TEN OUTSTANDING REFERENCES ABOUT:

Bullying

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INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behaviours among pupils do not occur only in the contemporary society, they are the fruit or the consequence of human relations and, therefore, practically as old as such relations. Nevertheless, the level of social alarm is elevated nowadays, which could be caused by the outreach of the mass media.

As regards bullying, and contrary to the situation of other social issues, the alarm seems to be justified by two reasons. In the first place the disclosure, of the unfortunately informed cases, of the suffering that other kids who are under the same circumstances may undergo, and among the consequences thereof, we may mention unhappiness at school, difficulties in concentration and learning, anxiety symptoms, physical symptoms, such as stomach and headaches, as well as nightmares. The second reason, that originates from the aforementioned one, is the possibility of an intervention and avoid a situation that causes the suffering of the victim and that, in a more or less short term, will also cause the suffering of the aggressors, because the rate of bullying children that develop a criminal career with the subsequent imprisonment is very elevated (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 2000). Another motive, yet of another nature, refers to the manner in which the democratic principles are compromised, because as Olweus (1998) states, all the persons have the right not to be oppressed or humiliated in any manner whatsoever in any social environment, thus including the school.

Bullying is, in the words of Cerezo (2001), a manner of deliberate and prejudicial abuse, which persistence in time makes it very dangerous; and even if the main involved actors are the victim and the aggressor the impact is negative for all the group, given the interdependent character of social relationships.

Nevertheless, the interest of researchers in this subject is relatively recent, studies aimed at the evaluation of this type of violent behaviour began approximately in the 70´s, although they were limited to a determinate geographical zone: Northern Europe, specially, Scandinavia (Olweus, 1998). As from the 90´s the scientific interest appeared in other countries, such as the United States, England, Canada, Australia or Japan. In Spain, an increase in the interest in this issue, this interest being not exclusively scientific, as we have mentioned before, accompanied by the gradual increase of the incidence rate, according to the latest epidemiological researches (Cerezo and Ato, 2005). The average numbers of children, aged between 7 and 11 years old, which have participated in any form of bullying, has been established, according to Kumpulainen, Räsänen and Henttonen (1999) between 15 and 20%.

What is really worth mentioning is that the interest in this issue has always been triggered in the same manner in all countries: by the information offered in the mass media of the suicide of one or several children as a consequence of the bullying of their own schoolmates at school, this extreme conduct evidences the psychopathological consequences that a situation of continuous abuse causes to the victim. At the same time, and owing precisely to the crudeness of the results of their actions, there appears a disorder in the aggressors, at least at the behavioural level.

The abovementioned concepts justify, therefore, the objective of this article that may be summarized in an attempt to provide an approach to the

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scientific study of bullying from the different perspectives that may encompass the phenomenon in its entirety, thus enabling to establish a preventive framework for such situation. Therefore, in the first place, it was deemed necessary to elucidate the concept of bullying, what is understood and what is implied by the term in the different countries in which the study is conducted, at the same time the different terms that refer to the said phenomenon of bullying are considered, taking into account the cultural differences. In the second place the knowledge of the effects provoked by the bullying situations both on the victims and the aggressors, as well as the group environment is included because of its relevance and impact for the intervention, including the preventive intervention. Such consequences are analysed at a psychopathological level, physical and social, at short and long term, and concerning the persistence of such behaviours. This allows, therefore to consider the existence of a series of risk factors and, therefore, of protection factors. In the third place, the need of including the information about the situation in Spain, as compared to other countries, as well as the available possibilities to evaluate the phenomenon were considered. Finally, the main objective of this article is focused on the possibilities of intervention.

The mentioned objectives directed the search of the articles reviewed herein, including as selection criteria the time framework; thus, it was considered of utmost importance to include the information provided by a pioneer author, both in the study and intervention in mobbing related situations, such as Dan Olweus, as well as the most recent research and contributions. And, in order to amalgamate all the information it was essential to include transcultural and longitudinal research, which would make it possible to know the evolution of the phenomenon.

Olweus, D. (1998) *Conductas de acoso y amenaza entre escolares.* **Madrid: Ediciones Morata.**

The selection of the paper is based on two specific criteria: the analysis of the current phenomenon by a pioneer author in this subject, such as Dan Olweus and, on the other hand, the analysis of an intervention program, also pioneer, which positive and negative aspects have served as a basis for the development of other intervention programs. To elaborate the first part of his book, Olweus used the information provided by three complementary researches carried out by the author. The method of assessment used in all of them was the Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1986) and, in all the cases the sample was composed of individuals aged between 8 and 16 years old.

The first one of the studies comprised a sample of 130.000 students belonging to 715 Norwegian Schools (which would imply approximately the inclusion of nearly 25% of the children's school population in Norway); and in a second study a sample of 17.000 Swedish students belonging to three cities which populations ranged from 120.000 to 420.000 inhabitants was used, which made such sample comparable to the sample used in a former study. The third study deals with a longitudinal analysis that comprised a period of approximately ten years and that includes the follow up of 900 students in Stockholm.

In this paper, Olweus makes a conceptual explanation of the circumstances, characteristics and factors that should be taken into account when referring to bullying, such information was considered both in the elaboration of his questionnaire and to carry out the investigation. Thus, he proposes a definition of the phenomenon by defining which type of situations, in function of the time framework, would be a case of bullying or not; in this manner, the author defines bullying as the " exposure of a student repeatedly and during a determinate time to negative actions performed by other student or several of them" (page. 9).

The concept of negative actions includes the intention to do harm, either physically (hitting, pushing, etc.) or verbally (threatening, name calling, mocking), or gesturally (making fun of somebody, offensive gestures, etc.), and even by omission (excluding somebody from a group, etc.), an important condition being the unbalance of forces, both physical and psychological. Aggression may be caused by an individual or several individuals, and likewise, the victim may be only one student or several of them, although the results of the studies conducted by Olweus suggest the conclusion that the victim usually suffers the bullying of a group of two or three students. It is also worth making the distinction between direct bullying (open attacks to the victim) or indirect (social isolation of the victim and deliberate exclusion from a group).

General conclusions that may be extracted from the research conducted by Olweus provide the description of the bullying phenomenon with the aim of performing an accurate intervention. It is worth adding, before dealing with the presentation of such conclusions, that most of them are results corroborated in further studies, nevertheless there is a lack of analysis from a psychopathological perspective.

Thus, and considering the results obtained, the mobbing problems in School, mainly in the Elementary School centres, proved to be more serious than expected so far; even if the data collected are not enough to assess if these problems worsened by the end of the eighties or at the beginning of the nineties, do not allow the assessment , it is true that some indirect signs indicate an increase in the seriousness of school harassment as compared to 10 or 15 years ago, which conclusion was supported by other researchers (Cerezo, 2001).

Nevertheless, the rate of bullied students decreases when they become older, with an overt tendency to the decrease of the use of physical aggression. There is also a different with reference to the sex, because girls suffer from a more indirect type of bullying while boys suffer, moreover, a direct abuse, in the manner of physical violence.

An important conclusion of the Olweus' work refers to the lack of involvement of the teachers in the solution or mediation of the problem, which aspect would be essential in their intervention program, in other words, the attitudes of the professors in face of the problems suffered both by the victims and the aggressors, as well as their conducts in the bullying and intimidating situations are absolutely relevant in the dimension that the problem may acquire. In the same sense, the participation of the parents is evaluated, that are practically unaware of is going on with their children at school, in the case of the victims; in the case of the parents of the aggressors, awareness is even

lower: parents do not talk at all with their children about this circumstance, or they seldom do it.

As regards the place where the attacks are more frequent, it is confirmed, contrary to the general belief, that it is not the way to or back from school, but inside the same school, the size of the same being irrelevant as a risk factor. Finally, as regards the institutional framework, it is not in the big cities where the bullying rates are higher, but in smaller ones and in rural areas.

Once the problem is described, Olweus states which are the characteristics that are most frequently associated to the problem situation, this is, what characterizes, in a general way, the aggressor, the victim and the contextual situation. This would enable to identify potential risk situations with the possibility to prevent them or rather by modifying some of such characteristics, to intervene in a positive way by minimizing the negative effects.

