

## School violence seen from the media and legislative power in Mexico

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Cómo citar : Zurita U.(2015). La violencia escolar desde los medios de comunicación y el poder legislativo en México. Revista Sophia. vol 11 (1) p 81-93

### Abstract

The article examines some of the main concepts and attitudes about violence in Mexican schools recently proposed by two actors external to the education system whose importance is indisputable: the media and the legislature power. These views are addressed through a content analysis of newspapers news nationwide, as well as laws existing in eleven entities, and a documental review of literature, taking into account the conceptualizations, proposals and relevant implications for the educational system and schools. This analysis is essential given the deep scope of functions that these two actors perform in the country and, above all, by the peculiar way they have contributed to focus and, consequently, to promote specific actions aimed at the prevention and eradication of violence at schools in Mexico.

**Key words:** school violence, mass media, legislature, education system, Mexico.

## Introduction

This work examines school violence, parting from views of two foreign actors to the educative system, and schools which speeches and actions are of a great impact due to their impact on preparation of policies and educative programs, and, undoubtedly, on their own daily operation. They are the media, and the legislative power, who, in spite of such relevancy, have been little considered in national and Latin American academic production from this perspective<sup>1</sup>. Based on a documental review of national and state circulation written media, as well as on cohabitation laws, security and school violence, existing in almost all entities of the country, I present here some results of this research which analytical dimensions are conceptions on school violence, proposals and their scope at schools and the education system.

The approach undertaken here comes from the purpose of studying the many and, sometimes, opposing speeches on violence at schools, which intensify the debate in the public scenario of our country. The obvious divergences among involved actors, also respond to different resources, powers, and responsibilities distinguishing them, beyond experience and specialized skills each one expresses on the corresponding topics. As a result, there a major complexity, because actors interested in violence at schools seem to be increasingly more, but not necessarily with a direct relationship to the education system. This issue, although at a first sight, could be a positive event which would account for a concern and interest in this topic, could also be interpreted as negative, since it would reveal that it is the consequence of increase and seriousness of violence and its many non-desired effect it causes on every stage of individual and social development. From a wider perspective, government actions aimed at cohabitation, security and school violence, reproduce several weaknesses, and problems shown in design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and programs of social development (Coneval, 2012),

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1. It is true that there is a huge literature on mass media effects on certain expressions of violence among the various individuals and groups, such as infantile public and juvenile because of contents of certain channels and programs. However, as seen below, this is not the object of analysis of this work.

where there is conceptual and institutional confusion, regarding public problems to be approached, remediate, or prevent, as well as their causes and consequences; statement of policies, programs and respective actions, are not generally associated to human rights. These problems are worsened by non-coordinated reproduction of projects and interventions by many government actors, and non-government at various levels.

The ways run by public intervention to such violence, specially government action nationwide, but still within each entity, have not been homogeneous or on a single line. During the last years there has been an extended idea that school violence is a core problem, not only in this country but in other ones, other regions and continents (IIDH, 2011, Benbehishty and Astor, 2008; Carra, 2009), but, different from other times, such problem is now regarded as a problem which not exclusively concerns to schools or education systems and, as a consequence, for its prevention and eradication efforts by a wide range of actors are indispensable. Reaching this agreement has not been simple, and as seen below, it is a fragile agreement because speeches inter-subjectively built by the same actors involved (Berger and Luckmann, 2000), show not only different conceptions and vision of the problem, but unreconcilable postures on its definition, and, no doubt, on proposals of intervention to achieve such objectives.

When thinking of the role of certain actors regarding violence at Mexican schools, (such as international agencies, government authorities, education authorities, legislators, specialists, media, members of school communities, among other), it is unavoidable to warn on the complex task that articulation of their efforts suppose. For example, if such differences are located in the conception of school violence, challenges increase when initiating any work among various actors, if some of them conceive it as a problem exclusive of girls, boys, adolescents and young individuals, while others regard such problem as a reflex of the social violence predominant in various ambits, and which has reached a determined influence on school life. Likewise, such violence is seen as difficult, of some see it as a threat to teaching and learning processes and, therefore, related to the classroom and its members, while other actors think

of school violence as an obvious sample of juvenile delinquency, family breakdown, and wrong mass use of information and communication technology. Likewise, the responsibility for prevention and reduction of school violence, for some actors, relies only on education and school authorities; different from those stating that its attention is a competence of the whole society.

