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Beyond mere exposition: TV violence in protected times

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Abstract

Introduction. The regulation of violent, among others, contents in certain times of the day aims to protect minors of their effects. However, it is necessary to analyze the characteristics of violence to be able to anticipate their consequences. This work aims to analyze and compare aggressive acts broadcast on Spanish TV in time slots with different degrees of protection to minors. **Methods.** For that aim a content analysis of 147 hours of TV recordings broadcast in 2000, 2005 and 2012 in the main national and regional channels was carried out. **Results and discussion.** Similar results are found regarding the frequency and characteristics of the violence at time slots analyzed. It should be noted that 57% of violence in protected time is legitimate or ambiguous in this sense. Minors are thus still exposed to TV violence, but an effective regulation should also consider aspects like the consequences of violence and the legitimation it receives.

Keywords

Violence; television; regulation; children; media influence; content analysis.

Contents

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1. Introduction

The presence of violence on television has been concerning for a long time as it is understood that it may generate negative effects on viewers, specially minors. In fact, research about violence on television, with evidences about negative impact of broadcast, have led to the concern about its regulation or limitation, mostly during time slots or programs where there is a greater likelihood of presence of children and adolescents, so that the exposure to violence is avoided due to their higher vulnerability. This regulation has been also incorporated in our country, even though there is no perception that is being effective, both regarding violence as well as other potentially harmful contents for minors. On the other hand, literature about effects of violence on television is reorienting its perspective on the matter, firstly, questioning its direct and evenly negative effects, secondly, showing that the context and broadcast modalities can modify the consequences of violence on viewers, being able to even consider the possibility of positive effects of reception. Therefore, it would be necessary to reconsider to what extent the broadcast of violence should be completely avoided or if there should be concern about the features of violence broadcast instead.

In this sense, this paper aims to analyze the presence of violence on television depending on the time slot, protected or not. Likewise, it attempts to find differences between broadcast violence in protected and standard time slots regarding variables referring to context and modalities of violence broadcast, such as legitimacy, consequences for the aggressor, type of victim, etc.

2. Influence of television on child socialization

Studies about the influence of television in children date back to the fifties and still is a relevant object of analysis (see Cachán, 2015). The predominant view in studies is the one emphasizing the power of television and the defenselessness and passivity of audience (Medrano, Cortés and Palacios, 2007). This view has been mainly supported in the cultivation theory (Gerbner and Cross, 1976) -individuals who are exposed too much to television end up acquiring values and behaviors shown in said media- in the catharsis theory (Noble, 1973) -emotions reduce in a cathartic manner when the individual's emotions are faced with those expressed on media-, in the social learning theory (Bandura, 1994) -children learn behaviors they observe in television in a vicarious manner -, and in the priming theory (Jo and Berkowitz, 1994) -in this case, triggering of ideas and concepts in viewer before the exposure to specific contents can also generate positive effects on children's behavior. But it is also possible to find classical theories that defend that television does not always has a negative influence on children and, besides, they are not passive subjects, but instead active, in their interaction with this media. This is the case of the uses and gratifications theory (Blumer and Katz, 1974), theory of enjoyment by means of tensional control (Zillmann and Bryant, 1996), posture theory (Zazzo and Zazzo, 1962) and the constructivist theory. All these show that the viewer, through exposure to television, actively looks for needs' satisfaction or mood regulation (Cfr. Medrano *et al.*, 2007).

In general, described theories have the limitation of explaining reality in a very restricted manner. More updated theories are based on the idea that television doesn't have a direct and so defined influence, but instead its influence interacts with other influence sources and variables such as family

and school on one hand, and characteristics of the recipient or exposure context on the other for instance (see Albero-Andrés, 2013; Medrano *et al.*, 2007). Thus, influence of television on audiences is quite wide, including cognitive dimensions, such as audiovisual alphabetization, and learning and pedagogical dimensions through entertainment and information products (television news, documentaries, etc.), that position viewers, children and adults, before a panoptic perspective of the world's reality.

From a different more holistic perspective, it is evident that contents broadcast by television contribute to building reality. Television is a relevant socializing agent included among the called “impersonal agents”, that is, forces or influences that act on subjects introducing a notion of society and also behavior models. In this sense, for instance, series and children's movies protagonists become references or behavior models for minors. The relevance of events, facts or objects is proportional to the time they occupy in that media, in such a way that anything that is not made visible on television, doesn't tend to exist (Cachán, 2015), and what is shown is altered or augmented for viewers (Pantoja and Rodríguez, 2008).