The first of the important conclusions to this effect refers to the temporal stability of the condition of aggressor or victim. The importance of this affirmation is obvious as from the moment in which the intervention is necessary to change such situation. If nothing is done to prevent this, the boy that is aggressive with his schoolmates will continue doing that for a relatively long time, whereas the boy that has been a bullied victim once, will very probably become a victim again, with all the negative psychosocial consequences implied and that may worsen with the passing of time. Thus it is even more necessary to know which the conditions are or risk factors present in the situations of bullying to modify those who are more likely to be modified.

In the first place, what makes the bullying victims so vulnerable is investigated, thus the author concludes that in spite of the existence of certain external deviations that may be important in certain individual cases, its influence, in a general manner, is less than expected, excepting the situation of physical strength (for the aggressor) or the lack thereof (for the victim).

The characterization of the victims depends on the fact of being passive victims or submissive or rather provoking victims. In the first place, they are anxious and insecure children, sensitive and quiet, with a low self-esteem and that usually have a negative attitude towards violence and the use of aggressive methods. The provoking victims, in turn, are anxious and react aggressively, they are usually restless, have trouble concentrating, and their behaviour is irritating for those who surround him.

In the case of the aggressors the main characteristics are summarized in the aggressive behaviour that is exhibited not only with the schoolmates, but, often with the adults and the impulsiveness, as well as a lack of empathy with the victims. It is worth mentioning the low levels of anxiety and insecurity in the bullying kids and their relatively high self-esteem. In them, it is combined generally an aggressive form of reaction with a physical strength above average, and a benefit derived from their bullying behaviour, as may be money, cigarettes, etc. from the victim.

The long term consequences of the mobbing situation in the case of the victims is related to the presence of mood disorders and a low self esteem whereas in the aggressors such consequences would be the addictive disorders and criminal conduct; in the bullying group there is a four-fold increase of the justice infringement problems in a serious and reiterated manner.

As regards the educational environment excessive permissiveness in the presence of violent behaviour accompanied by a lack of affection in the case of aggressors are risk factors; among the victims insecurity in the relations was frequent owing to the existence of conflicts between the parents.

Socio-economic conditions are not related to bullying (including economical income, cultural level of the parents and kind of household) according to Olweus, who points out that the explanation for these results is the relative social homogeneity of the Scandinavian countries, whereas in those countries where the social unbalance is higher results may be different.

The importance of the group is also relevant so that, among the causes of the group bullying behaviour we may include the influence of the social contagion as well as the weakening of the control of the aggressive tendencies, this being provoked, in part by the passive attitude of the adults in the face of violence situations.

Taking into account the overall of the described situations, Olweus develops a guide that aims at the identification both of the bullying victims and of the aggressors, where he points out a series of primary clues that keep a direct relationship with the situation and several secondary clues.

Considering all these explanations, the author elaborates an intervention program that intends to eliminate, or at least, reduce at the minimum possible, the mobbing problems at school and to prevent the outcome of new problems. This program is characterized by general prerequisites of orientation and involvement, so that the adults may be aware of the existence of a problem and decide to intervene. The program is based, mainly in the use of the social environment, in other words, of the professors and other staff of the school, students and parents. The essential function of the non-experts is directly related to the restructuring of the social environment, whereas the experts, as well as the psychologists of the centres, the counsellors, and social workers perform planning, coordination and advisory functions, etc. From this point on, a series of measures are developed to be applied in the school, mainly directed at the development of attitudes contrary to the abuse and involving all the school team as well as the parents, measures to be applied in the classroom, with similar objectives than the previous ones but adapted for direct work with the pupils, focusing mainly on the elaboration of rules against the aggressions, and individual measures that would enable to change the conduct or situation of the individual students.

To assess the results of this intervention program, Olweus carried out a fourth study with a sample of 2.500 students belonging to 28 Elementary School and to 14 High Schools, boys and girls, aged between 10 and 15 years old. Besides, data was collected from 400 deans and teachers as well as 1.000 parents approximately. Data was collected from all of them at different moments during two years and a half.

Among the main results of this study after two years of application of the intervention program it is worth mentioning the reduction of the bullying conducts, both direct and indirect, and both in boys and girls, in a 50% approximately, although the effects were more evident in the second year than in the first year; the aggressions did not occur outside the school whereas a general decrease of the general antisocial conduct occurred (vandalism, taking of personal belongings, absenteeism, etc.). Improvement of the social climate has been observed in the classroom, such as a better order, discipline, more positive social relationships and a better attitude towards school and academic work.

Briefly, the interest in the work exposed is based, as it was previously stated, in its pioneering nature. Besides, the greatest part of the results exhibited has been confirmed by subsequent studies, which provide the article with updated information. Nevertheless, it is worth taking into account, when approaching this paper, that the author does not expose the methodology used in the research carried out which conclusions are the basis of the paper, the author directs the reader to a specific bibliography about the subject.

Smith, P.K., Cowie, H., Olafsson, R.F. y Liefooghe, P.D. (2002). Definitions of bullying: A comparison of terms used, and age and gender differences, in a fourteen-country international comparison. *Child Development, 73* **(4), 1119 – 1133.**

Since Olweus (1978) published his book about "aggression in school", an increase of the research on the aggressiveness in school centres took place in most of the countries. The internationalisation of this phenomenon has been so great than the authors of the paper evidence the need of determining the similarities and differences of the term "bullying " in different countries.

Starting from the historic evolution of the concept and the difficulty entailed in translating the English word bully to other language, the authors attempt to determine the possibility of finding a global concept that may define exactly what is mean by bullying in each country. An approach between the terms would be ideal to understand the extent of the studied phenomenon, although it is necessary to compare previously the concepts to determine the similar or different dimensions or criteria (physical/psychological, direct/indirect, group/individual, among others) that facilitate a common definition that would provide more clearness to the research and, therefore, to the intervention.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to compare the meaning of several terms in 14 countries and 13 main languages, not to give more privilege to a concept or language above other, but to determine the situations associated to each term and to differentiate the groups of ages and genders as regards the understanding and perception of the violent conducts. In order to present the concepts, 25 cartoons were used that showed situations that may be considered bullying or not. Comics are elaborated using elements included in the definition accepted for the term bullying that is characterized by an aggressive conduct, or, at least, the intention of doing harm, persistent along the time, where there exists a relationship of abuse of one subject by another, that appears without an apparent provocations and that includes conducts of verbal and psychological aggression and social exclusion (Farrington, 1993). All the comics were used identically in all the 14 countries and the general procedure was carried out in three steps: in the first places the concepts that best described bullying and social exclusion were enumerated and selected, in the second place, the groups of terms selected were used with the schoolchildren to prove the use and understanding of the concepts and, finally, and in the third place, the comics were classified according to the tasks to define the manner in which such terms are used. This last classification was administered to a minimum of 20 boys and 20 girls aged between 8 and 14 years old in each country (the total sample was composed of N = 1.245 subjects, of which n1 = 604 aged approximately 8 years old and n2 = 641 aged approximately 14 years old). All the selected participants belonged to representative schools of the educational system of each country.

The results show that the schoolchildren in Elementary School (8 years old) make a clear distinction between aggressive situations and non-aggressive situations, even if they do not distinguish clearly the kind of aggression (physical, harassment, verbal or social exclusion), physical aggression from harassment or verbal aggression from social exclusion. Nevertheless, schoolchildren in High School (14 years old) do make such distinctions. The authors suggest that this result is the consequence of the experience, in the Elementary School children; that is more directly related to physical school harassment rather than verbal aggression or social exclusion, probably due to cognitive type limitations. As regards the difference in the concept grouping according to the gender, results show that there are no significant differences as regards the social situation described by the terms associated to bullying. Data show that such results are consistent in most part of the countries that participate in the study.