Research in Mexico on these topics has progressed sometimes indecisively, but more recently on dynamic basis, at such extent that it may be confidently stated today that there is an education research field dealing with school violence, security and cohabitation (Furlan and Spitzer, 2013). Specially, this interest has been found at basic level state schools, school space, and harassment among peers at student level. Within this context, it is surprising the low interest raised by the study of media role, and legislative power role on school violence, in spite of the enormous influence they exercise to promote certain public debate, and to pass laws which approach this phenomenon. The idea which justifies this work is, precisely to promote analysis of violence, not limited to daily events at the classroom and schools among students and teachers, but, otherwise, also see this contemporary phenomenon in the same perspective as researching agendas developed in other latitudes since decades ago. (Visser, 2006; IIDH, 2011).

In order to learn the main results of research performed on the role of media and the legislative power, it is necessary to place them first in a wider context, to be able to identify several elements which lead to their subsequent analysis.

## Context

The role performed by media and the legislative power in Mexico could be hardly understood and explained, if a brief contextualization where they act. In this country we have recently observed diversification and expansion of may act and incidents grouped under the term ‘school violence’ which scenario is located at education institutions or their immediate surrounding. These phenomena have not been ignored by a wide number of government and non-government actors, educative and non-educative,

local, state, domestic and international. The concern of the society on this matter has become obvious in many actions toward this phenomenon, assuming that it corresponds to a reality, which may be approached and, as a consequence, modify it.

This challenge calls for participation of many other actors, in addition to education government authorities, in charge of the fundamental role of design, presentation, implementation, evaluation and tracking policies and programs aimed at prevention, treatment and eradication of school violence. If the study of results and impact of cooperation by such great number of non-government actors, has been a line not sufficiently explored as shown by academic production during the term 2002 – 2011, such as books, chapters, articles, proposals, and graduate thesis, it is even more scarce the research on the role and scope of media and the legislative power on school violence. (Zurita, 2013).

In the particular case of media, perhaps this disinterest is due to the fact that: “researchers generally consider media as a passive link between messages of the elite and the opinion of masses” (Stein et al, 2006:105). Unlike policy makers and other actors – such as legislators – who recognize:

the media ability to use informative coverage to establish the agenda to publish policies, accelerate the rhythm of decisions, change incentives for support to policies, and increase the cost of scarce performance, or in their own interest (ibid, 106).

And beyond such influence achieved by media in preparation and release of policies and programs aimed school violence, media participation on public debate is essential, since they provide sense and meaning that, according to their singular codes, promote permanent (re)construction of collective vision. In addition, media provide structures that organize and interpret the social reality, and release and update speeches, as well. These construction subsequently reach those wide and heterogeneous target groups, to establish their informative processes that, in turn, are retaken by other actors to prepare and modify their speech and actions in diverse specific matters (Killingbeck, 2001).

In concrete terms, analysis of the media role in approaching school violence leads to approach their

performance within the context of statement of public problems, in order to be included in the agenda of public policies; it also promotes an approach to the various ways to observe and contextualize violence at Mexican schools.

As this topic has not shown any prominent presence in Mexican academic ambit, it is not seen either on specific laws in matters of cohabitation, security and school violence released during the last years in almost all entities of the country<sup>2</sup>. It seems that not only the difficult access to this information, or the fact that laws are still seen as a field of study by experts on law, they are reasons that explain their limited presence in education researches, but, the most serious, it ignorance among specialists and the same officials of federal and state educative systems, as well as among the same authorities and members of school communities.

In order to understand current scope of existing legislation on matters of cohabitation, security and school violence in Mexico, it is necessary to mention, at least, four references, that, notwithstanding each one holding a specific legal status, and a singular relationship to school violence, all of them coincide in that they could impact prevention, treatment, eradication, sanction and/or repair (Zurita, 2013). The first one includes the group of domestic and state laws aimed at protection and defense of boys – girls, adolescent and young individuals rights, as well as the whole system of justice for adolescents (Vasconcelos, 2009), and which is linked to international treaties to protect and guarantee the rights of these populations, such as the Convention on the Child Rights.

The second reference is the Law of Women Access to Life free from Violence, passed in 2007, which specifically refers to violence modes against women. Such modes include teacher violence, including those actions which adversely affect female students self esteem through discrimination acts related to sex, age, social condition, or academic, physical limitations and/or characteristics, caused by teachers.

