

Gendered justifications for transgression at school¹

Sophie Duteil Deyriesⁱ

Université de Montpellier, Montpellier, France

Abstract

This study is part of a thesis in educational sciences defended in 2018 at the University of Montpellier, France. Numerous studies highlight the differentiated treatment at work in the school space when female or male students transgress the rules. But have we collectively questioned ourselves about the arguments put forward to justify these behaviors, to give them an explanation? Teachers and students alike are comforted by justifications that are in line with social representations. Male students would transgress out of immaturity, out of a desire to "make things interesting" to peers, or out of a lack of control over their emotions, such as anger. On the other hand, and for the same transgression, the interviewees explain the differences in the behaviour of female students by defensive (and not offensive) reactions, personal problems - to which they would be subjected - and a cruel lack of moderation in their reactions. Boys are judged responsible but also subject to their nature; girls are considered victims of transgression situations by taking responsibility for their actions. Based on a sample of 500 students and 29 teachers, from kindergarten to high school, it is through a partly qualitative survey (interviews and observations) that I propose to question and think about school transgression through the prism of a mechanism that is continuously maintained, and shows how transgression is a school gender analyzer.

Abstract

Transgression. Gender. Social representations. Inequalities. Educational institutions.

As justificativas de gênero para a transgressão na escola

Resumo

Este estudo é parte de uma tese em Ciências da Educação defendida em 2018 na Universidade de Montpellier, França. Numerosos estudos destacam o tratamento diferenciado em ação no espaço escolar quando meninas ou meninos transgridem as regras. Mas será que nos questionamos coletivamente sobre os argumentos apresentados para justificar esses comportamentos, para lhes dar uma explicação? Tanto professores quanto alunos se contentam com justificativas que estão em consonância com as representações sociais. Os meninos transgrediriam por imaturidade, por desejo de "tornar as coisas interessantes" para os colegas, ou por falta de controle sobre suas emoções, tais como a raiva. Por outro lado, e pela mesma transgressão, as entrevistadas explicaram as diferenças de comportamento entre as meninas através de reações defensivas (e não

¹ English version originally translated from English by Marina Lima Pompeu.

ofensivas), problemas pessoais – aos quais elas seriam submetidas – e uma cruel falta de moderação em suas reações. Os meninos são julgados responsáveis, mas também sujeitos à sua natureza; as meninas são consideradas vítimas de situações de transgressão ao assumirem a responsabilidade por suas ações. Com base em uma amostra de 500 alunos e 29 professores, da Educação Infantil ao Ensino Médio, é através de uma pesquisa parcialmente qualitativa (entrevistas e observações) que proponho interrogar e pensar na transgressão escolar através do prisma de um mecanismo que é mantido continuamente e que mostra como a transgressão é um índice analítico das relações de gênero na escola.

Palavras-chave

Transgressão. Gênero. Representações sociais. Desigualdades. Instituições educacionais.

Justificaciones de género para la transgresión en la escuela

Resumen

Este estudio forma parte de una tesis en Ciencias de la Educación defendida en 2018 en la Universidad de Montpellier, Francia. Numerosos estudios ponen de manifiesto el trato diferenciado que se da en el espacio escolar cuando las chicas o los chicos transgreden las normas. Pero, ¿nos cuestionamos colectivamente los argumentos presentados para justificar estos comportamientos, para darles una explicación? Tanto los profesores como los alumnos están satisfechos con las justificaciones que se ajustan a las representaciones sociales. Los chicos transgreden por inmadurez, por el deseo de “hacer las cosas interesantes” para sus colegas o por la falta de control de sus emociones, como la ira. Por otro lado, y por la misma transgresión, los entrevistados explicaron las diferencias de comportamiento entre las chicas por reacciones defensivas (y no ofensivas), problemas personales – a los que estarían sometidas – y una cruel falta de moderación en sus reacciones. A los chicos se les juzga responsables pero también sujetos a su naturaleza; a las chicas se les considera víctimas de situaciones transgresoras asumiendo la responsabilidad de sus actos. A partir de una muestra de 500 alumnos y 29 profesores, desde el Jardín de Infancia hasta el Bachillerato, es a través de una investigación parcialmente cualitativa (entrevistas y observaciones) que me propongo interrogar y pensar la transgresión escolar a través del prisma de un mecanismo que se mantiene continuamente, y que muestra cómo la transgresión es un índice analítico de las relaciones de género en la escuela.