In the construction of that reality, the dependency of media is greater when less direct experience there is about a specific issue (Frigerio, 1997), hence, children and youth can be influenced more by television in their construction of that reality. Independently of the discourse about whether television has a positive or negative influence, direct or indirect, greater or lesser, what is rather clear is that it conveys the audience a structure of meanings and values contributing to grating sense and interpret what is perceived. What is visualized contributes to building an image of what the world is in their mind, a beliefs and values system that can be reflected subsequently in behaviors developed (Gladkova, 2013). In this sense, the presence of violence in television could contribute to ways of building the world that may seem adequate or not, that may contribute positively, or not, to the moral socialization of children.

However, for decades it has been considered there was a clearly established relationship between exposure to violence, through television or not, and aggression. In their meta-analysis, Paik and Comstock (1994) concluded that even a brief exposure to programs or movies with violent content broadcast on television could make children more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors. Miller, Grabell, Thomas, Bermann and Graham-Bermann (2012) found that exposure to violent programs on television was significantly related with aggression towards siblings even after controlling the exposure to other types of violence, such as violence in the community and violence in the family. In the Spanish context, Pantoja and Rodríguez (2008) found that in general, children exposed to violence of any kind are more likely to become aggressive, identify with characters and, therefore, imitate behaviors they see in them, thus reproducing violent behaviors to solve their problems.

The general aggression model supports these kinds of results. In summary, this model described that exposure to violence in media led children to engage in aggressive behaviors through a learning-activation-application mechanism. That is, exposure to violence generates aggressive cognitions that may eventually increase their ‘arousal’ and other emotional reactions. Moreover, the child could use these aggressive cognitions to update knowledge structures located in the memory regarding aggression and violence. These structures of knowledge may include scripts about how to behave before a provocation, for instance. With the repeated exposure to violence, aggressive structures of knowledge are reinforced and updated, making them more automatic and difficult to change (see in Brocato, Gentile, Laczniak and Ji-Song, 2010).

In general, this perspective popularized the idea that a lot of violence is shown on television and that it is something bad, but it is very difficult to quantify the amount and, above all, the specificity of said influence. For instance, Comstock (2008) concludes that these effects depend on some specific traits or attributes of viewers. In the same line, Gunter (2008) states that violence on television has negative effects in some individuals. Krahe *et al* (2011) found a greater emotional activation in viewers before exposure to violence, which may lead to a desensitization towards contents shown.

Likewise, it is undeniable that television shows violence, but it is not clear that this violence leads to a greater rate of real violence. In this sense, Ferguson (2015) through a longitudinal analysis showed that in certain time periods there is not a relationship between violence shown on television and real violence, even in some cases there seems to be the contrary relationship. Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski and Eron (2003) suggest the problem of accurately studying the multitude of variables and conditions that may have influenced in a long period beyond watching television. Therefore, effects of violence observed in experiments are not transferred in an aggregated manner into the society, which may generate doubts about the effective negative influence of violence broadcast.

On the other hand, the context in which it is presented, the type of violence shown, how it is shown, who are involved, what is the sense in showing what is being shown and what is conveyed, might influence in very different ways in the short and long-term impact generated in the audience. These kinds of results do not consider the difference between real or fictitious violence either, or between close or distant violence, or when it appears as legitimate or illegitimate. In this last sense, there is evidence that when violence is not justified, aggressive attitudes of subjects exposed reduce (Berkowitz and Powers, 1979; Hoyt, 1970; Palmer and Dorr, 1980, *Cfr* Medrano *et al.*, 2007). This obliges considering concepts such as reasons of violence (Wilson *et al.*, 1997, 1998), intention (Potter, Vaughan, Warren, Howley, Land and Hagemeyer, 1995), reasons (Gunter and Harrison, 1998) or justification (Mustonen and Pulkkinen, 1993). But all these concepts pivot on the aggressor's figure and do not consider the victim's or audience interpretations of a specific aggression action. A concept that is quite useful for the analysis of the impact of violence is legitimation, because it is based on the discourse gathered during transmission, thus orienting the interpretation of what is described. To legitimate violence means to present it as an acceptable, normal, trivial and comprehensible behaviors, that sometimes goes beyond understanding and acceptance, and includes celebration and exaltations (Fernández-Villanueva, Domínguez and Revilla, 2006). Audiovisual resources of creators and producers of violence in television are the support constituting the ambitions of broadcast legitimation. Through the construction made of aggressors, victims and consequences of aggressions, violent actions are interpreted as legitimate or not legitimate (Fernández-Villanueva, Domínguez, Revilla and Anagnostou, 2004).