The third one is located on the education scope, and corresponds to various legal instruments (General

<sup>2</sup> Mexico is composed of 31 entities and a Federal District; only in four entities (Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Jalisco and Sinaloa) there are no approved laws.

Law of Education, Law of Teacher Professional Service, General Law of the National Institute for Education Evaluation), and education policy (Education sector programs, secretary agreements, education programs, rules for operation of education programs, among other), which provide directions and references on acts by education authorities, and members of school communities aimed at preventing violence.

The fourth reference dates back a constitutional amendment on matters of human rights passed in June 2011, conceived as one of the last most important efforts for effective protection of fundamental right in Mexico. This amendment does not include any explicit reference to school violence, but its transcendence is in several core issues, which include incorporation of the concept of human rights as the axis of actuation by, and articulation of all authorities at every level; and, in addition, inclusion of provisions in matters of human rights of the international system as the highest rank standards in the Mexican legal system (Carbonell and Salazar, 2011).

Current laws, either individually or together, face the challenge of preventing and eliminating violence at Mexican schools, and promote there healthy environment based on respectful cohabitation of human rights. Given the situation of violence at Mexican schools and Latin America, specially in countries like Argentine, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay<sup>3</sup>; these laws could provide important lessons in many senses in the future.

## Results

The following analysis is divided into two large parts according to actors considered in this work and, as

<sup>3</sup> Cases forming the contemporary wave of laws passed on this matter, include: Law 20.536 on School Violence in Chile (2011); Law 29719 which promotes Cohabitation Without Violence at Education institutions in Peru (2012); Law 1620, “which creates the National System of School Cohabitation and Formation for the exercise of Human Rights, Education for Sexuality and Prevention and Mitigation of School Violence in Colombia (2013); Law 4633 Against School Harassment at State and Private Education Institutions in Paraguay (2012); Supreme Decree 1302 or Eradication of Violence from Schools in Bolivia (2012), and National Law 26.892 Law on Cohabitation and Approach of Conflicts at the School (2012).

seen in such analysis, there are common results between both parties. The following is a report of the main findings related to general dimensions which guide the analysis: a) Conceptualization of school violence, b) proposed actions and strategies (policies, programs, laws, government actions and non-government.); and finally, c) the main implications for schools, systems and education policies at organization level, standards, daily operation, tasks and responsibilities for education authorities, members of school communities, creation of figures, intra and inter-government articulation, for example. As it will be seen, election of these dimensions become important since from previous works (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b), it was established that they fully reveal the conceptual, analytical, methodological, technical and political challenges found in all contemporary initiatives – including the academic ambit, in front of major visibility and spread of violence at schools, in every geographic location, education level, and types of school institutions.

### **View, voices and actions by Mexican media regarding school violence in Mexico.**

In performing this analysis a following was made to domestic written media through Internet since June 2011 through September 2014. Such following showed:

-There an important presence of the topic, in domestic press, regarding violence at Mexican schools. This fact shows interest on this phenomenon, which s time passes becomes more visible in the various fields of public life, beyond education and school fields. Responses to this problem, which public character is increasingly unquestionable, are expressed by many actors of different level, and according to methods of conceiving this phenomenon from the various speeches.

-There is a notorious increase of news on school violence associated to very concrete events. They include approval of any state law on this matter; debate initiated on publication by any government entity, civil society, or any international or regional organization regarding the number of cases, specially those involving *bullying* and some (supposed or

real) cases of suicide of homicide; presentation of any institutional, international, federal or state report; realization of any event in the federal, or state education system, among other events. Events foreign to the education system were identified, such as first performance of any domestic or foreign movie approaching such topic; declaration by any popular personage, (spectacles, sports, etc.) regarding any personal experience involving school violence; for example.

-A traditional classification of news shows that news may be informative of entertaining. It is obvious that when journals publishes news on violence at schools, in principle they are not classified within entertainment. Notwithstanding, taking into account approaching methods in recent years, such new not necessarily are within the informative space. In this manner, there are news linked to school violence (TV-novels, series, movies, publishing campaigns, personal experiences of popular figures), but where this entertainment dimension is highlighted.

-Most Speeches expressed in news contents, show a marked trend to present them in sensationalist, scandalous, and banal manner which reinforces stereotypes, prejudices and also inequality, exclusion, discrimination, and racism both in the school and educative space and the social one.