Palabras clave

Transgresión. Género. Representaciones sociales. Desigualdades. Instituciones educativas.

1 Introduction

In the school environment, students, boys and girls, can break the rules in the same way and be warned in different ways. School transgression is defined as “[...] something

that disturbs the regular operation of the school and the classroom (noises, incessant chatter, questioning out loud, disturbances, inappropriate jokes ...) (DEPOILLY, 2013, p. 208). However, reprimands, as well as punishments and penalties at school, can be of different types and have a rewarding or devaluing effect on the student (AYRAL, 2011). Different interpretations are possible to analyze these differences in treatment, but what interests us in this work is the student's gender prism² to justify the infractions committed.

In the interviews carried out, both teachers and students try to find explanations to understand why some students show a behavior prone to infractions in the school sphere. This article will try to demonstrate that its justifications emerge from social representations on the theme of the infraction and justify two transgressive models, one male and one female. Depending on the gender, students adopt several types of explanations for the behaviors at hand. On the other hand, there are specific categories for boys ("showing off", "being immature") and others attributed only to girls ("defensive reaction", "personal issues"). Other explanations work for both cases but are illustrated with arguments whose distinctions according to gender. These common justifications are of "biological", "cultural" or "in relation with the forbidden" order, but this article will focus only on the typically male and female categories. Teachers share with students certain ways of explaining wrongdoings while considering certain explanations are adapted to the behavior of girls or boys.

The study was carried out in Montpellier, in the south of France, during the 2015-2016 school year. Methodologically, I made use of the scenario questions (Elementary School and High School students ³), this means that the same infraction situation is proposed twice: first with a male protagonist and, later in the interview, with a female protagonist. Isso permite uma comparação entre duas situações idênticas. This facilitates the comparison between two identical situations. I also used records collected in a

² Gender shows that the differences between the sexes are not only of a biological nature but also - and above all - a social and cultural construction" (FOURNIER, 2004, p. 22).

³ NT: A "Escola Secundária" (*École Secondaire*), termo que a autora emprega aqui, começa com o que, no Brasil, corresponde ao sexto ano do Ensino Fundamental II (estudantes de 11 anos de idade), etapa que na França se chama de *collège* (colégio), e vai até o fim do Liceu (*Lycée*), correspondente ao Ensino Médio brasileiro. O ensino primário é a etapa precedente e se divide em duas fases: escola maternal (dos 3 aos 6 anos) e escola elementar (dos 6 aos 10 anos).

discussion about a drawing-language ⁴ (for elementary school students), as well as interviews with teachers. From this set of procedures, the categories of explanations presented later could be extracted from the data. This was very evident in the scenario questions of the final years of elementary school, as the student interviewed often gave very different justifications and assessments, depending on the protagonist's gender.

I must emphasize that I preferred to use the first person in the writing of this article, as I conducted all of this academic work. Also, there are many oral speeches in the body of the text (in quotes), sometimes in approximate language. These are excerpts from interviews with students. I chose to write them literally here.

2 Male transgressive universe

2.1 *"To be in social representation"*

2.1.1 Show off

The boys make people laugh, take the initiative, appear interesting, and at first, this may even please the teacher: "[...] when a boy plays the rascal a little, at first I will take it as a joke; and later, if he really continues, I'll do something different or even punish him ", explains a teacher. This is one of the characteristics the students use to explain and justify the offending behavior of the boys: the desire to "get attention", to "be noticed", to "show themselves as interesting", "to show off", to "play the clown "and above all "making colleagues laugh", according to what the High School girls say.

The boys explain this by emphasizing the desire to "have fun", "make others have fun", "try to make the class laugh", and "get noticed". For the boys, there is a search for pleasure in the transgressive mechanism at play (KINOO; KEYSER, 2011). A student from the lyceum told me that "for our friends, it makes us look fun". The school students had the

⁴ I used drawings illustrating infractions to talk to elementary school students. This method seemed more suitable for students under 11 years of age. I was inspired by photo-language.

same explanations for the offending boys, with the recurring expressions: "making yourself noticed", "showing off" and also "looking good" (the latter expression not necessarily being positive). Humor is one of the ways to get noticed and one of the favorite tools of boys because it can be seen as positive strength recognized by girls (HURTIG, 1978).