When television broadcasts are analyzed using the legitimation concept, a high percentage of violence is presented as legitimate. Fernández-Villanueva *et al* (2006) found that about 40% of aggressive acts broadcast in television are very legitimate. The French *Centre Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (CSA, 1995) identified as legitimate 40% of aggressive actions of fiction programs analyzed. Finally, Gunter and Harrison (1998) obtained that about 33% of violence would be legitimate. In addition, Fernández Villanueva *et al* (2006) also found that 20% of aggressive actions were considered ambivalent, that is, legitimate and delegitimate at the same time, which might lead to increase the percentage of legitimate violent actions (60%). In this case, we should consider whether this “ambivalence” or lack of strict parameters isn't also a feature real violent actions have, since the concept of violence itself is evaluative and its interpretations considerably depend on who the evaluators are.

3. Regulating the broadcast of violence on television

Despite the competition of other technological and/ or communicative media (smartphones, computers, videogames, etc.) watching television is still a relevant part of the spare time of children and youth (Cachán, 2015). Therefore, it is indispensable to establish some kind of control of this media that contributes to safeguard minors' integrity. In this sense, the Spanish Constitution sets forth in its article 39 the obligation of public powers for ensuring social, economic and juridical protection of family, and specially minors, in compliance with the international agreements that look after their rights like, for instance, the case of the United Nations Convention dated November 20, 1989, where the fundamental rights of childhood are agreed. In that same sense, the Law 25/1994, which transfers to the Spanish juridical regulations, the guidelines 89/552/CEE about regulations of the practice of television broadcast, includes a section about protection of minors before advertisement, tele sales and programming. Curiously, in this section, there is no mention to violence, but instead there is advise about avoiding programs that can seriously prejudice minors' physical, mental or moral development, at the same time that obliges to rate programs depending on the age range they are targeted to.

The self-regulation code (2004), agreed by media with the objective of controlling audiovisual contents broadcast, establishes violence as one of the four areas that influence in the programs' rating by age ranges. Regarding exposure to violence, in the code the following guidelines or rules for the defense of the minor's rights are included: "Avoid indecent or offensive language", that can be understood as mild or social violence, and "Avoid unjustified broadcasting of inadequate messages or scenes for minors in times slots typical of child audience, where sex and explicit violence would be included (Ruiz, s.f.). In this code, it is also established that the time slot for minor protection is considered to be ranged between 6:00 hours and 22:00 hours. Furthermore, within this time slot of generic protection there are additional time slots of reinforced protection in the sense that the presence of the age group considered as more vulnerable before the television must be taken in mind, which are minors under 13 years old. This time slot of reinforced protection is configured from Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 9:00 hours and from 17:00 to 20:00 hours, and weekends from 9:00 to 12:00 hours.

Considering that programs rated for older individuals shouldn't be broadcast in protected time slots, and that violence influences in that rating, we should expect there to be less presence of violence in those protected time slots. However, this is not what seems to be happening: the presence of violence in protected time slots is still elevated. Pérez-Ugena, Menor and Salas (2010) performed an exhaustive study in the Spanish context about television contents in time slots of child protection and confirmed that minor protection was still quite deficient. Fernández and López (2011) indicate countless violations to the code that is possible to find in all generalistic channels, many of which are related with the presence of aggressive actions of increased severity in protected time slot.

Based on the aforesaid, the objective of this paper is to analyze violence actions broadcast in the Spanish television during the protection and reinforced protection time slots and compare them with those broadcast outside said time slots to show, on one hand, whether there are hints of real protection and, on the other, to think about about the differential presence of some relevant variables regarding the form in which violence presents, which would influence on the impact of what is broadcast on television in viewers inside that time slot.

4. Methods

Violence actions analyzed were collected in the years 2000, 2005 and 2012 through fragments of 15 minutes daily television broadcasts chosen randomly for 4 nonconsecutive weeks of each one of the generalistic, national or regional, channels, selected by audience and population criteria (see Table I). For the selection of broadcast fragments, we divided the time slots of a day into four sections of six hours each, and each one of them into 24 fragments of fifteen minutes each, from which a fragment was randomly selected of each time slot per day and per channel. Afterwards, to achieve this paper's objective, based on the fragment's broadcast time slot, we categorized time slots in: standard time slot, protected time slot or reinforced protected time slot.