As regards the comparison of the terms in the participant countries, the authors observe that the term bullying (Anglo-Saxon) shows a strong meaning correlation with the conglomerate that defines verbal and physical harassment, a moderate one with social exclusion, and to a lesser extent with arguments or provocative relations, whereas they do not correlate with the grouping of comics of a non-aggressive nature. This result is consistent with the definition of bullying given by the general population when considering it as a form of aggression (generally physical or verbal) but leave aside any kind of aggression of a psychological nature. This evidence is confirmed in several studies that exhibit how most part of the teachers and students of educational centres do not include psychological or emotional abuse as a form of bullying. The result found by the authors shows a disagreement between what is understood as bullying by the students and by the researchers and most part of the scientific community, specifically with reference to the psychological aggression and social exclusion involved in the term.

Authors highlight the importance of understanding the term used to refer to bullying, because different words suggest different interpretations according to the countries. Thus, the Japanese word ijime has less violent connotations, and emphasizes a higher social relevance or the Italian terms prepotenza

or violenza involve conducts which are highly related to physical violence thus leaving aside verbal violence and social exclusion.

Briefly, the authors of this work understand that these differences prevent the correct understanding of the concept, instead of making it clear, thus it would be advisable to group criteria around the concept of bullying.. This conclusion is interesting because reaching a global consensus would be useful to apply assessment tools or tests adapted to all the countries, because, as it has been demonstrated so far, according to the use or concept utilized to describe bullying the students interpret and decide which situations are clear examples of bullying and which are not. Therefore, it is necessary that the researchers include members of the general population in the process of construction of the social and historical meaning of bullying because the results obtained show a clear generalization as regards the distinction of the concepts associated to bullying according to different age groups and different genders in the different countries that participate in this work depending on the term used.

Kumpulainen, K.; Räsänen, E. y Henttonen, I. (1999). Children involved in bullying: psychological disturbance and the persistence of the involvement. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23* (12), 1253-1262.

The criterion that guided the selection of this paper is based on the need of understanding the persistence of the bullying phenomenon. Thus, this article analyses the stability of bullying during a four-year period. Nevertheless, it also provides a series of conclusions that, even if they had been stated in former selected papers (Olweus, 1998), are now corroborated with a more exhaustive methodology.

Thus, the objective of the work was to study the impact and stability of the bullying conducts, as evaluated by the children, parents, and teachers. The information provided by parents and teachers could be considered as biased, because children do not often talk about bullying problems; nevertheless the rate of students that does talk is likely to be elevated with the increase of the frequency of bullying conducts. At the same time the rate of recurrence of psychopathological disorders that affected children involved in bullying conducts was analysed, as well as the possible relationship among bullying, gender and other secondary factors.

Therefore, two studies were used in two different time moments. The Study (E1) was performed in 1989 whereas the Study (E2) was performed in 1993, using the same subjects. Therefore, it is a design of repeated measurements which sample was selected at random in a population of 11.518 children of the area of the University of Knopio (Sweden). The number of subjects of the sample corresponds to 1.316 children which average ages are of 8'5 years old in E1 and of 12'5 years old in E2. In this second study there was an experimental mortality of 17% with respect of the children, of 11% as regards the parents and of 13'4% with respect of the teachers.

The sample was divided in three groups according to the role played by the children in the dynamics of bullying: aggressor, victim, aggressor/victim, with the rate of each one of the groups in both studies being the following: in E1 8'5%

were only aggressors (108 children), 6'8% shared the condition of aggressor and victim (86 children) whereas 11% were only victims (139 children); in E2 7'9% were aggressive children (100 children), 10'3% were aggressors/victims (130 children) and 5'3% were victims (67 children).

The following assessment tools were used Rutter Scale A2 (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970) and the Rutter Scale B2 (Rutter, 1967) as well as the Children's Deppression Scale (CDI) (Kovacs, 1992). The question concerning the suicide in the first group of study was deleted of the last scale because the authors considered that it could be anguishing for 8-year-old children. When the scales were presented to the parents a question about their awareness of the involvement of their children in any type of bullying related behaviour as well as a series of questions concerning the socio-economic characteristics of the family. Information concerning the level of school performance of the children and the existence of special gifts as regards to music, painting or literature was collected from the teachers.

Data obtained with the indicated assessment tools were analysed with the statistical tests Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson's Chi square as well as the unidirectional variance and the results obtained could be summarized as follows:

The number of involved children in any type of bullying behaviour decreased (little, approximately by 8%) during a 4-year-period, in other words, in the second study, so that all the children involved in bullying (333 children) in the E1 42% (140 children) remained in the E2, whereas the numbers of boys exceeded at all times the number of girls, the difference of the genders was lower in the groups of victims in both studies. For the authors, this is difficult to explain, but they suggest that it would be easier for girls to find support from the adults, specially the teachers, that would intervene more easily in the case of female victims that in the case of male victims.

An important rate of children changed their role in the dynamics of bullying between both studies; thus most part of the children that in E1 were part of the aggressors/victims groups in the E2 their status had significantly changed, so that 25% of them were still aggressors/victims, other 25% were only aggressors, and a little percentage were only victims after four years.

In all the scales and in both studies children involved in bullying showed a larger number of psychopathological symptoms that the control group children. The number of children with psychopathological disorders was formed by those who exceeded the percentile 90 of the evaluation scales, so that in the E1 group, the most altered group was the one formed by aggressors/victims because more than two thirds scored above the 90 percentile in any of the scales. Nevertheless, after four years the most pathological groups was the one formed by the victims. In the case of the aggressors the rates were similar. According to the authors, there exists a clear relationship between bullying behaviours and psychopathological disorder; nevertheless, it is not possible to determine the cause-effect relationship.

In order to analyse which circumstances would be involved in mobbing, the authors performed a logistic regression analysis by comparing the children

involved in bullying behaviours in both studies with those who did no participate in them, in any manner whatsoever, as regards a series of factors which interaction in a previous analysis proved to be very significant and, therefore, were included in the model. Such interactions were: gender and are of residence, gender and level of development; gender and month of birth of the children; age of the mother and level of development of the children at school, age of the father and level of development; age of the father and special gifts as regards to music, painting and literature, area of residence (urban, semi-rural, or rural) number of siblings, socio-economic situation of he family and number of siblings, number of siblings and month of birth.

As regards the results obtained, sex, place of residence and the existence of gifts or special attitudes had a significant impact in the model so that children that lived in semi rural areas and specially in the rural areas had a higher probability of being involved in bullying conducts than in urban areas. As an explanation the authors propose the existence of a higher number of advantages in the city given the fact that children could find more easily other children to share likes, interests, etc. Nevertheless, in this work, the study are does no include Metropolitan Zones, so that the former conclusions should be examined cautiously.

Besides, special attitudes as regards Music, Painting, and Literature served as protective factors in the case of bullying conducts.

The level of development appeared to be an important condition and nevertheless had no impact in the model; there are also evidences that suggest that children who have several siblings are more likely to be involved in bullying behaviours than only children.; nevertheless, the confidence interval of this last condition was very wide, which makes such result very questionable.

Another logistic regression analysis was performed to compare children who had been involved in bullying in E1 but not in E2 with those who were still involved after four years. In this analysis only two main factors proved to be predictive: boys were more likely to be implied in bullying than girls in the same manner that children whose families belonged to a lower socio-economic level. In this relation, it can be inferred that children from different socio-economic situation have the same risk of being involved in bullying behaviours in the same moment, but this behaviour would be more stable along the time with a higher probability for those children with a lower socio-economic level.

The authors of this paper highlight the importance of the results referred to the stability of the behaviours investigated because they corroborate partially the affirmation stated by Olweus (1998) concerning that the antisocial behaviours exhibited in adult life could have appeared as bullying during childhood, nevertheless it would be necessary to carry out longitudinal studies from childhood to adulthood in order to corroborate this statement. In the same manner, in order to gain more insight in the psychopathology related to bullying it would be very advisable to perform a greater number of research using general samples and clinical samples.

Kumpulainen, K. y Räsänen, E. (2000). Children involved in bullying at Elementary School age: their

psychiatric symptoms and deviance in adolescence: an epidemiological sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 24* (12), 1567-1577.