However, when addressing this same type of justification concerning girls, we perceive the existence of a pejorative connotation in the vocabulary used by students: "you want to make people laugh so that everyone looks at her", "you want to be smart", "wants to be talked about", wants to "be different from others" and "wants to show off" (high school students). The girls at the school also mentioned the desire to "appear", the desire to "make people look at them", the "need to be interested in her" and also the desire to "make a show of herself". Students of Elementary school final years see this as a reaction to "not appearing as a victim". Of course, girls also want to "show off" or "get noticed", but to a much lesser extent than boys, and more anecdotally than other justifications about female behavior.

Despite the social changes in terms of gender relations, it's as if the old structures remained very much alive. The public sphere is male-dominated. In it, men are allowed - and even compelled - to "show off". Women, on the contrary, are assigned to the private sphere. They must remain hidden, invisible in the public space. When men pretend to "show off", they strengthen this structure. To adapt to it, women have to remain modest, instead of standing out from the group of women. A male student who "shows off", does so as an individual; a girl who does the same and pretends to behave as an individuality breaks the gender pact that fuses her into her homogeneous group of girls who are "all the same".

In general, boys in the field of socialization are seen as humorists, valued by peers, which gives an image of a "nice person" to the transgressor. One of the functions of humor is to seek "[...] attention, approval, favoring or reinforcing the cohesion of a group, or simple pleasure" (DEROUESNÉ, 2016, p. 96). The girls are represented as self-centered, concerned with the image they want to present. These are two different interpretations of the situations were seen in the interviews, even though the proposed scenario was the same.

For younger elementary school students, the explanations are similar. One girl reports that "boys have a bit of a [...] mischievous character [...] so they look interesting

doing nonsense". Here is a trait almost exclusively masculine according to these children: "it's to make others laugh [...] it's much more frequent for boys [to do this]", explains a 5th-year girl. Another added: "They like to make fun of themselves and show off." Boys like to make people laugh.

In general, they are fewer female students than male students when it comes to being noticed by using humor. Humor creates a setting, attracts the attention of others, and aims to bring people together. Does being funny mean being dominant? Of course, because having a sense of humor also means being able to talk and not being afraid to be looked at. It's a power move.

When a girl "makes herself noticed" through an argument, a boy says: "she wants to get the boys' attention"; another mentions: "girls fight over boys" or "it is strange that a girl attacks a boy, that means she likes him"; the girls, in turn, testify: "it's to flirt", or "[...] I would say that there is a complicated love or friendship story", "[...] because he betrayed her". We didn't observe these findings in the comments about boys.

2.1.2 To be dominant

"Dominance" is also used as an explanation since boys are said to "impress those around them" because they are transgressors. They "care about themselves" and want to "be the guy", "the guy who stands out", "to give yourself a superior appearance", "to show that you are above others", "to show that you are a man". They want to "prove to themselves that they're brave", "to show that he's supposedly stronger, that people think he's strong to make them believe that he's the best, so that people are afraid of him", "show others that you don't let yourself be weak or show any weakness". Being weak is associated with femininity and being a man is, before anything else, not being a woman. This is very close to the representations of the hegemonic masculinity conceptualized by Raewyn Connell (2014).

Through physical confrontation, there is "recognition by peers, through boldness and resistance to pain" (BOXBERGER; CARRA, 2014, p. 44). The adjective "proud" is

recurrent: a high school student explained to me "[...] that, in comparison with girls, boys want to assert themselves more and never let go of their pride. It's more accepted for boys to be like that". The girls mention, in turn, "macho" positions to "humiliate" others (school and lyceum).