Table I. Television channels and number of hours analyzed per year.

Channels	2000	2005	2012
TV1	X	X	X
La 2	X	X	X
Antena 3	X	X	X
Tele 5	X	X	X
Cuatro			X
La Sexta			X
Telemadrid	X	X	X
Canal Sur		X	X
TV3		X	X
N° of Channels	5	7	9
Total hours	35	49	63

Since fragments were randomly selected there is no comparable number by each time slot type. In 2000, 18 of the 28 fragments were in protected time slots and 2 in reinforced protected time slots. In 2005, 16 fragments were in protected time slots and 5 in reinforced protected time slots. And in 2012, 18 fragments were in protected time slots and 6 in reinforced protected time slots. To be able to calculate whether there were significant differences between the number of violent actions in each one of the time slot types, we calculated the number of actions' rate per recording time.

From the broadcast fragments selected, we identified those episodes where there was violence, not only physical violence, but all kinds of violence instead. The definition of violence used was as follows: "state of social relationships that for its maintenance or alteration, it needs a latent or explicit threat" (Fernández-Villanueva *et al*, 1998, p. 46). Likewise, a violence episode was understood as the minimal unit of meaning in the analysis of violence broadcast on television (Fernández-Villanueva *et al*, 2004). The episode is part of a broadcast, understood as a complete programming unit. For instance, if it refers to an informative program, the episode would be news, and in the case of a movie, the episode would be a scene, or an announcement in the case of advertisements. Now, each one of those episodes may include different aggressive actions, which are harmful behaviors, understanding damage as any lessening of physical, social, patrimony integrity or integrity of any other entity considered.

After applying this procedure, we analyzed 147 recording hours and a total of 2972 aggression actions were obtained. 925 of these actions were broadcast in standard time slots, 1487 in protected time slots and 560 in reinforced protected time slots.

Once episodes and corresponding actions were identified as violent, we coded as a result of a content analysis carried out by two members of the research team that worked as judges, submitting divergent cases to a specific task so to clarify coding criteria until reaching consensus. Judges worked with a coding manual independently, which included a wide description of the analysis categories and prototypical examples of each one of them. This procedure is similar to the one used in classical studies (i.e. Mustonen and Pulkkinen, 1997 and Wilson *et al*, 1998). The inter-judge global reliability was considered to be quite acceptable (coincidence of 84.5%).

The analyzed variables are the following:

- Television channel. Studied channels include *TV1, La 2, Antena 3, Tele 5, Cuatro, La Sexta, Telemadrid, Canal Sur and TV3*. Regarding comparative analysis by channel, we considered those that have been studied during the three years of analysis (*TV1, La 2, Antena 3, Tele 5, Telemadrid*).
- Type of program. Categories used are the following: news, documentaries, movies, series, magazines, advertisement, promos (advertisement of programs that will be broadcast in the same channel) and cartoons.
- Aggressor's characteristics: gender, age and number of aggressors. Categories used regarding gender and the number of aggressors were: man, woman, group of men, group of women and mixed group. Regarding age, categories were child-adolescent (under 14 years old), adult (between 15 and 64 years old), and elderly (65 or older).
- Victim's characteristics: gender, age and number of victims. Categories used regarding gender and number of victims were male, woman, group of men, group of women and mixed groups. Regarding age, categories were child-adolescent (under 14 years old), adult (between 15 and 64 years old), and elderly (65 or older).
- Type of damage. Categories of analysis used were physical, social, towards property and other kinds of damage. In the physical damage we included examples that entailed the death of victim, that the victim is severely harmed or that the harm does not entail death nor a serious threat for life. Regarding social damage, we included examples such as receiving insults or contempt. The damage towards property refers to examples where harm is not experienced directly by individuals but their properties instead (house, car, etc.). Finally, another kind of damages would include the psychological damage, which actively pretends to produce terror before the possibility of harm, a symbolic damage, that would include for example burning a flag or the destruction of a portrait, and another kind of damages that couldn't be classified in the previous categories.
- Consequences of aggression for the aggressor. Consequences can be positive (some kind of benefit is obtained: money, prestige, etc.), negative (stop receiving or having access to some benefit or receive any negative consequence as punishment, such as social disapproval), ambiguous (consequences are positive and negative at the same time, for instance, get social disapproval before performing a physical damage and at the same time the perception of coercive power by observers) or none. The absence of consequences may have a positive aspect, in the sense that the aggressor is successful in avoiding

sanctions derived from a violence that is often illicit. Therefore, consequences of actions are an indication of the functionality of violence administered by aggressors.