The work performed by these authors aims at the determination of the presence of psychiatric symptomology in early adolescence (15 years old) in children involved in bullying situation aged between 8 and 13 years old. Thus, it is the objective to perform by means of a longitudinal design an assessment of the children in three periods of time (8, 12 and 15 years old) to understand if the involvement in bullying situations at early ages (Elementary School) has a negative effect in their mental health as assessed further at 12 and 15 years old (High School education).

Authors start from the generalized consensus among researchers that the participation in bullying situations, at early ages, causes psychological problems in the future. Research show that victims are more likely to develop more depressive symptoms, have a lower self-concept and great difficulties in sexual relationships in adolescence. On the contrary, the aggressors exhibit more violent conducts and are more easily involved in criminal situations.

Likewise, other studies suggest that children are especially vulnerable since early adolescence to suffer psychological damages associated to bullying, especially if the bullying experience is produced in the stages of the vital cycle that occur before adolescence. Nevertheless, and in spite of the results of several papers, authors suggest that the results found about psychiatric symptomology and further development of disorders are not determinant, particularly if we take into account that most of them do not use longitudinal designs when they plan the research[1]. The work presented by Kumpulainen and Räsänen is performed in three different time moments
(at 8, 12 and 15 years old) with the purpose of assessing the same children from the period of Elementary School to High School and to observe the evolutionary changes directly associated to development. For the assessment the
Rutter Scale was used for parents, teachers and pupils (Rutter, 1967; Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970), and the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) (Kovacs, 1992). The original sample was formed by 1.1316 children and the final (at 15 years old), was collected from protocols completed by 1.111 children, which represents 87'6% of the original sample. The low mortality rate is one of the strong elements of this paper, because as it is well argued by the researchers it is strange to find so many answers after the beginning of the research 7 years ago. With this sample, four groups were formed in function of the involvement or not in the process of bullying that would be the

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[1] *As regards the harmful and destructive effects of bullying y children, it is recommended to review the works of by Berthold and Hoover, 1999; Craig, 1998 and Slee and Rigby, 1993 that suggest that the intimidation victims have low levels of self-esteem, are more depressive, unsure, anxious, hypersensitive, cautious, and introverted, appear to be closed in themselves, and have more difficulties in adapting to new situations. The work of Kumpulainen et al. (1998) that finds a higher number of psychosomatic symptoms, depression and more psychiatric interventions in children involved in bullying. Also, the works of Kaltiala-Heino et al. (1999) and Rigby and Slee (1999) about the high risk of suicidal ideation and consummated suicide related to bullying situations are also important.*

subsequent object of statistical analysis necessary to answer the main objective of the study. Those groups were: (1) intimidators; (2) intimidators-victims; (3) victims; and (4) control (non-involved).

Results show that children involved in bullying between the ages of 8 and 12 years old are more likely to develop psychiatric symptoms in subsequent years than those who did not suffer the experience of bullying. Specifically, intimidating children that start their bullying behaviour at early ages (8 and 12 years old) are more likely to develop psychiatric symptoms at 15 years old and the happens with the group of early bullying victims. As regards the group of intimidators-victims, the results show that those children are more hyperactive, have more difficulties with relationships and externalise their behaviours more easily. This group, during elementary education exhibit more psychiatric symptoms than the rest of the groups (intimidators, victims and control). Data also show that the victims exhibit a higher number of depressive symptoms, psychosomatic symptoms and a behaviour characterized by the internalisation of conducts, specially if the victimization experience takes place at early ages (8 years old).

Authors state in the paper that the results obtained emphasize the vulnerability of the children aged between 8 and 12 years old in bullying situations, that the victims exhibit throughout the process of school development an overt difficulty in affective personal relations when they internalise their behaviours and feelings and that the intimidators appear to be more hyperactive and with a clear tendency to externalise their conducts in the course of time.

Finally, and as a conclusion, we think that the value of this work is two-fold. In the first place, it highlights that early experiences in bullying situations have a direct relationship with the occurrence and further persistence of psychiatric symptoms and, therefore, the increase of the development of psychiatric diseases. And, in the second place, as pointed out by the same authors, because the results obtained highlight the need of intervening in any bullying related problem that may appear within the school environment and that it should not be taken as a temporary phenomenon, harmless or even normal, and necessary in the process of evolutionary development of children.

Baldry, A.C. y Farrington, D. (2005). Protective factors as moderators of risk factors in adolescence bullying. *Social Psychology of Education,* **8,** 263-284.

Bullying is such a complex phenomenon that several studies have attempted to find the risk factors associated to it. Nevertheless the authors of this work illustrate that, even if it is important to know these factors, it is even more important to know the protective factors (personal, social and familiar) that may reduce or even eliminate the effect of such risk factors, and therefore, decrease the possibility of becoming bullying victims or aggressors. From this consideration, the authors wish to find, with this study, the risk and protection factors that may predict the occurrence of bullying and victimization. Likewise, they want to demonstrate the manner in which risk factors may be counterbalanced by protective factors associated to family context and the use of positive coping strategies

at the moment in which the aggressor or the victim face stressing situations, (thus considering bullying as a stressor).

Therefore, Baldry and Farrington make a revision of the works elaborated about the risk and protective factors (associated to upbringing styles) and coping strategies in adolescents. As regards the first ones, the studies have demonstrated how certain characteristics of the socialization process (low control and family supervision, family disintegration, lack of parental involvement in children's education) are good predictors of the incidence of problematic behaviours in youngsters. It seems clear, therefore, that there exists a clear relationship between the familiar context and precisely, upbringing styles[2] and the development of bullying behaviours in the school context. The works show that totalitarian or permissive upbringing styles are risk factors whereas a democratic upbringing is a protective factor. Therefore, the parents of the bullying children are likely to base their education in relationships of power and violence (physical and verbal) and the parents of the victims in dependant and overprotecting relationships that make the youngsters feel more vulnerable to be victims or aggressors depending on their family background.

As regards coping strategies, most of the researchers agree that there exist, at least, three main different coping strategies[3]: problem centred coping (behavioural or cognitive strategies tending to eliminate stress by modifying the situation that causes it); emotional centred coping (strategies tending to reduce or eliminate negative feelings provoked by the stressing situation); and avoidant coping (strategies that include denial and avoidance of thoughts or behaviours related to the stressing situation). Likewise, research with adolescents has found a fourth type of strategies defined as acceptance coping that consist of a psychological dissociation of the situation thus provoking a cognitive redesign of the same situation by forcing the subject to accept the stressing event as it is. In this sense, if we consider bullying as a stressing event, research show that youngsters which are not involved in bullying develop coping strategies which are useful to solve problems constructively, and victims adopt emotional internalisation strategies whereas intimidators use strategies centred on the externalisation of the aggressiveness, thus avoiding to find a constructive solution of the problem.

From this theoretical review that focuses on the objective of the study the authors selected a sample of 702 students from two main schools in Rome (Italy) to determine if the democratic upbringing style and problem centred coping are protective factors that may reduce risk factors associated to authoritarian or permissive education and the negative coping (avoiding and emotional centred) of bullying. Results show that 37'4% of the students admit having intimidated others and 17'1% admit being a victim of intimidation. As

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[2] *Studies conducted mainly by Baldwin and Baumrind, during the decades of the fifties, sixties and seventies of the XX century, have shown a series of characteristics in the educational practice of the parents. The analysis of the upbringing styles (*authoritarian, permissive and democratic*) may be consulted in Moreno and Cubero (1990) and (Santrock, 2001).*
[3] *For more information about coping styles, it is recommended to review the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984)*

regards correlation analysis between risk factors and protection, data show that there exists a positive correlation between an authoritarian upbringing style (based on aggressive and violent conducts) and emotional centred coping and intimidation conducts among schoolchildren. Likewise, a negative correlation appears between protective factors associated to a type of democratic and problem centred coping strategies and intimidating behaviours. As regards the victims, results show a positive correlation between an authoritarian and emotional centred focusing and a negative correlation in problem centred focusing.