In the case of fights, students translate this concept saying: "[...] maybe both boys want to be strongest". It's a question of the struggle between boys for hegemony. Um menino do 5º ano já é consciente da relação de domínio sobre as meninas: A boy in the 5th grade is already aware of the dominant relationship over girls: "maybe, because they're boys, they think they're stronger than girls [...]". The older elementary school girls added: "they want to show that they're always stronger than the girls", "that they are in charge". A boy from the same level of education testifies: "They want to dominate." A lyceum student tells me what he thinks affects the boys: "There are influences from action movies, rap videos and there is a lot of violence and it influences the brain a lot. It's like in the jungle, the lions, it is to prove who is dominant, to show who is the strongest" (boy, lyceum student).

A high school student told me that "it's ridiculous to use violence to prove that you are a man", but that is an isolated reflection.

Teachers share the idea that students want to show that: "I am the strongest!" - as an elementary school teacher stated. This perspective is especially true when classes aren't balanced in terms of gender, with boys being the majority, according to a teacher from the same level of education mentioned above. A middle school teacher adds: "[...] as for the boys, there is a herd effect [...] it's necessary to show that if you're the strongest, that you can do the greatest idiocies that the others, that you must follow it [...]".

This position makes behaviors visible and public. A high school student explained that boys "hide less from society" to transgress. Because it isn't worth infringing if no one sees it; everyone has to watch the transgression for it to be worth it, even if it is to "show off to their classmates" (boy, student at Elementary School). With this behavior, the intention is to be punished and crowned with the "medal of virility" (AYRAL, 2011), which establishes the boy in the "dominant" position. Girls, on the other hand, have nothing to gain from the fact that their infraction is visible since it isn't valued and gives them a

negative image - not to mention the fact that it can suggest a possible attraction of the boys' attention, and that is reprehensible.

The infraction is seen as positive and normal for a boy and negative and abnormal for a girl. For the boys, the staging takes place in the public arena, in front of a class audience that can value the performance. For girls, they're asked to transgress in silence, invisibly, without making a noise.

2.2 "*Being immature*"

2.2.1 Making a fool of oneself

Justifying the behavior of boys using foolishness isn't as frequent as the previous explanations, but it's present in all levels of education studied: there are the terms "fool", "stupid behavior" and "idiot" in high school; "silly" and "idiot" in upper years of the Elementary school. In lower years of elementary school, the girls repeated more regularly that "sometimes they are silly" (girl, 1st grade). On the other hand, girls' disobedient conduct is very rarely justified by the fact that they are "fools".

2.2.2 Being childish

An element that comes up very regularly in the case of boys is the excuse of "immaturity", which would explain their desire to "play" and lead to offending or even engage in risky conduct. This excuse would also explain why they're more punished. In elementary school, students talk about "immaturity" and say that boys are "childish". For one of the girls, they follow their "friends in the mischief". The behavior of boys is described by students of both genders, in high school, as "childish" and "brat". Girls are accused of "immaturity" in high school, but very rarely. A teacher at this level of education spoke of "physiological maturity" for girls in the 6th and 7th grades, compared to boys. The same is true for a 5th-grade teacher:

What I saw is connected to the children's physical and psychological development, the boys mature later, so at school they still do a lot of stupid things, more than the girls, at least that's what I observe at school. They are more involved in games, they are less mature. Girls don't have the same points of discussion "(teacher, elementary school)

For an elementary school teacher, several hypotheses explain the boys' most frequent transgressions, which would come from their "immaturity", but not only that:

There are several factors, perhaps, but that's how I see things, ok?! I think there is a maturity factor. Girls are often more mature than boys and sometimes they give more importance to school life than boys, because, well, that's what society reflects, girls have to fight harder and it's easier for boys, even if also it's less automatic [...] "(teacher, elementary school)

The act of playing is very present in the speech of children in the early years of elementary school, particularly through fighting, for boys. Play involves physical transgression. A teacher explains:

I would say that playing, I would say yes, more boys, already in the 3rd grade, I say already because I had 5th-grade students for a long time and in the playtime, yes, there will be more boys who will get involved. And let's say that this joke, in any case, in class is embarrassing and is often taken as an infraction on your part. (teacher, elementary school)

In this sense, a 2nd grader asked himself: "Some boys fight, but they are always friends, so I don't know why they fight." For example, a 1st-grade student said to me: "I like to play fighting". This is a characteristic of play among male students (ZAIDMAN, 2007). Other boys: "It's just for fun sometimes", "Boys play fighting". They explain: "Sometimes they fight, but it's just for fun [...] they used to play pushing each other and [...] besides, they like it". In the 4th grade, another boy illustrates: "[...] I like it because they fight, I like the action [...] sometimes they fight in the movies and I like that". A boy 2nd grader tells how the fight becomes a group game: "Well, a boy will show up and he will find it fun to fight, and then a lot of boys will show up and it will be a big fight." For girls, this entertainment is typically male. A girl 2nd grader says, "Boys play fighting games like this more and girls play with dolls," "because it's a little bit like Star Wars [...]".

