



## INTRODUCTION

MARYSE ESTERLE, CESDIP, UNIVERSITE D'ARTOIS-IUFM

The texts which feature in this special issue with two IJVS numbers have been taken from a research conference focusing on disruption and violence in schools. This conference was organized by Cécile Carra and Maryse Esterle<sup>1</sup> as part of the CRIMPREV program.

CRIMPREV is a coordination action deployed by a multidisciplinary consortium of 31 participants from 10 European countries, funded by the European Commission (PRCD-FP6). This project began in July 2006 and ended in July 2009<sup>2</sup>.

It was designed to produce comparative European added value, based on knowledge acquired in each national context and to identify factors (social, political, economic, legal, cultural) involved in the perceptions of crime, deviant behaviour, as well as examining the implications for delinquency prevention policies.

This project had four objectives:

- Producing knowledge added value systematically using comparisons within the European Union
- Disseminating the knowledge added value thus produced
- Developing a scientific interdisciplinary network
- Providing managers at various government levels with methodological expertise and guides for quantifying deviances and criminality, their perception and the assessment of public policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cécile Carra and Maryse Esterle are CESDIP researchers, university lecturer and researcher teachers at Université d'Artois-IUFM, members of the RECIFES education research team.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.crimprev.eu/germ> René Lévy, Research Director for CNRS, director of the European Group for Research into Normativeness - GERN (GDRE CNRS/Ministry for Justice/University of Versailles Saint-Quentin en Yvelines) and CESDIP researcher was responsible for the scientific coordination of the CRIMPREV project.

This project consisted of 5 themed workshops (WP, Work Packages) which addressed the various aspects of the call for papers:

- Deviant behaviour factors (WP 2)
- The criminalization process (WP 3)
- The perceptions of crime (WP 4)
- The links between illicit or socially deviant behaviour and organized crime (WP 5)
- Public prevention policies (WP 6).

An initial symposium enabled us to provide an overview of the state of knowledge in the different countries of the European Union and to discuss problems created by methodological comparison between the different countries. A final symposium held in June 2009 produced a statement of the added value resulting from coordinated action and established future prospects.

The texts presented here have been taken from thematic workshop 2 (WP2): «The factors of deviant behaviour»<sup>3</sup>. Five themes had been selected for the whole of the themed workshop:

- Crimes involving property
- Violence
- The use of illegal substances
- Disorders and delinquency associated with conflicts between social groups or community groups or between the latter and state authorities
- Disruption and violence in schools (covered here).

This 5th theme was the subject of a conference held in Paris from the 8th to the 10th January 2009. It brought together some fifteen researchers focusing on three major approaches:

---

<sup>3</sup> Responsible for this WP2: [Laurent Mucchielli](#) (Cesdip-CNRS), France et [Pieter Spierenburg](#) (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Holland)

## A REVIEW OF THE ISSUE AND OF THE PROCESSES IMPLEMENTED

**The speakers took stock** of the constructions of the object: how is deviance in the school environment defined in each country, what are the specificities, which changes are revealed by the analyses? How does the issue of violence in schools test a country's relationship with its young people (children included) and with its schools? What connects deviance with violence, public security and violence in schools?

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OBJECT IN EACH COUNTRY.

The most commonly used concepts have been identified and vary depending on every social context.

Three types of approaches and of correlations were investigated and included in the debate:

- Violence and delinquency (security)
- Violence and populations at risk (risk factors)
- Institutional/symbolic violence: approached through the context (the establishment and its environment, the school climate, the teacher/pupil, pupil/student interactions, the issue of authority, teacher / student / parent relations).

The methodologies used have been the subject of debate, in particular on the matter of collecting data from children or adolescents, on the limits of quantitative methodologies and the cross-referencing between quantitative and qualitative data.

## THE NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES CARRIED OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE

Each approach gives rise to potential actions depending on local or national issues. In this connection, the validity of international comparisons on the issue of violence was questioned.

Some policies are more directly focused on the more preventive or more coercive approaches and different partners are mobilized to this effect. The different papers have addressed the question of the links between the police, the courts, the educational sector and schools. They raise fundamental questions: should the school be opened or closed? Integration or exclusion? The context surrounding the development of these policies and/or these experiences allows us to understand the different guidelines selected according to the countries concerned.

The symposium was concluded by putting the various communications and exchanges into perspective along the three approaches mentioned above.

Different contributors have addressed the issues of violence and deviances from various viewpoints, while retaining the guidelines referred to above. It is obvious that the qualification of deviances and violence in schools and the treatment applied to pupils involved in these phenomena vary from one country to another, even when similar concepts exist.

In the first number, Carol Hayden emphasises the concept of bullying, widely used in Great Britain, and makes the connection between the behaviour of children and their socio-economic lifestyles. Marek Fuchs questions, in the case of Germany, the connection between the research methodologies and the validity of the results, with emphasis on the individual variables used to explain violence phenomena. Georges Steffgen presents, for Luxembourg, the existing quantitative data and an assessment of public policies applied on these issues. Magdalena Kohout-Diaz develops the concept of *sikana*, a form of harassment among students, and questions the predominance of certain public theories and policies in the Czech Republic, in the field of prevention of violence in schools.

The second number will be published on December, and Susana Figueiró also quotes bullying as part of analysis in Portugal, as well as the lack of discipline, and stresses the importance of acquiring greater in-depth knowledge on the impact made by social factors on the development of violence. Marie Verhoeven highlights four intelligibility models of violence in schools, which refer to different views of social action and of deviance in French-speaking Belgium; she contrasts them with public action in which it is relatively disconnected from research results. Yves Montoya questions the link between the massive expansion of education in France and the development of violence in schools, whose manifestations depend in part of the «establishment effect», against a strong mediatization of the phenomenon. Johan Declerck stresses the important place occupied by criminology in the analysis of violence in schools in Flemish Belgium, which is not without impact on the terms used to define criminology. The prevention

of violence in schools mobilizes a range of fields (education, teaching) and the author submits an original model, the «prevention pyramid». Ana Rodriguez Basanta undertakes an analysis of the changes affecting research work in Spain, from a representation of young people as a dangerous class in schools (work on harassment) to considering the impact of the social and educational environment on the development of violence in schools. Finally, Cécile Carra puts European trends in research on these issues into perspective and plots the routes followed in this complex and changing field of research.

We hope that, through this CRIMPREV programme workshop, we have been able to contribute to an enrichment and synthesis of knowledge on deviance and violence in schools, in conjunction with all the societies in which they take place and whose specific features explain and determine the prevention programmes put in place. The publication of its main contributions will make them known to all those, researchers, students, interested entities involved in public policy or experiments and who take an interest in these matters.

And now, happy reading...

Maryse Esterle

On behalf of Cécile Carra et Maryse Esterle,  
coordinators of the both special numbers.