- Legitimizing discourse. Aggressive actions are categorized in legitimated (if they only show legitimation elements, despite of being aggressor, victim or action), delegitimated (only with delegitimizing elements) or ambivalent (if legitimation and delegitimizing elements are present at the same time). For instance, among legitimated actions we may find examples of forces of order or “heroes” that use violence to enforce rules or perform a good deed, the victim is presented as guilty or worthy of violence, and the action is introduced as proportionate, lawful or moral. However, the delegitimated actions of violence could be performed by a “villain” to generate an evil, the victim could introduce itself as innocent, unprotected or defenseless and actions could be shown as unproportionate, unlawful, inhuman, unexplainable, etc. Ambiguous actions combine legitimation and delegitimizing elements towards the aggressor, victim and the action itself (for instance, a policeman that tries to enforce law but through unproportionate or inhuman violence).
- Ratio of violent actions broadcast by recording time. This variable allowed to compare the number of actions per time unit based on the type of time slot analyzed.

Regarding analysis, we performed descriptive analysis of each one of the previously described variables depending on the type of time slot: standard, protection and reinforced protection. In variables such as television channel and type of program we show ratios of actions per recording time, and use the chi-square statistic to determine the existence of significant differences per time slot. In the rest of cases, contingency tables are elaborated analyzing the chi-square statistic in each case as well as typified residues to determine the significance of differences found. In all cases, we used the statistical analysis program IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

5. Results

The 31.1% of violence actions appear in the standard time slot, 50% in protected time slot and 18.8% in reinforced protected time slot. However, ratio per time slot was 21.8 actions per hour in standard time slot, 18.9 in protected time slot and 21.7 in reinforced protected time slot. The contrast statistic ($\chi^2= 274.4$, $p<0.001$) shows the existence of significant differences by type of time slot, standard and reinforced protected time slots are the ones showing a greater number of violent actions.

Channels with a greater ratio of violent actions broadcast are *Telecinco*, *Telemadrid* and *Antena 3*. If we compare only the standard time slot versus protected time slot, in all channels, except in *Telecinco*, we find a reduction in the number of violent actions. Despite this, it is outstanding that, when the reinforced protected time slot is analyzed, the regulation or control of channels seems to disappear for *Antena 3* and *Telecinco*, because we find an even greater number of violent actions compared to the standard time slot (Table II).

Regarding the type of program (table II), the ranking of programs showing more elevated ratios are promos, cartoons, movies and series. These are the most violent programs per time unit in all time slots, despite of being protected or not. On the other hand, only informative programs, reports and promos reduce their ratio based on the level of protection of the broadcast time slot, while in others (documentaries and, surprisingly, cartoons) the ratio increases as the level of protection increases. Lastly, series and movies show a similar pattern, where the higher ratio is in the protected time slot (not reinforced).

Table II. Ratio of violent actions per television channel, type of program and time slot.

Channels	Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Total
TV1	19.6	17.2	19.5	19.2
La 2	15.0	11.7	11.6	13.8
Antena 3	24.8	21.9	27.7	25.1
Telemadrid	26.0	22.7	18.0	25.1
Tele 5	22.2	28.2	34.0	27.0
Total	21.8	18.9	21.7	20.2
Programs				
Informative	33.0	20.8	12.1	20.6
Reports	20.6	10.7	4.4	12.9
Documentaries	10.6	15.5	18.1	14.4
Movies	45.6	66.8	52.7	49.4
Series	22.2	38.2	28.0	32.2
Magazines	9.1	7.9	9.2	8.5
Advertisement	9.7	9.0	19.0	11.1
Promos	255.6	144.7	92.5	150.9
Cartoons Animated	24.0	41.4	107.6	58.1
Total	21.8	18.9	21.7	20.22

Regarding the characteristics of the aggressor, the profile is similar compared to the time slot, because both in standard time slot, as well as in protected time slots, there is a greater number of cases where the aggressor is male and adult. However, in standard time slot there is a significant greater number of actions with men aggressors and a lower significant number of women and mixed groups, as well as children and adolescents. In the protected time slot there is a significant greater number of groups of men and mixed groups, and a lower significant number of men and women. Finally, in the reinforced protected time slot, there is a significant greater number of women and mixed groups, and a significant lower number of groups of men. Also, there is a significant greater number of actions with children and adolescent's aggressors and a lesser number of adults' actions. Hence, it is outstanding that in the reinforced protected time slot there is a significant greater number of actions where the aggressor is a woman or children or adolescents (Table III).