A boy from the 3rd grade explained to me that "sometimes it's a game, other times it's serious". When I asked if the girls ever get involved in this type of entertainment, several

of them said to me: "no, it hurts" or "no, it isn't a joke". Only one 2nd grader told me that she likes to fight, but under certain conditions: "I like to fight, but I never do it, I only do it with my sisters." There are spaces and restrictions for that. This student is aware of the limits at school.

The 2nd grade teacher explains to me that the "fighting" phenomenon was such that they were "forced to put it in the school rules: it is forbidden to play fighting". Furthermore, "the girls don't see it as a game, they don't like [...] the boys, if you ask them why they play fights, they tell you 'it doesn't hurt', that they are having fun. It's complicated, there is a real division between girls and boys", since the games of the boys are physical and somewhat violent, which wouldn't please the girls:

But then they [girls and boys] still get together in certain games, like chasing each other in the yard. This happens until the moment when a girl mumbles 'Oh, he hurt me' [imitates crying], even though she participated in the game. But see, when there is a little violence, the boy won't necessarily have done it on purpose, but the girl will cry, then the game will stop, the boy will have to apologize, so, you see, this is things ... yeah that's why they don't necessarily play together, they know very well that they won't have the same fun [laughs]. Boys run, they get hurt, it isn't very serious most of the time, and they don't take it seriously, whereas girls often, well, not all, but often, it's going to be 'Oh, he hurt me' [imitation high-pitched], but 10 minutes before she was all smiling and very happy to be playing the game. (teacher, Elementary School).

An elementary school teacher said to me: "[...] every time I go out to the playground, and the boys are fighting more or less like a game, relatively unpleasantly, which is why it isn't uncommon for them to be punished". A student told me exactly this: "they think it's a joke, but in reality, it isn't and then they're scolded". Many students talked about "playing fighting", even high school students: "violence for fun is very masculine".

The distinction between playing and infringing isn't obvious for male students. As Colette Guillaumin explains (2016), play isn't "an activity equally distributed between the two sexes, and which occurs since childhood"; for boys, the time spent playing is more important, the space for playing is also more open, it is" [...] wider, with fewer limits and restrictions" (GUILLAUMIN, 2016, p. 121). In general, space isn't restricted or limited to men in the city (RAIBAUD, 2015), so why should it be for boys at school? The boys mix fun and breaking rules; but don't they also mix spaces dedicated to learning and recreation?

Do they mix or authorize themselves? Do education professionals accept this as a natural fact or do they think it is cultural? Being educated for war (through games and toys, notably), being encouraged to play with limits (extreme and risky sports), being valued and recognized as a boy when authority and rules are challenged, isn't it male socialization?

Girls aren't seen as childish or lacking in awareness about the boundary between classroom and playground, the places where we work or play. Immaturity isn't used as an excuse. Boys, in turn, are accommodated in this situation, comforted by adult discourse. "Childhood" is an explanation acceptable to some and unacceptable to female students.

2.3 "An internal state"

At the time of the interview described below, another type of explanation appears: everything is "agitation" and "irritation". In the development of the interviewees' reasoning, both postures go together concerning the explanation for the boys' transgressive behavior.