-Approaching this matter by artists and TV stars, radio, or sports, as well as in domestic and international movies, has undoubtedly contributed to see existence and seriousness of school violence in Mexico; but paradoxically has also contributed to its trivialization and superficiality and even a wrong awareness of this phenomenon.

-News contents outstands for the scarce awareness and use of results and findings derived from domestic academic researches.

-Written press encourages visibility of certain actors (students, teachers and parents), promotes hiding and ignorance of other ones (academicians, government authorities, private initiative), and also minimizes obligations of certain actors (such as private initiative, and even the same media), which, as a whole, bear several responsibilities under provisions of the Political Constitution of the Mexican United States. -

- Resources used by domestic and state written press are directly linked to the ways in which media build the scenarios where they place the notes on school violence; that is, they express journalistic treatment of the approached topic. Regarding traditional resources, the use of pictures accompanying journalistic notes show contexts which not necessarily correspond to contents of real events. For example, they speak of rural contexts, while pictures refer to urban spaces; they speak of primary schools while pictures show adolescents and young individuals whose age correspond to other education level. Likewise, it is common to find photographic material where, without stating whether events occur either at state schools of private, such photographs corresponds to state schools. In addition, it is common to see girls, boys, adolescents and/or young individuals of mixed phenotypes of native, of low and middle socioeconomic sectors hitting each other before the indifferent observation of other individuals.

-Regarding other resources, such as data, there are notes that provide figures which do not support situations of described school violence, by making conclusive statements non-consistent or congruent with argumentations expressed in coverage of cases described by journalistic notes.

-An essential resource is heading of notes. It is not possible to deepen so much on them, but undoubtedly they would deserve a specific study, because it is usual to see that such headings are absurd, they show ignorance, inaccuracy, or simply, they are unfortunate.

-Media proposals trend to back certain initiatives of many government and non-government, educative and non-educative, local, domestic and international actors. It is notorious to see trends to support initiatives of hard hand, advocating for punishing act considered as “school violence”, which threaten both respect and guarantee for the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, and the right to quality education as provided by the Constitution, and ignore the also constitutional obligation of all authorities within the scope of their competence of promoting, respect, protect, and guarantee human rights under principles of universality, interdependence, integrity and progressivity (article 1<sup>st</sup>)

-Predominant characteristics of media use regarding school violence, (partiality, subjectivity, inaccuracy, disinformation, discrimination, among other), are common to treatment given to other public issues. Notwithstanding, a singular trait is the visible interest by media in joining and promote the vision of hard hand, which has been spread in many countries.

### **View, voices and actions of the legislative power toward school violence in Mexico.**

27 Laws were promulgated between 2004 and 2014: Law of School Security for the State of Chihuahua; Law of School Security for the State of Tamaulipas; Law of School Security for the State of Sonora; Law of School Security for the State of Baja California Sur; Law of Integral Security for the State of Nayarit; Law of School Security for the State of Coahuila de Zaragoza; Law of Integral Security for the Free and Sovereign State of Puebla; Law Against School Harassment for the State of Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave; Law for Promotion of Cohabitation Free From Violence at School in the Federal District; Law for Prevention, Combat and Eradication of School Violence in the State of Yucatan; Law of School Security of the State of Baja California; Law for Attention to School Violence in Michoacan; Law for School Prevention of the State and Municipalities in San Luis Potosi; Law for Cohabitation Free From School Violence for the State of Guanajuato and its Municipalities; Law to Prevent, Attend and Eradicate Harassment and School Violence in the State of Nuevo Leon; Law for Prevention, Protection, Attention and Eradication of School Violence in Hidalgo; Law to Prevent, Attend and Eradicate Violence Among Students of the State of Quintana Roo; Law Number 1256 for Promotion of Cohabitation Free From School Violence of the State of Guerrero; Law for Prevention and Treatment of School Harassment at Schools of the State of Oaxaca; Law to Prevent, Attend and Eradicate School Violence in the State of Aguascalientes; Law for Prevention and Treatment of at Schools and their Social Surrounding in the State of Tabasco; Law for Prevention of School Violence in the State of Tamaulipas; Law of School Security in the State of Campeche; Law of Integral Security for Colima; State Law for Cohabitation and School Community Security of Morelos; Law to Prevent, Attend and Eradicate School Harassment in

Zacatecas; and, finally, Law to Prevent and Eradicate School Harassment in the State of Baja California<sup>4</sup>.

