school to waste time, and who were there just because they were obliged to go to school (La Difícil..., 1996).

These representations of young people in the media discourse are associated not only with their little interest in school but also with their opposition to the scholar culture, students are described as *rule-breaking* in opposition to those *pure, honest* and *responsible*:

A survey confirms the poor written productions of students [...] a generalized disdain towards any prescriptive rules, as they were not aimed at easing human communication and, moreover, as it could be achieved without a series of linguistic conventions accepted by society (Una Encuesta..., 1993).

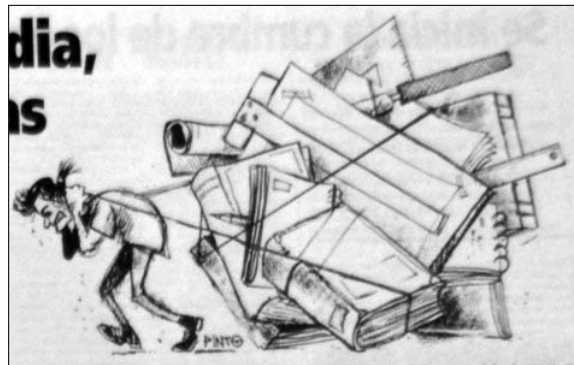
What an example for many of our young people who do not take seriously the tools the school provide at its different levels! (Escuela..., 1993).

What are they for? Adolescents versus books [...] (¿Para Qué?..., 1994).

Secondary students graduate without a defined profile and a basic humanistic education. They have a stereotyped personality made up of video clips and advertising jingles containing foreigner-centered messages that make them talk, dress, eat and, in the end, live in accordance with the consumerist philosophy and the trendy frivolity; they are stimulated to be transgressors without warning them that, in our current society, transgressing implies to be virgin, honest and responsible (La Educación..., 1995).

In some cases, caricatures are used (Figure 1 and Figure 2) to emphasize this position, exacerbating the stigmatization of certain students. The caricatures introduced below focus on the weight books have in young people lives.

Figure 1



Source: *Hoy* (08 Jul 1994).

Figure 2



Source: *Hoy* (26 June 1977).

Media discourses do not refer to the infringed right to education. They do not present an analysis about the way in which knowledge transfer is produced, neither the means used to promote meaningful educational trajectories. Instead, they keep showing individual

difficulties such as those in the use of language (difficulties in writing, lack of reading habits, presence of slang language, among others). The fact that the focus is put on the processes of cultural appropriation and transmission is related to the way in which knowledge construction is promoted. In agreement with Edwards (1995), knowledge is formed, on the one hand, by the use of school books and programs and, on the other, by a non-homogeneous set of practices performed by teachers and students where the evaluation, promotion and expectations of the actors involved are especially relevant. When the way in which knowledge is presented is unrelated to the educational trajectories of the students, their cultural reality clashes with the didactic objectives. Therefore, the student's singular and personal appropriation of knowledge is hindered. Undervaluing previous knowledges and experiences of the students or judging them by their social characteristics or learning difficulties leads to an external shaping of their subjectivity, affecting, thus, their performance at school (Kaplan, 2008). These statements regarding processes of culture appropriation are invisibilized by media discourses. The following are some examples of the media coverage:

About language, I do not want to talk since television and radio are the most eloquent proof of this rude, bad taste and coarse vocabulary that even little and young girls use. With what benefit? (La Educación..., 1993).

Nowadays, the difficulties in writing among students of primary and secondary school, and even at university level, are well known. Even though this process is framed on the general decline of education, there are some specific factors involved, such as the lack or non-existence of reading habits and the lack of practice (Una Encuesta..., 1993).

The ways in which young people and their educational trajectories are described (Terigi, 2009) do not contribute to visibilize their citizenship status. These ways are discursive practices which become doxa. In addition, on the Latin American context, high rates of young people dropped out early from the educational system. In this regard, Dussel (2004) claims that those young people, that are considered different, constitute a failure or a menace to the educational system because of the discursive association between equality and homogenization. This aspect is reproduced in the media discourse, not valuing similarly the ways in which young people relate to the scholar culture. If education is considered a right, strategies should be developed in order to take into account different educational trajectories.