High school students say the offending boys are "angry", "nervous", "offended", "in a bad mood", "they get angry faster and lose control," said one student. "We get irritated more easily," said the high school students. For older elementary school students, the words or groups of words "angry" and "get angry quickly" are regularly proposed by both genders, but the expression "doesn't control their anger" also appears. In an article, Isabelle Joing-Maroye and Éric Debarbieux (2013) write that "boys are distinguished from girls by adopting broader emotional reactions based on strength, physical and/or verbal violence. Their reaction is often manly; they are said to react and settle their differences quickly" (JOING-MAROYE; DEBARBIEUX, 2013, p. 13). "They don't know how to stay calm, how to manage their anger," reports a high school student about boys in general. A 3rd grader tells me that boys "get angry and have no control over themselves". A 1st grader stated that "the boy's tempers are ... are angry ... so they show off getting in trouble". In the 5th grade, a girl makes the connection of the irritability to the boys' brutality: "they are irritated ... maybe the boys are ruder than us. There are more rough boys in the class than

girls." They "keep their anger more inside them ", a boy from the early years of elementary school reported to me.

For the 1st grade teacher, the boys' irritability would be explained by the games they play. This state is directly linked to their need to spend energy: "So, I think it's the game, the game because when you play football it can happen more quickly than you get angry with a friend because there is no referee in the yard and you solve it in your own way".

It's also a physiological and specific need of teenage boys, according to a teacher from the final years of elementary school:

[...] when it comes to unrest in the classroom, it's certain that, um, boys are more restless. [...] An explanation is certainly physiological, quite simply, it's a physical agitation, they need to move more, maybe, I don't know [silence] [...] they are the profiles that certainly need more activity, movement, things like that, than girls who may be calmer ... at that age, I'm talking about!.. (teacher, Elementary school).

According to the students, their unrest reflects in their great excitement and difficulty in staying in place. The boys said to me, "We move around all the time," and a 1st grader said, "They can't stay in place, they can't stay focused for long". "It's because they are wilder," says a girl in the same class. The students compare this behavior with that of the girls in their grade: "They're more restless, maybe [...] the girls are calmer, I think, but I don't know why", says a boy from the 5th grade. Another from the 1st grade confirms: "girls are smarter than boys"; a boy from the 4th grade explains, with nuances: "boys are more agitated, nervous. Well, it depends, but most of them". The girls agree. A 3rd-grade girl says: "boys are less calm than girls". A boy in the 4th grade referred to the boys' impulsiveness: "we don't raise our hands⁵, we're a little impulsive". A high school girl also justifies boys' behavior: "men are more impulsive".

Some teachers question these claims. For example, this 3rd-grade teacher isn't convinced that boys are often more agitated:

Ah, yes, maybe [the girls] are a little calmer, but I don't have any statistics [silence], yes, I don't have any statistics to say that a group of girls is calmer than one of

⁵ NT: Reference to the act of raising their hands to address the teacher to ask a question or ask for permission.

boys. That is what is said, it's often said that a group with many boys is agitated, but I'm not sure. (teacher, elementary school)

A kindergarten teacher admits to feeding this (social) representation about boys and testifies to her influence on the reactions that we may have: "It's certain that there is something that lingers. I have the image of boys as more agitated and, thus, this stays on".

While I spent several weeks at the school in the research sample, I watched the rehearsals for the kindergarten class year-end recital. One scene particularly impressed me. The students were gathered in the yard to rehearse a choreography about emotions. All students, girls and boys, danced to the music. The idea was to associate a color with a sensation. Yellow, for example, represented "joy". Thus, all the children imitated the joy of life dancing with their arms in the air. But when it was time to stage the "anger", only the boys danced and waved on stage. It's a feeling considered excluded from the list of possible emotions for girls (DELACOLLETTE; DARDENNE; DUMONT, 2010). I remember very well the teacher encouraging the students (boys) to stomp their feet on the ground harder and let the anger flow out and to show that they were very angry (the color associated with that moment, by the way, was blue). I don't remember a group of girls dancing for a particular "emotion" and "color". For "anger", however, only the boys danced.

What I find interesting to emphasize is the comparison between girls and boys: they keep the "anger" inside them, as the boys let it out. In the school sphere, it's admitted that boys are unable to control themselves, to control their emotions (but only "anger"?): They "can't control themselves", "they're impulsive". To allow them to vent and manage their irritation, we adapt to the boys' behavior, instead of teaching them to communicate, to put words in their emotions and anxieties, to find different ways, in addition to the physical ones, to calm down. To accept that their anger is expressed in this way and, above all, that they have poor control over it, is to consent to their "rudeness", to their disregard for the rules, but also to the impact that this has on others. As for girls, do they have to act as "brake"? And what happens when girls don't control their own fury?