Further, a multiple regression analysis was made for each one of the criterion variables (intimidation and victimization) and the rest of the predictor variables that defined risk and protective factors associated to bullying and victimization. As regards the first criterion variable (intimidation) the model explains about 10% of the variance, whereas for the second criterion variable (victimization) the model explains about 11% of the variance. By analysing such models, authors confirm that in order to understand intimidation and victimization process it is necessary to know the risk and protective factors separately as well as their possible interactions. In this manner, results show that authoritarian upbringing styles, age and emotional centred coping contribute to the increase of victimization, whereas a permissive upbringing style contributes to the decrease of victimization. The authors express that the results are logical and predictable, nevertheless, this is not so true, as regards intimidation, and because the regression model shows that a democratic upbringing style and a low level of authoritarian upbringing contribute to the increase of an intimidating conduct. This result, that is contradictory as a whole, needs to be studied carefully in order to be globally understood, even if the authors try to provide an explanation when considering that democratic upbringings are associated to high levels of tolerance and educational permissiveness, that, together with a clear lack, in many cases, of supervision, may increase the risk of deviated conducts and, therefore, of bullying. Authors conclude the study by making a criticism on the limitations of their results when considering that the relation between risk and protective factors (upbringing styles and coping strategies) used to predict bullying are only some of the influential factors, therefore subsequent studies should include individual, school or even social variables that may be useful to predict more exactly the factors involved in bullying. Nevertheless, and in spite of such limitations, authors consider that the results are valid to design intervention programs at school aimed at providing social abilities among schoolmates, because youngsters are not able to control or change individual upbringing styles, and increase problem centred coping strategies so that students may face stressing situations associated to family and school context and thus reduce the risk of becoming bullying victims.

Pellegrini, A.D. y Long, J.D. (2002). A longitudinal study of bullying, dominant and victimization during the transition from primary school through secondary school. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 20,* 259-280.

The work of Pellegrini and Long may be considered as worth reviewing because they provide a study characterized by the presentation of a longitudinal study, the use of different methodological procedures to obtain scores an, above all, because this study takes into account evolutionary normality criteria to measure bullying among students. All these characteristics are necessary tools to examine the incidence and background of bullying among schoolboys and schoolgirls during the transition from elementary education (childhood) to High School education (early adolescence).

As regards the evolutionary normality rules, the authors start with the definition of bullying as a form of proactive aggression (that serves as a tool for self-affirmation and self-determination) that is in no way related to the reactive aggression used as a consequence of a provocation. It seems clear that during early adolescence aggression is considered as a less negative conduct by the social group and that may be associated, in many cases to changes in the hierarchy of social dominance. If, to those social changes, we add the transition from a type of primary education (typically small, personal and with a solid social group to a High School Education (based on more impersonal relations and with a system characterized by a lower supervision of the student as a necessary tool for the development of minimum levels of responsibility and independence in youngsters) where peer relations are so important, aggressiveness is used to establish social status with respect to the new group, as a necessary tool for dominance. Therefore, bullying may be understood as a new strategy to join a new social group and be accepted. Thus, it seems clear that the dominant position is acquired, during this transition, as a result of a new series of exchanges of aggressions and reconciliations among individuals. This social position is renegotiated during the transition from elementary to High School when the group is not formed yet, so that in the initial stage intimidation strategies prevail over the reconciliation and cooperation ones, so that subsequently, and once the hierarchical systems of social dominance are established, the system of strategies is changed, by the increase of the reconciliation strategies and the decrease of the bullying strategies. As regards victimization, research has shown that it is likely to decrease when the children grow older; because youngsters learn with the passing of time to handle a repertoire of coping strategies that will be useful to ignore or face bullying situations.

Another of the studied elements in this work is the peer affiliation variable, because it seems clear that having many friends and being highly popular in the social group is an essential element to be taken into account as a protective factor against bullying threatenings.

Taking into account these variables authors try to determine if bullying and victimization conducts are modified during the transition from elementary education to High School. Likewise, and according to the theory of dominance, it is postulated that bullying increases with the transition and finally decreases, so that the dominant position is a mediator during school transition. Finally, it is considered that victimization decreases during such transition. For such purpose, a longitudinal study was carried out for three years (evaluations are conducted in 5th , 6th and 7th Grade).

The initial sample was formed by 154 students and after three years 129 students were evaluated which represents 83% of the initial sample. The evaluation tools used in 5th Grade were: Olweus' Senior Bully Victim Questionnaire (1989) and the information collected by the procedure of name-calling of the schoolmates. The professors completed the Teacher Check List de Dodge y Coie (1987). The evaluation in 6th and 7th Grade was based on the same questionnaires and besides direct observation was used (during 11 weeks, in which aggression, victimization, cooperation and non-social conduct was evaluated) and the evaluation of journals completed by the students.

The results obtained show changes with the passing of time of proactive aggression, bullying and dominance. It is suggested that these constructs are interrelated as natural and instrumental elements that may be used to establish dominance scales between the individuals to belong to a new peer group. This information is significant, particularly in boys who are more likely to be involved in bullying behaviours than girls. It seems clear that boys use more forms of aggression than girls, so that boys use bullying and aggression as something positive and respected by the peers and a way of advancing through the early stages of adolescence. These conducts possibly represent a way of individual self-affirmation and an exhibition of true adult behaviours.

As regards educational transition and dominance hierarchy among students, results show that bullying increases from elementary education to High School as an attempt to establish a dominant position among the peers of the new social group, so that later on, and once the social position is established, bullying may decrease. Nevertheless, these results are not consistent with the ones found by others authors, although it is suggested that in many of them the same results do not appear because the longitudinal studies performed are carried out after the application for several years of an anti-bullying program or, basically, transition is not taken into account because there are no changes of school during the transition from elementary to High School. Anyway, it seems clear that these data should be confirmed by further studies because the role played by the hierarchical power structure in the increase and decrease of bullying is not clear. Yet, it appears that, according to the results obtained, aggression is an strategy used during the initial phases of the school transition for the establishment of dominance position among peers. Once the dominance systems are established, pro-social and cooperative strategies appear as elements of consolidation of the social position acquired. Thus, a larger number of bullying episodes and a lower dominance scale was reported among schoolmates between 5th and 6th Grade, contrary to the situation reported between 6th and 7th Grade.

As regards the other two variables victimization and peer affiliation, results show in the first place, that victimization decreases with age while an increase of bullying occurs, owing to early experiences of the victim at early stage of education that produce an internalisation of coping strategies associated to ignoring, avoiding or facing the aggressors. As regards the second place, and youth affiliation, results show a decrease of the affiliation by the end of elementary education and an increase by 7th Grade, this is likely to occur because during the transition aggressive self-affirmation prevails over affiliation as a way to maintain the acquired social position and the reputation within the new social group.

Finally, we believe that the work presented by Pellegrini and Long demonstrate how the transition from an educational system to another exerts an influence on early adolescence because it is an evolutionary period that should be taken into account, because several needs of social affiliation appear and the use of aggression is increased as a tool of self-affirmation of social position. In this transition, bullying appears as an element of dominance over the peers and social affiliation as an inhibitor of victimization. Likewise, we believe that, methodologically speaking, the work presented provides a large number of contributions that go from the longitudinal design to the use of different evaluation methods to collect information from the different constructs used as criterion variables. Briefly, we think that it is advisable to review this work, because, in spite of its limitations, it does emphasize on the need of taking into account, at the time of developing research with adolescents, normative and evolutionary criteria, because in many cases bullying is nothing more than a necessary event for the social and psychological development of the individual and that would be useful as an element of individual and social self-affirmation both for the reference and the peer group.

Salmivalli, C., Kaukiainen, A. y Voeten, M. (2005). Anti-bullying intervention: Implementation and outcome. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 75, 465-487.*

The development of intervention programs associated, in this particular case, to bullying problems is the essential tool to measure up to what extent the scientific community developed a degree of knowledge about social phenomena. In this sense, a dozen of programs have been developed that have yielded contradictory results and, therefore, demonstrate that there are some elements that had not been taken into account at the time of designing such programs. From this criticism authors propose an intervention program that consists of three basic hypotheses and that are used for the first time in an intervention program of this type: (1) the allocation of roles associated to bullying during within the social structure established at school It seems clear that the role played by the individuals in bullying behaviours should be taken into account at the time of the design of anti-bullying intervention programs. (2) A multi-level longitudinal design is proposed, thus a program based in three steps is designed: the first one is called acquiring knowledge about bullying (based on discussion groups); the second step of critical self-reflection (also about discussion groups and role-playing); and a third step called anti-bullying commitment (based on the promotion of positive conducts associated to anti-bullying by means of role-playing and psychodrama). All these steps are programmed in three levels: individual, class, and complete school. (3) And, finally the need of evaluating the degree of effective execution of the intervention program is proposed.