Besides these promulgated laws, there are additions and amendments to State Laws of Education in Chiapas, Jalisco, Sinaloa, Queretaro to prevent, attend and eradicate school violence and/or harassment. Likewise, there are initiatives for Law or to amend education laws regarding harassment, cohabitation, security and violence, as well as proposals in ambits corresponding to laws on other areas (i.e. health) in Local Congresses of Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, Queretaro, among other entities, where additions regarding the above mentioned issues have been proposed.

The following are the most important results from the analysis:

- The laws regard the school as an institution closely connected to its immediate surrounding and to the society as a whole. This approach is within two speeches, understood not only in Mexico but at a great extent in countries located in opposed poles, which includes those which retake or combine, at a major of minor extent, statements contained in both speeches. The first speech is related to the international regime of human rights, and democratization processes in the 90s, where school violence, taking into account that is adversely affects all areas which ensure welfare and integral development of children, adolescence and youth, is conceived as a threat to human rights, and concerns various actors, because it touches education, education institutions, and their authorities. The second speech recognizes the damaging influence of the context, caused by growing insecurity, drugs sales and consumption, gangs, crimes, illegal use of weapons, at schools and their members. This speech has inspired programs and projects contained in policies on national public security, resulting in specific initiatives dealing with school violence (Zurita, 2013).

- Laws retake, and, in certain sense, reproduce such speeches but in a singular manner. For example, the Federal District law includes, since its name, more closeness to the first. Unlikely, the laws of

4 Baja California and Tamaulipas are the only entities with approved laws, the first one on school security (2012), and the other one to prevent, and eradicate school harassment (2014) in the first case, and prevention of violence at the school in 2013.

Tamaulipas, Sonora and Nayarit include statements in concordance with the second; for example, when they establish responsibilities for the director, and security brigades regarding denouncement of acts committed near or within the school, such as possession of weapons or harmful substances for health. However, in general, all of the laws mention the Convention on Rights of the Child in supporting their pertinence, and locate them within the international or domestic legal framework for defense and protection of rights of children and adolescents (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b).

- The laws reflect singular views of violence at schools where some of them insist, (Veracruz, Yucatan, Nuevo Leon), on considering such matter as problem mainly among girls, boys, adolescents, and young individuals, while ignoring such complexity of this phenomenon, and which transcends to the traditional conception of student indiscipline, or excessive use of power and authority by teachers; and it is forgotten that violence is suffered, in various ways, by the remaining members of school communities, which surges and feeds from hierarchic and authoritarian relationships based on rooted patterns of inequality, inequity, discrimination, racism, homophobia, and exclusion (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b).

- From laws promulgated in the last decade, and particularly during the last six years, it is observed the apparent transit from concern for school security to prevention of violence, or school harassment, as well as recently for promotion of cohabitation free from violence in such contexts. However, this appreciation is false, since notwithstanding it shows persistence for wrongly consider harassment among students, mainly basic education and higher middle, as the main problem, they also express the permanent interest by legislators in continuing to pass laws at state congresses facing that way, type or specific manifestation of school violence which is harassment between peers.

- The laws establish guidelines on the various issues on school operation, related to methods used to approach school violence. The detailing degree varies; some laws crumble the phases which include inclusion of tasks on prevention, awareness, diffusion, attention, denounce, sanction, data collecting and registry, assessment of actions to include referral to other

instances, articulation with other actors, damage repair, and tracking (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b).

-Laws promoting and supporting participation of previously existing actors (i.e. school councils), or purposely created to perform special tasks (i.e. school security brigades, networks, observatories, councils, etc.). Most laws refer to tasks performed by the various members of school communities on individual basis (directors), or collectively (brigades, councils, parent associations). Control, coordination, or supervision generally rely on school authorities. Notwithstanding, some laws establish punctual actions for other members of school communities, as in the case of laws of Nayarit, Tamaulipas and Sonora, that expressly assign active participation of students in school security, as a part of their formation process. (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b).

-Laws assign various responsibilities to directors, and teachers associated to investigation of school violence, who should periodically report to the various authorities. Two thirds of the laws provide application of surveys and data collection (Veracruz, Hidalgo); other ones establish information should be used to evaluate school management regarding school violence, in order to prize through certificates of school cohabitation quality, those schools demonstrating proper effort and results (Puebla, Michoacan).