The media construct a youth identity as deviant, dangerous and in crisis. According to the Observatory of Young people, Communication and Mass Media, "the young people become the enemy, the scapegoat of society. These discourses pose a relationship between society and the youth mediated by fear..." (Observatorio de Jóvenes, Comunicación y Medios, 2013, p. 20). The following are some examples in this regard:

The event of Patagones is not exclusive of a certain place. There are teenagers in crisis in any school (Entre El..., 2004).

The proposal is that teachers should be armed [...] what has been happening since the nineties and during this decade almost every year is that, in these events, there are teenagers involved... (Masacre..., 2006).

Now, the typification of violent young people is linked to the school space where the type of violent student starts to be formed. It is presented as challenging authority since 'they have crossed the line'... (Adolescentes..., 1993).

The students from La Plata are belligerent, with healthy skepticism on the best cases, and with youth nihilism on the worst. Teachers, parents and specialists observe a recent change in young people's behavior. This fact is perceived not only by middle-aged people but also by those who are too young to recognize former school dress codes and rules in relation to silence in corridors. Susana Machado García explains this reality by saying that 'challenge to authority is what shows a teenager crisis. They abandon their child interests in pursuit of their growth. Sometimes, they seem to be deft, each one with its own, watching TV, playing video games or sleeping endless naps' (Adolescentes, 1993).

'It is absolutely incredible', says an art professor who returned to deliver classes in 1991 after thirteen years of absence. 'Youth today think that they can really have many rights. It is not that they do not respect us, they do not respect adults. It used to be automatic. Now, there is a test mechanism working constantly. They take advantage of some teachers because they know they won't pay the price. We did that too, but there is no doubt that they have crossed the line' (Reflexiones..., 1994).

The school identity of the young – present in the media coverages under analysis – is linked to a deteriorated relationship with school and the scholar culture, expressed by challenging authority. Meaningful aspects of educational proposals and their relation to educational trajectories of the young are not visibilized.

Young People's Rules

From the first period under analysis onwards, the mediatization of the *violent young people-violent students* presents violence as a *code* that is growing:

Boys and girls create their own ghettos with their own rules. They expand their territory in La Plata city divided into three groups... (La Violencia..., 1993b).

Violence: Pintado stated that teenagers' attitudes regarding their personal issues are less and less solved through dialogue or agreements [...] (Reflexiones..., 1994).

According to the psychologist, youth has its own code of violence. For things to become normal (the average of what happens on a determined social group and historical moment), a whole process is needed (La Difícil..., 1996).

In the four periods studied, students typified as *violent young people-violent students* are those who misbehave at night parties, Olympic laps, graduation trips, Spring Day celebrations, etc. The following are some examples in this regard:

The civil servant stated that 'students committed the excesses characteristic of this kind of celebrations' but he did not give details about what the disturbances were. For that reason, Arquez explained that 'the police detained for questioning ten students of the fifth year of Colegio Nacional of La Plata city, whose parents have been already informed of these facts'. When being asked about the reasons why the intervention of the police included the anti-riot division and the use of rubber bullets, the civil servant said: 'I don't know, nothing was informed to me on this regard' (Reflexiones..., 1994).

Damages and rubber bullets in a student party... (Destrozados..., 1999).

Students of the fifth year of Colegio Nacional celebrated the Day of the Secondary Student. They went dancing and organized a street murga (band of street musicians). Some of them took a parasol from a bar, damaged an abandoned flower stall and hit some cars. They were shot by police men who were guarding them (Destrozados..., 1999).

The guides say they do not want to go with school groups because of the lack of interest for the landscape and the constants lacks of respect. This is mainly because they sleep late and then are sleepy or totally asleep in the tours. A counselor related that certain places are shown from far away or from the buses because of the possibility they could be damaged (Los Viajes..., 1999).

In this respect, the school preceptor stated that 'we understand that the Olympic lap has a long tradition, but this time students went too far; they broke tables, chairs and glasses. It was an act of vandalism (Los Maestros..., 1999).