To develop the designed program, 48 classes from 16 schools from Finland were selected. The total

number of evaluated students was of 1.220 (600 girls and 620 boys) that attended school and belonged to 4th, 5th and 6th Grades. The need of intervention was proposed for the three above-mentioned levels and the degree of execution was measured during the period that the professors devoted to school activities associated to the intervention program and that were obtained by means of reports prepared by the same teachers. The evaluation of the program was performed in two different moments, the first one that served as a baseline (before the beginning of the program) and another 12 months after the application of the Program to validate the real effect of the intervention and the degree of implementation.

The results obtained show a positive impact of the intervention program in several variables. Thus, as regards bullying problem perception at School, significant differences are obtained in the 4th Grade. Nevertheless, and as regards the decrease of victimization, it is observed that data are moderated in such Schools where the degrees of execution is low (between 15% and 29%) and very high in such Schools in which the execution rates appear to be very high (between 46% and 57%); this information, that might be considered as positive, is taken cautiously by the authors, because, as evidenced by the studies, victimization decreases with age , therefore it is not possible for us to know if these data actually account for the degree of execution of the program or, else, if it is an expected result when assessing the subjects after a 12-month program.

Another significant variable refers to the attitudes and efficiency of the beliefs about bullying, because a substantial change of attitudes is shown in all the evaluated Classes. The most outstanding result in this sense is the found in the so-called observers (in the 4th Grade such subjects maintain or reinforce less the conducts of the intimidators and in the 5th Grade they are more likely to defend the victims).

Resides, results show that the effect of the intervention program is associated to the degree of execution of the program. Important changes are observed in the pre- and post-test, mainly in such School that have a high level of execution and especially in the 4th Grade and dramatically less in the 5th Grade. Nevertheless, and in spite of these results, the rest of the variables do not appear to be significant and a high level of change is not shown in the attitudes of the subjects with respect to bullying, which situation is analyzed by the authors, who attempt to provide a explanation for it, with relatively little success, because in most of the cases they do not provide a clear reason why negative effects are produced or the expected changes do not take place.

In spite of this criticism, we believe that this work provides a clear explanation for an essential element: intervention programs are likely to be more effective in the lower Grades, therefore it is necessary to execute intervention programs from the educational bases, because in this ways changes will be produced as well as really positive results about bullying and we will develop attitudes against any type of aggressive conduct in schoolchildren that would be more easily applied to other contexts.

Cerezo, F. y Ato, M. (2005). Bullying in Spanish and English pupils: A sociometric perspective using the

BULL-S questionnaire. *Educational Psychology, 25* **(4), 353-367.**

The evaluation of bullying has triggered, in the last decade, the researchers' interest in discovering the social and personal factors involved in the aggressive behaviours between peer groups in the school context. This is, generally speaking, the main objective that the authors purport to achieve in this paper.

Cerezo and Ato have prepared a review of the methodological procedures used to obtain information about bullying: by classifying them in two types indirect (using reports obtained from teachers or peer groups) and direct (by means of direct observation). From the indirect methods, the most used tools are the questionnaires that, in turn, may be classified in two categories: those who identify the aggressor or the victims by means of self-reports, and those who use the procedure of name-calling of the peer group that may belong to the group of aggressors or victims. Of all the existing tools, the most used one in most part of the countries is the Olweus Student Questionnaire (Olweus, 1986). This questionnaire was adapted for the first time by Ortega (1994a) and subsequently used in further studies by Ortega (1994b, 1997) and Ortega and Mora-Merchán (1995). The adapted questionnaire, by means of 27 multiple choice items, evaluates three categories: friendship, aggressor and victim. In spite of its utilization, this tool is not free from criticism because its scoring process is very complex and elements showing information about a possible intervention are missing, as well as a lack of items that evaluate social and affective cohesion of the group in a Class situation.

From this review, the intention of the authors is to build a tool that may assess bullying, study group cohesion and that may be easy to administer and correct. With those purposes in mind, the Cuestionario BULL-S (BULL-S Questionnaire) (Cerezo, 2000; 2002) was elaborated. This tool seeks organized groups based on the analysis of the position that each member has within the class group by using the acceptance-rejection criteria. They dynamics of bullying is evaluated by teh perception of the subject of being aggressor or victim. The definitive version of the Questionnaire has two forms: Form A (for students) that consists of 15 items that evaluate three general aspects of bullying: social position (ítem 1 – 4); bullying characteristics (ítem 5-10); and bullying facilitating situations (ítem 11-15); and the Forma P (Professors) that consists of 10 item that include the first two aspects of Form A. The objective of the questionnaire for Professors is to compare the observations with those of the students in order to establish the correlations between them. The reliability analysis of the global questionnaire show an elevated internal consistency (= .73) and the factorial analysis yields a trifactorial structure that account for 76'8% of the variance.

Taking into account these results on the reliability and validity of the BULL-S Questionnaire in its Spanish version, authors were determined to prove if the tool provided the same results in other European country, precisely England. Therefore a total sample of 212 students was selected, out of which 120 subjects belonged to the Spanish sample (51 girls and 69 boys) an 92 students belonged to the English sample (39 girls

and 53 boys). All of them had equal educational levels (between 5th and 6th Grades in Elementary School) and their ages were between 10 and 12 years old.

Results show that the students who experienced bullying represented 16'7% for the Spanish sample and 20'7% for the English sample (even if those differences are not significant). When comparing the rates between aggressors and victims some differences appear. For the Spanish sample the data evidence that 9'2% of the assessed exhibit aggressive conducts whereas 7'5% are considered victims of such aggressions. On the contrary, in England the results show that the aggressors account for 10'9% as compared to 9'8% of those self-reported as victims. As regards the gender, in the Spanish sample we observe that in 7'5% of the cases the boy is the aggressor and 4'7% of the victims are girls, nevertheless in England both the victims and the aggressors are boys with a 8'6%. Likewise, students that do not experience bullying have a better position in the social structure of the group than aggressors and victims, even if the aggressor has a better position that the victim.

According to Cerezo and Ato, those results indicate an increase of bullying in the classrooms of both cities and that this behaviour is very common between the students. Likewise, the authors emphasize the importance of the position occupied in the social structure of the classroom, because the results show that the bullying victims are the most rejected ones and are less socially recognized within the group, thus causing feelings of isolation and loneliness among these individuals.

The correlation analyses find that aggressiveness is significantly associated with rejection, physical rudeness and provocation (in both samples) and with exclusion (only the Spanish sample); victimization is related to rejection, cowardness and exclusion. As regards the factorial analysis, it is confirmed, in both samples, a structure of three main components with a global variance explanation of 74'36% (Spanish sample) and 72'61% (English sample). Authors define the first factor as aggressiveness (includes physical rudeness and provocation) and the second one as victimization (includes cowardness and exclusion) and the third factor called acceptance.

The study completed by Cerezo and Ato, is an starting point to understand the nature of the bullying phenomenon in all its dimensions, thus showing that it is necessary to perform cross-cultural studies that may determine the differences and similarities of the behaviours among individuals. In this manner, we may generalize the results obtained and clearly determine the limits of the studied phenomena. This is the reason why we consider that the instrument validated by the authors in this paper, with the Spanish and English samples, may be considered as an efficient tool to evaluate, not only bullying incidence, but also to determine the social dynamics and structure involved in the process of the configuration of bullying.

Smith, P.K. (2004). Bullying: Recent developments. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 9* (3), 98-103.