In the "male transgressive universe", only boys are excused for their behavior through the explanations detailed above. Not only are girls not allowed to be "immature",

"irritated" or "childish", but when they are, the interviewees don't accept such conduct, which starts to be viewed in an extremely negative way.

3 Female transgressive universe

3.1 "Defense reaction"

One of the most common justifications for the transgressive behavior of girls attending school is to take responsibility for their actions away from them, presenting them as victims of the situation. She has "a good reason", "there must be a good reason" to infringe, otherwise a girl wouldn't act like that. The defense is an explanation (very unusual for boys) because girls aren't seen as capable of attacking or causing a situation of disrespect to the rules. Some explain that fighting isn't the appropriate behavior for a girl, but she had no choice, as she was defending herself from aggression (verbal, physical or other), from a situation that is neither provoked nor desired by her. Others don't accept the transgression either in itself or in self-defense. In both cases, for one of the scenario questions, for example, the girl's behavior is censored. In one example, she transgresses by pushing. About this, an elementary school girl says: "she has no right to go after him, spitting [for the boy] is a reflex". In another example, in which the girl defends herself by spitting, the same interviewee comments: "I think it isn't appropriate to spit, she should go and talk to a responsible adult. In an attempt to justify these defensive situations, students in the last years of elementary school suggest that "someone has incited her" (girl) or "maybe she is being provoked" (boy). In other words, they aren't considered "responsible students", but "victimized students" (PARENT, 2012).

In the early years of elementary school, girls justify the previous infraction as a reaction to an attack or as revenge (a little later) due to the attack: "Sometimes, when the boys push us, we do the same thing", "it is for to get revenge on them "(girls, 1st grade). Other students of the 1st grade said: "We never get angry [...] sometimes, but it is only when I defend myself against the boys", "sometimes the boys annoy us and sometimes we

slap them". Another student in the 1st grade explained to me: "Many boys tease girls, but when they tease them, sometimes they do it either to play or because they teased them before, so they want to take revenge and show them that they didn't like it." However, a 5th grader said to me: "There are girls who provoke boys and sometimes they are the ones who upset them, and they want to take revenge".

The last allegation, which reinforces the fact that girls aren't taken seriously and are therefore discredited, is the girls' supposed lack of moderation in transgressive behavior: "it's excessive behavior", "she is exaggerating" (girls, High school). In another instance, some students question her mental state: "she is strange", "she must not be aware of what she was doing" (girl, high school). A boy from the last years of elementary school added the famous expression "she is hysterical". This is reminiscent of female criminology studies, which show a different assessment according to the sex of the criminal. The role of the transgressor isn't reliable for a woman in society, just as it isn't for a student who is an offender in the educational system. With transgressive women and girls, it's more customary to suggest a treatment to cure than a "repressive treatment" (CARDI, 2017; MORAN, 2018). This is also observed with students' "protective" reactions when a girl transgresses: "we need to talk to her".

Finally, because she is "against the law" or outside the rules of the institution, the girl student violates twice: once the internal rules and once the norm imposed by her gender. However, girls can intentionally attack, transgress, react with insolence or violence. So, when ignoring, turning away, or interpreting this phenomenon at will, is there contempt for the reality possibly experienced by the student, a reality that is the object of a lack of attention and even of appropriate treatment? This may also be the case for child offenders. Did they have the opportunity to fall victim to the situation? The question also arises, especially, when there is a situation of transgression between a girl and a boy. A high school student attests:

But speaking frankly, I would be much more surprised and angry at the guy who did it, who spit on a girl ... In fact, I would consider that if the girl pushed him, it was because there was a good reason [question in which the protagonist is a boy], while in the other question [where the protagonist is a girl] I don't necessarily assume that

the guy who pushed her had a good reason. I would be angry with the boy and try to understand why the girl did this, in fact, I would already be on her side before I had the explanations" (boy, High School)

The female temperament allows for a reaction to an offensive. On the other hand, the girl isn't susceptible, mentally and physically responsible, or even educated to transgress "like a boy". Or else, she doesn't have the same resources as the boys, which explains her excessive stance.