The victim's profile is also very similar in protected and standard time slots. In the three time slots there is a greater percentage of violent actions where the victim is male and adult. However, in the reinforced protected time slot there is a significant greater number of violent actions where the victim is a woman and a lower significant number where there are groups of men. Moreover, there is a significant greater number of cases where children or adolescents are victims and a lower number where are adults instead (Table IV).

Therefore, the violence that in standard time slot seems to belong only to males and adults, in the time slot where the weaker population is exposed, it extends to women and minors, without changing the general trend.

Table III. Violent actions by characteristics of the aggressor and time slot.

Aggressor's characteristics		Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Sig.
Gender and number	Man	509**	700*	254	87,56**
		61.3%	54.2%	53.9%	
	Woman	92	141**	99**	
		11.1%	10.9%	21.0%	
	Group of men	179	293**	50**	
		21.5%	22.7%	10.6%	
	Group of women	1	4	3	
	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%		
Mixed group	50**	153*	65**		
	6.0%	11.9%	13.8%		
Total	831	1290	471		
	100%	100%	100%		
Age	Children-adolescent	8**	39	21**	18,24**
		1.0%	2.9%	4.2%	
	Adult	828**	1278	476*	
		98.7%	96.0%	94.8%	
	Elderly	3	14	5	
	0.4%	1.1%	1.0%		
Total	839	1331	502		
	100%	100%	100%		

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Table IV. Violent actions by characteristics of the victim and time slot.

Victim's characteristics		Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Sig.
Gender and number	Man	466	660	266	17.49*
		57.1%	52.6%	54.6%	
	Woman	127	215	105**	
		15.6%	17.1%	21.6%	
	Group of men	101	174	48*	
		12.4%	13.9%	9.9%	
	Group of women	16	17	10	
	2.0%	1.4%	2.1%		
Mixed group	106	189	58		
	13.0%	15.1%	11.9%		
Total	816	1255	487		
	100%	100%	100%		
Age	Children-adolescent	34	59	44**	16.09**
		4.1%	4.5%	8.6%	
	Adult	785	1241	463**	
		94.9%	94.6%	90.1%	
	Elderly	8	12	7	
	1.0%	0.9%	1.4%		
Total	827	1312	514		
	100%	100%	100%		

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Regarding damage characteristics, the profile is rather similar in the three time slots: it is essentially a physical damage. However, in the reinforced protected time slot there is a significant number of social damage actions and a significant lower number of physical damage. On the contrary, in the standard time slot, there is a significant greater number of physically harmful actions and fewer cases of social damage.

Regarding consequences for the aggressor, there is a significant greater number of actions without consequences for the aggressor in standard time slot and a significant lower number of actions with negative consequences. In the protected time slot, there is a significant greater number of actions with negative consequences and a significant lower number of actions without consequences (Table V).

Therefore, we can find a reduction of the physical damage in favor of an increase of the social damage in protected time slots, perhaps because the former is the violence that is easier to identify and the most agreed to be harmful for minors. Also, in these protected time slots, the actions without consequences for the aggressor reduce and increase the actions with negative consequences.

Table V. Violent actions by characteristics of victim and time slot.

Damage	Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Sig.	Consequences	Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Sig.
Physical	626**	901	325*	23.28*	Positives	275	495	175	30.02**
	67.7%	60.6%	58.0%			34.0%	35.5%	33.1%	
Social	220**	434	188**		None	220**	434	188**	
	23.8%	29.2%	33.6%			23.8%	29.2%	33.6%	
Property	53	113	36		Ambivalent	208	367	152	
	5.7%	7.6%	6.4%			25.7%	26.3%	28.7%	
Others	26	39	11		Negatives	154*	338**	98	
	2.8%	2.6%	2.0%			19.0%	24.3%	18.5%	
Total	925	1487	560		Total	809	1393	529	
	100%	100%	100%			100%	100%	100%	

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Finally, both in the reinforced protected time slot as well as the standard time slot, violence actions show a delegitimizing discourse with a higher frequency. But in the standard time slot, there is a significant greater number of actions with an ambiguous discourse and in the reinforced protection time slot there is a significant lower number of actions with this type of discourse (Table VI).

Table VI. Violent actions by legitimating discourse and time slot.