Students of Colegio Nacional celebrated the Day of the Secondary Student and committed public disorder downtown (La Violencia, 1999).

Hooded young people broke into the school yesterday and damage furniture threatening teachers and students (Destrozados..., 1999).

According to Elias: "Most people of every society have at their disposal a broad range of expressions used to stigmatize other groups" (Elias, 1998, p. 96). When youth is presented as a risk, there are symbolic struggles involved regarding social classification and positioning within the social space, organized hierarchically. Without making visible their rights, youth is considered a problem to be solved. In addition, the *magic* effect of language on discourses enables to construct spaces of meaning with respect to youth, which are aimed at the adults' interests. Those spaces create representations that, far from integrate, widen the intergenerational gap.

Judicial Identity

Another important aspect regarding the way in which media discourses visibilize youth is the *importation* of terms from the legal or police vocabulary. For example, the use of the term *minor* to name young people when mentioned in a news report (Saez; Aducci; Urquiza, 2013). This term refers to a person who is underage and is accused of committing a felony. For that reason, its use in the social discourse has a pejo-

rative meaning reinforcing prejudices, stigmas and social inequalities. Thus, two different models of childhood and youth are constructed: children or young people, and minors. In addition, the introduction of judicial terminology is related to the solutions presented on the news regarding violence in the school space. This aspect is analyzed below.

According to their legal status, the term *minor* refers to young people in two ways: those who are underage and those who have not reached adults' reasonability. Young people "live in an undefined statutory situation, which is perceived as a moratorium" (Martuccelli, 2016, p. 161). Since the origins of the Argentinian school system, there is a connection between legal identity and educational identity. In Sarmiento discourses, this association constructed the teacher's authority establishing an age limit according to the civil code. Thus, adults keep power over the students, who did not have rights of their own and were subordinated to adults' authority.

By considering the young people as minors in relation to adults' reasonability, they become incomplete beings, because they are still growing up or are excessively passionate (Carli, 2012).

When the police is part of the news, many times police source is the only one mentioned. Therefore, the criminal code is presented as the mechanism that rules civic behaviors in the different social spheres. However, in school institutions, situations typified by this code are exceptional (Observatorio Argentino de Violencia en las Escuelas, 2011). And even in the cases that these situations occur, they should be considered within the scope of children and adolescents' rights.

Naming someone as *accused* or *detained* denotes a police logic. That is, school terms are not used to referred to school, its conflicts are not solved by school authorities, students are turned into minors, pedagogic interventions are replaced by detentions and schools no longer belong to school districts but to police jurisdictions.

The use of criminal vocabulary deeply transforms the collective viewpoint on childhood and on the period of transition to adult life. Indeed, social distinctions and taxonomies compare individuals and groups by symbolic distance or proximity, leading to the configuration of normalization parameters (Kaplan, 2012). According to Goffman (2001), being an adolescent is a stigmatizing category, that is, a category with an attribute considered intrinsic which is embarrassing and threatening. The symbolic characteristics assigned to adolescents' social identity, which become distinctive, are related to excesses. The symbolic effectiveness of this belief effect lies in assigning rebellion to the young people, turning it into a negative essential feature of this social group. The discourse and image of the subaltern youth as criminal have deep roots in our social matrix. In this regard, the Observatory of Young people, Communication and Mass Media states the following:

"Another important dimension to consider in relation to the process of construction of media reality is that the news reports which criminalize young people and their practices are police narratives de-

rived from some sort of old chapbooks. These publications were pioneers in the use of techniques to arouse readers' emotions" (Observatorio de Jóvenes, Comunicación y Medios, 2013, p. 20).

If we consider that violent events are always part of the social relations, and that school is one of the main places where people learn to live together and to connect to the world and learning from it, the school is still the bastion – even in the most unstructured historical moments of Argentina – from where to construct citizenship, exercise rights and assume responsibilities. All of this is possible within the frame of real teaching and learning practices, from which school may find solutions, and teach to search for them, from a participatory perspective, based on the democratic dialogue and in accordance with law.