-Laws create figures which embody any type of participation to approach security, violence prevention or promotion of cohabitation free from violence: School Security Brigades (Tamaulipas, Sonora, Puebla); School Integral Security Brigades (Nayarit); Brigades and Municipal and State Councils for School Security (Puebla); the Council for Prevention, Combat and Eradication of School Violence of the State of Yucatan; Delegation Councils for Prevention and Attention to School Violence, and the Observatory on School Cohabitation (Federal District), or the State Network of Cohabitation Free From School Violence (Guanajuato).

-Laws introduce some changes to school standards: on regulations, laws provide the need of defining violence, its manifestations, rights and obligations of school members, as well as sanctions to be applied to those breaching such standards. Some laws

expressly recommend inclusion of student rights in school regulations; while other ones list sanctions for the various school members who commit any breach. When dealing with students, sanctions include private admonition, treatment, suspension and transference to another school (Veracruz, Yucatan, Hidalgo, Oaxaca. (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b).

-Deep changes involving laws will be discussed. Even when such changes do not become mechanical or uni-directionally into institutional changes through formulation and implementation of public policies, their will mean great implications for schools and education systems, in terms of new and renewed responsibilities assigned to multiple actors.

## Discussion of results

After showing some of the most important results, it may be stated that in Mexico, as in many other countries, media is a core actor in dealing with school violence, since media produces opinion and promotes public debate, and impacts formulation of policies and programs aimed at prevention, treatment, and elimination of this problem (IIDH, 2011, Visser, 2006). Notwithstanding the fact that attraction of media caused by violence is unavoidable, it is essential to require media to approach the problem, but not as an event located within a school, educative or geographic named *perspective* (Visser, 2006). Thus, instead of presenting schools as undergoing a permanent chaos, media should include objective, systematic and reliable information on this phenomenon, and its magnitude in a temporal horizon and wider space; parting from their responsibilities in exercise of press freedom, in a country assumed as democratic. So doing, would decrease the scarce, partial, and erroneous awareness which frequently appears weak or wrongly founded, which would contribute not only to disinformation among the public, but to design, preparation, and implementation of wrongful actions.

News approach of school violence, specially harassment among students, through little reliable information, accompanied by a yellowish and sensationalist tome, shows in interest in promoting social panic among the many government or non-government actors, as widely documents in other

places (Killingbeck, 2001). By so doing, media promotes application of punishing, sanctioning, authoritarian, and vertical actions which threaten the rights of girls, boys, adolescents and young individuals. In contrast, vertical opinions of some actors committed to and responsible for defense and guarantee of human rights, such as government authorities, are unable to reverse such negative effect of those campaigns performed in media spaces, even when their arguments are solid, as shown by the following citation: “The Inter American institute of Human Rights considers that it is important to recover [school violence] as a question of dignity and rights, and yield light on its various artists, with a clear approach of human rights, instead of prejudices and stereotypes, arbitrary apocalyptic hypothesis, opinions without true basis, and repressive proposals of ‘hard hand’. The latter are particularly dangerous, not only because specialized research has demonstrated that they are inefficacious, but because they tend to condone or promote violation of other human rights on behalf of an ‘order’ or a ‘peace’ unilaterally defined by those holding power positions”. (IIDH, 2011: 36-37)

In addition, if laws on cohabitation, security and school violence, existing almost in the whole country, Short, middle and long term consequences are expected regarding arrangements and the institutional capability of schools and the education system in front of challenges posed by prevention, identification, and sanction for school violence. For such changes to occur in school management, a transformation to education structure is fundamental from macro (system), to micro (classrooms) level (Aguerrondo, 2012; Zurita, 2012a; 2012b). Transformations suppose other changes beyond the education sector, and the education system itself, since they refer to multiple government actors, assigned with several responsibilities to manage these school phenomena. These circumstances will test the institutional ability to assume new or renewed obligations in front of problems, which historically had been delegated to decisions and actions of schools and their authorities. (Zurita, 2012a; 2012b). In addition, it is pending harmonization of such laws with other international, domestic and local scope regulation instruments, linked to close issues such as eradication of discrimination, women access to a life without

violence, equality between women and men, social prevention of violence and delinquency in Mexico. For example, through laws recently promulgated in Mexico, such as the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (2003); General Law of Women access to a Life Free from Violence (2007), General Law for Social Prevention of Violence and Delinquency (2012), or the General Law of Rights of Girls, Boys and Adolescents, recently promulgated (2014).