This work should be reviewed by such researchers who attempt to initiate their research of bullying related issues for two main reasons: the first

one because the author elaborates a descriptive and critical review of the research studies performed during the last 25 years by different working groups in different countries, and in the second place, and even the most important one, is that a reflection is provided on the future research lines that may open new study guidelines.

Focusing on the paper, Smith addresses the following aspects: (1) a review of the concept and extent of bullying, (2) studies that attempt to describe the roles of the aggressor and the victims within the school context, (3) study methods for the collection of data about bullying, (4) studies focused on the analysis of coping strategies used by the victims, (5) review of the large-scale studies about the success of intervention projects and programs; and (6) future research lines.

As regards the concept and extent of bullying the author starts from the definition accepted by most part of the scientific community. Nevertheless, in spite of this consensus, certain doubts about such definition are expressed, which are not clear in the context. Thus the "intentionality" may imply the completion of the aggressive act or only the intent of aggression, without the completion of the act. Repetition may involve more than one act or an unspecific period of time. As regards power unbalance, its interpretation may depend on the perception of the victim or the objective criteria of the aggressor (physical characteristics, number of aggressions...). These and other questions, as pointed out by Smith, are points that had not been taken into account during the design of the studies, specially if we take into account the results obtained in different countries that find difficulties at the time of finding words similar to "bullying" in their native languages and that suggest that there may be more or less bullying depending on the word used and the perception of the victim or aggressor about such phenomenon. Finally, the appearance of other forms of bullying associated to new technologies (text messages, chats, or electronic mail) and that imply different forms of indirect aggression that involve, in many cases, the hidden identity of the aggressor and an extension of bullying to other contexts outside school.

As regards the studies that examine the role played in the process of bullying by the aggressor, victim and non-involved in such phenomenon, the author highlights the work elaborated by Salmivalli et.al. in 1999[4],, that evidence a social structure characterized by one or several individuals that may be at different hierarchical levels and perform several functions within the dynamics of intimidation within the school context. Thus, the following ones may be distinguished: heads (the leaders of a bullying group and the ones that initiate the intimidation phenomenon); the followers (the ones that start with the intimidation); the reinforcers (those who do not participate actively but reinforce or support the aggressor); the intruders (those who are not involved in bullying, they are mere observers). This non-intervention is understood by many authors as another way of complicity with the intimidating behaviour of the bully; and the defenders (they try to help the victim or even confront the

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[4] *It is also interesting to review, about this subject, the work carried out by Salmivalli et.al. (1996). In this work the authors do not only describe the roles involved in the bullying phenomenon but also provide an explanation of the social dynamics, both internal and external, of the group.*

aggressor). In spite of the usefulness of this classification, subsequent studies suggest that the roles played in the dynamics of bullying should be considered as useful and necessary conceptual tools in the school social structure instead of small groups of children with their own specific characteristics

Also the distinction of attitudes related to head-intruder-defender has been used in the intervention programs with the intention of modifying the peer support systems and increase the number of defenders, and therefore, modify the attitudes of the children with respect to bullying.

As regards the methodology used by the studies that deal with bullying, the author starts with a definition of the most used evaluation methods, mainly the following ones: self-reports, peer name-calling procedures, teacher reports (specially recommended at elementary and pre-school educational levels) and the methods of direct observation. Nevertheless, it is suggested that new studies should attempt to perform multi-method research for a more precise approach to the understanding of the constructs involved in bullying.

Besides, studies on the characteristics of the aggressor and the victim and their possible relationships have not yielded the expected results. If we study the aggressor, most of the authors find that those subjects are more aggressive, have a strong temperament, with a socialization process characterized by low affectiveness, violence and low parental supervision and a concept of interpersonal relationships that evaluates positively aggression and intimidation as a way to influence on the peer group. Nevertheless, it is not clear if the aggressors have less social skills, more social intelligence, have a low self-esteem, or have a high level of defensive selfishness, and, therefore are less tolerant to frustration and criticism. As regards the victim, it seems that there is a greater consensus among the authors, thus highlighting that the victims is associated to high levels of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. As regards the group variables, strong correlations were found between the victim and the peer rejection, a less quality of social relationships, a low number of friends, and a low acceptance at class. The most characteristic personal variables are: low self-concept, weakness (from a physical or constitutional point of view, low pleasure at school, few social skills and a high internalization and externalization of problems. The studies with the families of the victims have evidenced that the socialization process has been characterized, mainly, by an excessive protectionism of the parents.

Finally, Smith shows how the studies suggest that ethnicity and sexual orientation are not risk factors in bullying, even if some studies showing the relationship existing between the victim and the impaired capacity have appeared. Likewise, there exists a psychodynamic trend that even suggests the need that within the school context there should be one or several victims as necessary elements for the self-affirmation of the person in the group.

As regards the studies concerning the coping strategies we have found that most part of the strategies developed by the victims depend on the school context and the peer support and mediation system. Studies carried out in this connection suggest the clear benefits of using the support system to improve school

environment, nevertheless, the specific benefits for the victim, are yet to be elucidated. In spite of this limitation, it seems that the evaluation of these programs show satisfactory results as regards interpersonal skills and the total impact on the school context.

From another perspective, as regards the studies on the results of the intervention, the author starts with the analysis of 12 intervention studies at large scale, focusing basically on the data obtained by applying the Anti-Bullying Program of Olweus and the Sheffield Project in many countries, with distinct and contradictory results being collected. There are many factors that may account for this phenomenon: the nature of the intervention, the characteristics of the anti-bullying programs, the different participants of the Program, and the design of the intervention that, in many cases, does not include a follow-up period.

Briefly, the author provides two reflections: on one hand, a criticism of all such studies and suggests new research lines focused on the study of the role played by the girls in bullying, training in social skills and assertiveness at early schooling times and to perform tasks that would rather focus their objectives in the better knowledge of the school environment and social relations instead of the bullying process at school, because the knowledge of such aspects would be helpful for the development of new anti-bullying programs. On the other hand, the author reflects of the fundamental role of the School in bullying, nevertheless the global impact of society and its influence on schoolchildren's behaviour is not to be neglected. In this sense, we share with the author, the opinion that children are nothing but the image of the society in which the cult to violence, the values transmitted by the means of communication associated to the abuse of power or even the disintegration of the family group have a determining influence on our schoolchildren that use the school context as a channel to transmit such internalized guidelines, and that, from a pessimistic point of view, it is foreseen that they will persist, in a near future.

Hawker, D. y Boulton, M.J. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 41* (4), 441-455.

This work should be consider as basic for such researchers that wish to become involved in the study of the relationship between peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment that this situation imposes on the victim. Likewise, it constitutes the firs meta-analysis developed in the literature around this question.

It consists of an exhaustive and rigorous review article that, even if it is not very recent, it allows the reader to make a progressive approach to the research subject we are dealing with, and, besides it provides relevant guidelines at the time of dealing with the design of future research aimed at the collection of solid data in this field.

Therefore, Hawker and Boulton reviewed those transversal studies, published between 1978 and the end of June,1997, that related several measurements of peer victimization according to their types (global,

physical, relational, indirect and verbal) and some of the forms of psychosocial maladjustment involved (precisely, depressive and anxious symptoms, loneliness, global self-esteem and social self-concept). The authors start with the following hypothesis: victimization is positively related to different forms of social and psychological maladjustment.

In this work, emphasis is placed on the progressive increase of papers that focus on the study to determine if the peer aggression victims experience psychological maladjustments, while pointing out that such studies are being conducted mainly with a cross-sectional cut. In this sense, it could be considered that the criterion used by the researchers by only reviewing the transversal studies, constitutes an important limitation, because other longitudinal studies that might have provided a broader view of the consequences of victimization are excluded from the selection, as evidenced by other papers reviewed earlier.

The method used for the selection of the papers was performed by the search of the descriptors bully, Vich, bullying and peer victimization, in the data bases PsycLit, BIDS ISI Social Science Citation Index and OCLC.