Discourse	Standard	Protected	Reinforced	Sig.
Legitimated	319	534	215	15.25**
	34.5%	36.0%	38.4%	
Delegitimated	363	637	242	
	39.2%	43.0%	43.2%	
Ambivalent	243**	311	103*	
	26.3%	21.0%	18.4%	
Total	925	1482	560	
	100%	100%	100%	

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

6. Discussion and conclusions

In general, findings show the existence of a certain control by television channels regarding violence shown in protected time slots, but perhaps not the desirable control, since results show an elevated ratio of violent actions in the reinforced protected time slot. The fact there is a high rate in unprotected time slots can even be expectable, but the fact that said rate is almost identical to the one found in the time slot in which the most vulnerable population is exposed the most, is frankly surprising. Despite that, we must pay attention to the fact that the regulation enforced would not only support in a lesser or greater reduction of the number of violent actions shown in protected time slots, but it would also support on aspects like the type of violence shown, consequences obtained and legitimation. For instance, although in all cases a delegitimizing discourse of violence predominates, it seems the regulation is evident when finding a lesser number of ambiguous actions in this sense, in the reinforced protection time slot.

On the other hand, all channels analyzed, except *Telecinco*, show a reduction in the number of violence actions broadcast in protected time slot. But in the reinforced protection time slot, both *Telecinco* and *Antena 3* show a ratio of violent actions superior even to the one found in standard time slot. The evaluation of audiences indexes in every channel would be an element to be considered when trying to identify the causes of these results. Thus, some studies demonstrate that children show a greater interest and attention for infantile programs that include violence and action scenes, compared to educational ones (Perlado and Sevillano, 2003). Also, these indexes should be considered to analyze implications and consequences of showing violent actions.

The most violent programs are promos, cartoons, movies and series. Therefore, essentially fiction is the one feeding violence in protected time slot, while the real violence (news, magazines, etc.) have a much lesser presence and besides, more controlled depending on the level of protection. Moreover, it is outstanding that cartoons, a type of program mainly designed for children and youth, it is one of the programs showing a greater number of violent actions without moderation depending on the level of protection. Thus, it is evident that the fact cartoons are broadcast, it doesn't mean that this kind of population is protected. Another aspect to consider is the difference between real and fictitious violence. Even though the most violent programs mainly broadcast fictitious violence, it is very difficult for a young age child to differentiate between real and fictional (Pantoja and Rodríguez, 2008; Perlado and Sevilla, 2003).

Both regarding aggressor and the victim, the most frequent feature is to be male and adult. Although the physical damage is still present in protected time slots, there is more social damage in the time slot of reinforced protection. In unprotected and protected time slots, there predominate positive consequences derived from these actions, but comparatively there is a greater number of negative consequences in the protected time slot. In all cases, the most frequent is the discourse that delegitimizes this violence, although we shouldn't forget that 57% legitimates or is ambiguous in this sense in the protected time slot.

The evaluation of the possible effects of legitimation must consider the conditions in which violence appears legitimated in television broadcasts. For instance, regarding the aggressor, probably there are not the same effects generated in cases where aggressors are individuals responsible of keeping the order (i.e. police), figures that have an educational role (i.e. parents) or individual's rights who protest as citizens through those actions, which might be considered as examples of normative violence, that is, legitimated by society, compared with actions where other kinds of aggressors are shown. In this

sense, legitimated violence shown on television is not always in conflict with legal codes or moral values of society, like the case of normative violence, a violence that perhaps, due to this reason, should not be concerning. Although this kind of violence can keep the established social order, in any case, it should be questioned from an ethical and moral perspective (Albero-Andrés, 2011).

To what extent does television reproduce what already exists, what is real? Or is simply showing an “unreal”, partial, biased reality instead? Anyways, what is doing is conveying and contributing to perpetuate specific realities, despite of being more or less “real”. The concrete analysis of broadcast of specific types of violence could allow suggesting what is broadcast on television as an intervention strategy to palliate certain social problems. For instance, comparatively women experience more violence than what they cause and suffer a certain level of victimization in society. Perhaps an effective intervention strategy to reduce the social problem of gender violence would include taking even greater care of the legitimation made of this violence and the consequences associated thereof in time slots where the most malleable population is exposed.