The approaches that support the judicialization and criminalization of youth and childhood are in permanent debate, mainly when the category *student* is tackled. The suspicion cast over students contributes to their stigmatization, instead of offering an educational way-out based on inclusion; especially considering that, in unequal social contexts and from a criminalizing *doxa* viewpoint, the typification of *poor* is almost mechanically linked to *criminal* (Kaplan, 2011).

As the Observatory of Young people, Communication and Mass Media (2013, p. 16) points out: "The stigmatization that experienced the 'subversives' during the seventies is now present on boys and girls who wear caps and sport shoes. It is not by chance that these systematic practices of power abuse carried out by the security forces always involve poor young people, mainly boys, from the large urban conglomerates of our country".

There are not individuals or groups that are inferior or superior in essence. The belief in inferiority or the feelings of superiority are socially tied to the different positions of power. The discursive logic of the criminalizing matrix turns young people of socially disadvantaged sectors into a threat to us, into a group that breaks the law.

However, following Zaffaroni (2011), the punitive model operates with a logic of exclusion, because not only it does not settle the conflict, but it prevents or complicates its combination with other models that may solve it. Repressive sanctions do not guarantee the solution of conflicts; on the contrary, they tend to strain the relations between the actors involved. This situation generates institutional unrest making difficult the search for more effective mechanisms and more participatory strategies to solve problems (Zaffaroni, 2011; Kliksberg, 2009).

The punitive measure, considering its different methods and styles, is not an instrument that reduces the transgressions, crimes and sins that may exist or proliferate in a culture (Zerbino, 2010). The criminalizing *doxa* and the punitive measure disregard, by principle, the potential of schools and their actors to tackle pedagogically the violence that takes place there. In addition, the spectacularization on the broadcasting of those events (Brenner, 2009) prevents any reflection upon the complexity of the problem. On the press, the school institution is ousted

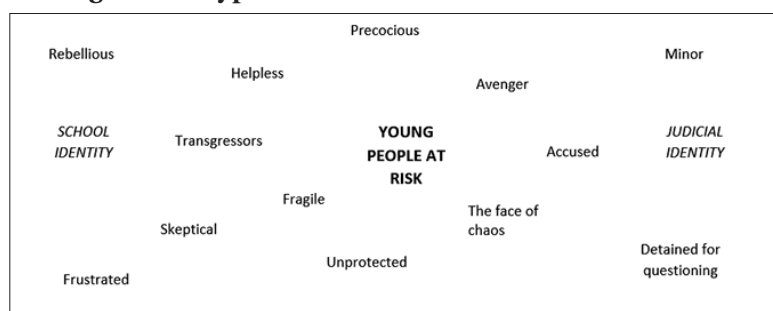
from its place of authority leading to a strong presence of the legal and police fields in the search for solutions.

Final Notes

Media coverages resort to the approach of young people as a threat. Based on the stereotypes assigned to this age group, they propose a vigilance approach of their behaviors and the corresponding punishments that inadequate behaviors should have.

Discursive practices regarding violence at school present youth as unprotected with respect to a school identity characterized by frustration, skepticism, rebellion and transgressions. A discursive operation connects these social actors to danger by terms linked to the legal identity of *minor*. The following graphic represents the chain of meaning present in the coverages:

Diagram 1 – Typification of Youth in the Media Discourse



Source: The author's production based on the research data.

In line with these analyses, some subjects are considered less capable of controlling their own representation on media coverages (Champagne, 1999). This aspect constitutes a vicious circle that gives little space to young people's discourse. As they are the most difficult subjects to listen to, other people talk about them more than the young do about themselves. Far from being helpful, journalists' discourse frequently creates a negative image. They contribute to the young's stigmatization, which is unintentional and resulting from the journalism field, spreading beyond the events that cause it.

As conclusion, it is worth mentioning that this research is relevant because it broadens the empirical base regarding the ways in which youth is presented in media discourse. It is important that mass media participate in the development of new sensitivities, addressing the young people as subjects of rights. Thus, they would contribute to renew their social commitment to a more fair and democratic society.

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