As regards the results, the authors collected in several tables the characteristics that were considered as more relevant in each one of the reviewed papers. The following characteristics were emphasized among others: sample size, age range, gender, nationality, type of informant (victim, aggressor, professor, family, etc.), subtypes of victimization, presence of the method of shared variance in the size of the effect and nature of the measurements of psychosocial maladjustment. Even if the first table deals with the description of the types of victimization and their evaluation in the different works, focusing on a new subtype of victimization which was not included in the European Literature and which is slightly different from indirect victimization: the relational victimization. Likewise, in a last table, they summarized the results obtained as regards the association between victimization and psychological maladjustment, taking into account if the information was provided by the same subject (both victim and aggressor) or several subjects.

Hawker and Boulton organized the exposition of the results according to: 1) a general view of the characteristics of the studies (gender, participants, age range, nationality, subtypes of victimization and origin of the information) and 2) effects of the victimization on the psychological maladjustment of the victim, paying special attention to the difference as regards the used methods to obtain information about bullying (in this sense victimization is more strongly related to psychosocial maladjustment when both variables are evaluated by the same informant (frequently the victims) that when those informants evaluate such aspects.

As regards the general view of the characteristics of the studies, it is noteworthy that the study population is usually composed of boys and girls alike, of any age range, even if the age groups with ages between 8 and 13 years old prevail, and, although they come from different countries, most of them (excepting two studies) were elaborated using Scandinavian or English languages.

Besides, it is pointed out that in most part of the works, the subtypes of victimization were not evaluated as separate aspects, rather as a compound that consisted of two or more subtypes, by presenting the study of the physical and verbal victimization usually together, whereas, the relational and indirect had been barely taken into account. Nevertheless, in other analyzed studies victimization was used as a generic concept, thus ignoring the different subtypes.

As regards the origin of the information, victimization has been evaluated both by the victim and the aggressor, whereas psychosocial maladjustment is likely to be evaluated by the self-report of the victim.

This works focuses mainly on the effects of peer aggression on the psychological adjustment of the victim, by emphasizing that victimization is positively associated to depression and loneliness, even if the number of studies that have used loneliness as a depending variable have been very scarce when compared to those of depression.

Likewise, as regards anxiety and social anxiety, a positive relationship is still reported, yet less significant than the others, perhaps because, as the authors point out, prior to the interpretation of the results, attention should be paid because researchers are likely to use different concepts, with more or less accuracy to refer to the term anxiety or related constructs (as neuroticism).

For those authors, self-esteem may be the most studied variable as regards peer abuse, with a negative relative appearing at any moment between victimization and self-esteem of the bullied child, and always, regardless of the use of the shared variance method, as in the case of the former variables.

Briefly, the results of the studies reviewed by Hawker and Boulton emphasize that the peer abuse victims exhibited more negative affectiveness and more negative thoughts about themselves than those who were not victims, thus appearing generally as fearful, anxious, and with a low self-esteem. Besides, the victims may be characterized by important feelings of loneliness and dysphoria. Likewise, there are no evidences that peer victimization may be more strongly related to social forms of maladjustment than to psychological forms. And finally, those findings occur regardless of the gender, age group or type of aggression.

Authors provide a summary of the methodological limitations observed in the reviewed studies: in the first place, comorbidity problems between anxiety and low self-esteem with depression, and, in the second place, the scarce reference to certain types of victimization such as the relational and or indirect, as well as the lack of attention to such concept as a whole (complete evaluation of all the victimization type) with the subsequent risk at the time of interpreting the results obtained (underassessment or overestimation of the same). In the third place, the low number o papers that use more than an item to evaluate the concept of victimization. In the fourth place, the detriment of the results when referring basically to the level of statistical significance of the results and not to the size of the effects of the same. Fifth, the need to increase the transcultural variability in these studies and avoid limiting them to the Scandinavian or English speaking population. And sixth, to study the buffering effects of variables such as age, gender and sexual orientation.

In spite of all these limitations the authors highlight that the analysis of the reviewed papers have provided at any moment evidences to gain more insight into the study and treatment of the bullying victims.

In the second place, and as the final point of this meta-analysis, the authors review the change of the course that the peer victimization suffered. Thus the first papers collected in the review of Farrington (1993) were focused in questions related with the description of the problem subjected to the study and its prevalence, to deal later with more recent papers focused in the consequences of victimization. In this relation, authors provide interesting recommendations to develop further research, among which the following could be mentioned: the study of risk factors that may be involved in victimization situations, as well as the relationship of causality that is established with certain variables; to analyse the differences that are present in the psychological unbalance of the victim in function of the different types of victimization; and to elaborate intervention strategies directed at the decrease of the number of bullying victims and their consequences.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, it is worth mentioning the importance of the correct analysis of this phenomenon for the purposes of its prevention because the problem is reaching such extremes that the teaching professionals, through the Unions, have mentioned the need to include bullying as a crime in the Minority Act. Therefore, from the scientific environment, the evaluation of the risk factors should be emphasized, and as stated by Baldry and Farrington (2005), mainly of such elements that may act as protective factors in case of the need of attacking other children as well as the possibility of defending against such aggressions.

In order to provide a more efficient intervention from our scope of influence, it is considered that the study of the psychopathological aspects derived from bullying (both in the aggressors and the victims) should be deeper, taking into account, nevertheless, that the intervention in the cases of bullying, as stated in the above mentioned articles, requires an inter disciplinary approach that includes even such social environments that could be considered as foreign to school reality, but that undoubtedly keep more or less stable relations, as in the case of the Health System, the Judicial System or the Political System. Thus it should be considered as necessary to face the bullying problem from a more integrated point of view that involves a double objective: on one hand, to consider bullying as another component of social dynamics, and on the other hand, to create less insecure school environments. As highlighted by Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan (2005) a change in the social dynamics of intimidation and the development of programs aimed at the creation of safer social environments will enable a social development based on respect, and therefore, will facilitate a higher success in learning, taking into account that such program should include the greater number available of members of the educational and social community.

In this sense, the Centro Reina Sofía para el Estudio de la Violencia (Doña Sofia Center for the Study of Violence) celebrated last year in October a Seminar about "Violence and the School",   which conclusions were included in a report (Serrano and Iborra, 2005) in which bullying is compared to other types of violence (physical abuse, emotional abuse, negligence, sexual abuse, economical abuse, vandalism); besides, the possible socio-cultural risk factors related to the aggressor and the victim are analysed. Bullying is not only defined as a form of persisting school violence but also includes a series of diagnostic criteria that would allow the definition of bullying if at least three of them are present: the victim feels intimidated, the victims feels excluded, the victim perceives that the aggressor is stronger, the aggressions are increasingly stronger and the aggressions occur in private.

A brief description of the studies carried out in Europe is provided. Nevertheless, the interest of this report is based on the research proposed by using as an assessment tool a questionnaire that would enable us to collect information not only from the aggressors and the victims, but also from the witness to the aggressions (the questionnaire is presented as an annex to the report) For this study, a sample of 800 adolescents was used from all parts of Spain whose ages ranged between 12 and 16 years old.

Some of the results obtained do not correlate with the results of other studies carried out in Europe (which confirm the need of taking into account the cultural factors) as in the case of what is referred to as the "law of silence", which circumstance is not so common as other studies have pointed out. Thus, 75% of the interviewed students have witnessed the aggressions in their centre of studies out of which only 28,5% does nothing, the rest is directly involved in the conflict (mainly) speaks with the professor, with the victim of with the aggressor. Among the conclusions related to the aggressors, he highlights the strong cognitive distortion exhibited in the same manner as other type of aggressors, which justifies completely the need of psychological attention.

It is worth adding that the interviews to the students were done by phone contact, with the corresponding experimental limitations.

Finally, three internet links that deal with the bullying issue in an integrated manner are provided Such links are: www.bullying.co.uk, www.bullying.org y www.antibullying.net. Such Web pages are highly recommended by the number and extension of the links, as well as for their constant update and scientific production. Likewise, information for professors, parents and students is included, legal aspects, antibullying projects for schools, possibility to contact the page, interventions in different types of bullying and advise for parents and guardians. The page offers, apart from the information, the possibility of participating in a virtual newsletter about the subject and to keep online contact by means of discussion groups and chat created exclusively as a meeting point between the professionals and the actors involved in the bullying process.

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