The results of this study, just like those offered by Pérez-Ugena *et al* (2010) and Fernández and López (2011), show that minor protection is still deficient. But it is not as important to determine whether a lot of violence actions are broadcast or not, but instead to analyze how is that violence that is evidently broadcast. Although children represent only 8.5% of audience of generalist channels (Cachán, 2015), television chains have a social responsibility towards them, so we still have the pending task of taking care to a higher extent of those contents they could consume. In quantitative terms regarding violence, this would mean, for instance, to eliminate promos of fiction programs for adults in protected time slots or to select fiction products with less presence of violent contents. In qualitative terms, this would mean taking care that programs broadcast in protected time slots present forms of violence that convey adequate behavior models for minors: less physical violence, delegitimated violence and with negative consequences for the aggressor. This way, the key would not be in eliminating violence, but in showing it in an educational manner, as morally unjustified and besides, not functional.

The complete elimination of violence, at least in this time lot, perhaps is an impossible mission, or perhaps, in a way, it might even be counterproductive. The reduction of violence in television could avoid any unpleasant emotional reactions in minors and could have implications regarding imitation and desensitization. But it would be questionable to suggest the elimination of real violence from television programming.

Back in the introduction, we described that contents broadcast by television contribute to building our reality, and to a higher extent in the case of children and youth. In this sense, to what extent is it convenient to show an “unreal” reality, where there is no violence? Unfortunately, violence and aggression exist, they are very real, and have been from the beginning of times. For instance, to what extent should we hide from children images of corpses of Syrian refugees or the consequences of terrorists’ attack? On one hand, it is a very important and urgent reality, before which it would be necessary to sensitize population. But, on the other hand, it would be more adequate to protect children from the anguish these images cause? Should we suppress the news and images about gender violence when it is evident, there is a need that new generations engage to transform values and the practices that make that kind of violence possible?

When the real violence is compared with the fictitious one it is necessary to introduce other additional factors beyond mere exposure in analysis. The real violence, which refers to the close environment or that it is specially tough or vivid, can produce other effects very different from imitation or

desensitization, although this does not mean that there should be some sort of protection anyways. In the research of Albero-Andrés (2011) it was evidenced how children recalled scenes of the murder of a Palestinian child they have seen more than 4 years ago. Probably this representation generated in them a reflection about childhood in other contexts, which could be used as a pedagogical resource where other socializing agents participate, such as family or school. Television is not the only socializing agent, but it interacts with others instead.

The discourse about the influence of television has been usually negative, essentially defending that watching television is counterproductive and it is necessary to protect from its harmful effects, but its influence depends on multiple personal and contextual factors. Television can be a source of learning, but in order to make this possible it is indispensable that children and youth are educated to be critical and active about what television shows them (Medrano *et al*, 2007). From this paper, we suggest that what is relevant is not the broadcast of violence, but instead in what way it is presented. We need to pay attention precisely to the characteristics that configure it, to determine whether there is really success in protecting children or not in the protected time slot, and what is confirmed through results is that violence shown is very similar in the different types of analyzed time slots. It is concerning that all the damage performed doesn't have more negative consequences than what was found, at least in protected time slot. It should be shown to a higher extent that violence, even though it exists, it is not a useful or socially acceptable means to achieve pursued goals. Even though the discourse presented in actions is mostly delegitimizing, channels should make an effort to achieve that in most percentage of cases this is so, because it is rather concerning that in 57% of cases, violence is legitimated or ambiguous in this sense. Medrano *et al* describe some studies that show that when violence is unjustified, aggressive attitudes of subjects studied reduce. There is a clear relationship between the moral reasoning of children and the perception of violence, but children's age works as mediator of said relationship, because only older children tend to think about drivers and intentions of protagonists.

This research is aligned with a research program that has not been paid much attention up until now in the research about violence, the attention to models in which violence is inserted, instead of violence itself. This should take us to a convergence with literature about socialization in normative models, as well as a social debate, not about violence itself, but instead about the treatment of social violence towards which we cannot be indifferent to.

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Brief description about paper contents

The results of this study evidence that minors protection is still deficient. But it is as relevant to determine whether many aggressive acts are released or not, as well as to analyze how is that violence shown in their broadcasts. Television chains have a social responsibility towards minors, therefore they should take greater care about contents they might consume. In quantitative terms, this would mean, for instance, to eliminate promos of fiction programs for adults in protected time or selecting fiction products with fewer violent contents. It would be questionable to suggest the total elimination of violence from television programming. In qualitative terms, this would mean ensuring that programs broadcast in protected time, show forms of violence that convey adequate behavior models for minors: less physical violence, delegitimate violence and with negative consequences for the aggressor. Thus, the key would no longer be in eliminating violence, but in showing it in an educative manner, as morally unjustified and besides, nonfunctional. The particular analysis of specific types of violence broadcast could allow suggesting what is launched on TV as an intervention strategy to palliate certain social problems.

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