Notwithstanding, which is insisted on is that, beyond the value contained by each law, such laws, unquestionably become singular ways to conceptualize cohabitation, security and school violence and, over all, they provide specific proposals to prevent, attend, and eliminate this public problem. That is, they show how this phenomenon is perceived among legislators, how they define the problem at a determined time, why and how the need of creating or amend any law, to approach the problem, is supported, what actors or government and non-government instances are suitable to participate in recommended actions, and in function of such participation, what concrete proposals are made to deal with the problem at entities, the Federal District and/or in the country as a whole.

In front of this scenario, it is urgent to undertake more investigations to, first, understand complexity of this problem of public order and, secondly, identify the weight of media and the legislative power on decisions made.

## Conclusions

The media and the legislative power join other agents, from those who consider school violence as a health, public security and/or educative problem, to those who regard it as threat to defense and promotion of rights of girls, boys, and adolescents (Plan, 2008). The question is that speeches suppose, besides divergent conceptions, different guidelines for attention, and frequently little complementary, resulting in a number of actions which include intervention strategies, with a very different nature and scope, because they include since projects undertaken at the classroom or at the school, to policies applied at all schools of a

determined country, of a certain level, mode or any particular characteristic<sup>5</sup>. In Mexico, the number and heterogeneity of actions show two positive actions, which are worth to highlight: The first one is that social issues related to school violence, and specially harassment among boys, girls, adolescent and young individuals, are present in agendas of numerous and different authors. The second question is that their proposals, most of them, are supported on explicit recognition –in most cases- that school violence may prevented.

Notwithstanding, from the other perspective, appearance and placement into operation of many programs, projects and actions to deal with school violence that, as shown by the experience of several countries of this continent, according to the Inter American Institute of Human Rights (2011), are not always operated in a coordinated, integral and articulated fashion. The problem is that this situation in the short, middle and long term could create and result in inefficient, ineffective actions, with unsatisfactory results, and what is worse, assuming, and even reiterating the idea that school violence is undefeatable, as well in other ambits.

Another important point is that speeches and actions derived from performance by media and the legislative power, become a matter of analysis by themselves, instead of considering them as proposals and actions, far from, and apart from the education system, and schools, or assumed as elements to contextualize investigations. So far, academic researches ignore the impact of methods, contents, messages and campaigns performed by media on school violence, on construction of legal initiatives, and/or law amendments approaching this phenomenon, and it is not accurately known how much they impact policies, programs and public projects on this matter.

The reasons justifying laws on cohabitation, security and school violence as a pertinent and relevant object of study, is due to the fact that they seek, and if applied, will undoubtedly impact school environment, by

<sup>5</sup> In fact, international literature also show the prevailing diversity in this wide range of actions. For more information see: Unesco, 2001; Preal Preal 2006a, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Krauskopf and OPS, 2006; IIDH, 2011

influencing daily performance of education systems. Although this impact is not linear, immediate, homogeneous or mechanic, since it is foreseeable that, as in other laws and education amendments, they may not modify the basic nucleus of what happens at classrooms as expected. This is because translation of regulations into public policies and programs, as well as their subsequent implementation, are related to complex institutional and inter-subjective processes, affected by a series of issues related to education structure, culture of its members, pre-existing rules and standards, daily evaluations and practices within schools. As claimed by experts in education amendments and implementation of education policies (Aguilar, 1993; Ezpeleta, 2004; Lahera, 2006; Rincon Gallardo and Elmore, 2012; Rockwell, 2012), as laws are translated into policies, programs, punctual actions, as well as regulations, guidelines, technical standards, operation rules aimed at school management, processes involved in their implementation are not single-direction or direct. Otherwise, these processes feed from educative, organizational and institutional contexts where they are placed, reaching undetermined results, and in a constant reengineering because of intervention of diversified number of educative authorities, officials of the system, and members of school communities.

Bearing in mind the above reasons, this work reiterates the urgent need of researching about intervention of other authors, beyond the education system, and schools involved in multiple actions to deal with school violence. Now, it constitutes a little explored sub-field, but it could be expanded, in disciplinary and interdisciplinary basis, in a near future, through case studies, or compared analyses at various levels, periods and contexts.

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