In any case, when a girl transgresses as a boy, she suffers for her actions and is therefore considered a passive subject (not responsible, always in defense) under the conditions of transgression, unlike the boy who is always active (VOUILLOT, 2002; SEGALLEN, 2006).

3.2 "Personal issues"

The same students who described the boys' behavior as "agitation", "irritation", or "wanting to be noticed" by their peers explained the behavior in a completely different way. They evoked their private life or tension in their personal situation. We found a type of justification observed in the Minors' Court for the crimes committed by delinquent girls (MORAN, 2018). Explaining the offense as the girl's "defense reaction", the students invoke a cause outside the school environment over which she has no control. Again, this argument contributes to her taking no responsibility for the act.

In the last years of elementary school, the girls explain: she must be "mistreated at home", "she has issues", she must "have personal problems", she has "big problems", "there is a problem, otherwise she wouldn't react like that, is weird". The boys think she must "have family problems", and even that she is "beaten up by her parents". In high school, students of both genders also said that she "has a lot of problems", "family troubles", and that she "has no means of expressing herself at home".

There is also an explanation that can be found in the "unruly nature" of women (PARENTE, 2012) and in the fact that they "feel bad" without being able to find a way out and master the situation. She has an "unrest", "doesn't feel well", "doesn't feel good about

herself", "is lost", has "no confidence in herself", high school students said to me. Elementary school students said the same thing: she "doesn't feel well", "feels sad", is "hurt", "doesn't feel good about herself". These descriptions contrast with those given to boys, and although both genders are subject to uncontrollable moods, they aren't the same when analyzing student behavior. Boys break the rules because they are angry and impulsive; in the case of girls, the reason for the transgression is more likely to be a distress to which they are subjected.

On the other hand, the people interviewed assume a deeper, more serious, and more worrying problematic state when the infractions are committed by girls. Since it isn't just a temporary irritation (as with boys), but a concern linked to a situation experienced by students outside the school environment and/or a context whose resolution they can't control. For example, an elementary school teacher explains to me that boys' transgressions are more common, but he adds that they're resolved more quickly. Managing infractions, however, is more complicated when it comes to a girl:

Then, there are more typical reactions of girls and boys [...] among the boys, it's more [silence] specific. [...] That is, the problem is posed and then there can be a discussion, and then that is it, if it solves quite easily, it can start over, but well, the codes are more easily understood on both sides, which necessarily means that they are respected, huh!? Then, with the girls, it's sometimes less obvious, I noticed. Especially for girls who have a problem, um, problems are sometimes more complicated, but neither do they often come up with problems (teacher, elementary school).

We can ask ourselves what the teacher means by "code". Does he do better with offending boys because he has the same male "codes" as they do? He ends the interview by saying: "[...] I notice from experience that boys are, in general, frequently more agitated, but usually, girls who are agitated that cause problem, the problems often is more serious, is often very, very problematic". Isn't it problematic for the institution when this isn't resolved by "repressive treatment", either due to lack of means or lack of experience?

In the female transgressive universe, the student is always deprived of her responsibility for the act of infraction. Going beyond the school order is necessarily linked

to an external element not controlled by it: being governed by a personal problem, for example, they are ungoverned.

4 Conclusion

The justifications given by the people interviewed are following the social representations about the transgression. Both students and teachers, instead of questioning their prejudices, are often more inclined to find justifications that allow "expression without fear of reproach or sanctions." (DELROISSE; HERMAN; YZERBYT, 2012, p. 75) de outros.

Two universes of infraction coexist in the school sphere. One is physical, noisy, visible, having an impact on other students, on the current class and challenging the school's regulatory order (justification for male transgression); the other (DELPHY, 2008) isn't physical, noisy, or visible and has little effect on other students and the class (justification for female transgression). One is tolerated; the other not so much. Thus, two universes of explanations and justifications are created: one is masculine, the other feminine.

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Sophie Duteil Deyries, Ministry of Education

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6730-9606>

Senior Education Advisor at the Ministry of National Education / France. He holds a doctorate in education from the University of Montpellier and a senior educational advisor (C.P.E.).

Authorship contribution: Paternité complète de l'article.

E-mail: sophieduteil@hotmail.fr

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